

The ‘Take 5 Voices’ of Community Music – understanding the lived experiences of a UK community choir through phenomenology

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Abstract

There currently exists significant methodological issues within CM research, criticised for lack of theoretical grounding and advocacy considerations resulting in uncritical research agendas (Galloway, 2009; Belfiore & Bennett, 2010). These concerns have historically permeated the CM field, and are perceived to have worsened in CM's acceptance of public sector funding from the 1970s onwards (Kelly, 1984). A research culture of 'resource' orientation over 'active reflexivity' prevails, in which the evaluation of outcomes are emphasised over the understanding of processes of CM engagement (McKay & Higham, 2012). This dissertation explicitly focuses on these processes of engagement. The adoption of an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework set out by Smith, Jarman & Osborn (1999) aimed to understand CM experiences in the 'wider social, cultural and theoretical context' of participants' lives (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Through this, the accounts of Take 5 Voices, an inter-generational community choir based in Bulwell, north Nottingham, are heard. Identified themes include degrees of formality within CM, the 'team' in Team Take and barriers to CM engagement. Exploring the 'essence' of participant experience through IPA resulted in findings that highlight pressing matters of discourse within CM. These include the field's relations with formalised music education and questions concerning the core intents and purposes of CM research. Future research could further explore a symbiotic relationship development between IPA and the CM field, focusing on processes of engagement over the identification of outcomes.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introducing Take 5 Voices

Take 5 Voices (T5V), established in 2010, is a sister group to the larger Take 5 Dance school, formed in 2008. Ran by coordinator Freya and her mother, Emily, the school is based in Bulwell, a market town in north Nottingham, and delivers thirty dance classes a week for children and adults. Based in a large studio space previously housing Bulwell's library, trophies and photographs adorn the walls of every room, highlighting the achievements of Freya and her students. Through initial discussions, Freya expressed a desire to make 'everybody feel welcome,' emphasising the 'team' aspect of T5. The school emanates a strong community ethos, proving a fundamental value for Freya.

T5V is un-auditioned and prides itself on offering inclusive opportunities within the community. Over the course of the choir's history membership has fluctuated. It now attracts around 10-15 members for weekly, hour-long rehearsals. Mostly consisting of adults, the choir attracts some younger members who are relatives of these adults, either their children or grandchildren. T5V also perform at a number of community events throughout the year. These include local Christmas fairs and carol singing for the 'When You Wish upon a Star' foundation at East Midlands Airport. T5V prepare throughout the year for the annual T5 Summer Show, culminating in a weekend of performances from all members of the school.

T5V's repertoire focuses on modern pop tunes, offering audience members the chance to participate in performances through the encouragement of sing-alongs. During rehearsals, word sheets are provided as opposed to notated sheet music. Most

members, including myself, were familiar with the song choices; most were generally easy to pick up if not. Structurally T5V is split into two broad sections by voice type, with ‘high’ and ‘low’ voices. Attempts at harmony creation are encouraged and through Freya’s use of an online harmony app to support and develop these. Whilst musical aspects of T5V are of interest in discussing CM engagement, they will not provide the forefront of analysis within this dissertation. Rather, the focus here is on CM participation through T5V members’ perceptions of their engagement in the broader contexts of their lives.

Over eight months I devoted an hour a week to the choir, attending rehearsals and interviewing each individual member of T5V. I became closely acquainted with T5V and felt a growing sense of inclusion into ‘Team T5.’ Formative chats with Freya and Emily developed this, as we sought to establish and create a rough timeline for T5V, identifying areas that consolidated the identity of the choir. These initial conversations achieved a sense of rapport with the group and solidified the rationale for T5V as a case study for this dissertation.

1.2 Rationale

Freya openly described the running of the T5 school as ‘organised chaos.’ Consequently, alongside Freya’s desire to ‘take every day as it comes’ in the organisation of the school, there is little written acknowledgement of T5V’s achievements other than the placement of physical objects inside the studio (e.g., photographs, trophies, etc.). This dissertation was influenced by a collaborative ethos between myself and Freya, offering T5V members personal reflection on their individual and collective CM experiences with the choir over the past decade. However, T5V’s position as a small, local and largely unrecognised CM group also

links more broadly with the current paucity of writing on grassroots groups, as CM activity in these areas ‘often goes under-articulated’ (Brown, Higham & Rimmer, 2014, pg. 51). This under-articulation of practice relates to arts funding as an issue that has historically permeated CM, in its dependence ‘upon funding for its sustenance’ (*ibid.* 2014, pg. 13). Freya spoke personally of this, from the perspective of a CM facilitator who receives little financial assistance from outside sources.

Emily: - you looked at the lottery one didn’t you?

Freya: I did yeah, but what you have to go through and it’s like all I’m doing is try to bring something to the community and then I’ve got to fill in this whole catalogue of questions that have got nothing to do with what I’m trying to do...

Freya acknowledged the potential benefits grants, particularly those provided by Arts Council England (ACE), could provide the school and her members, yet resented the potential sacrifice of her autonomy as an independent facilitator under funding bodies’ ‘control.’ Freya’s frustrations support the assertion that funding application processes are often needlessly ‘complex and bureaucratic,’ undermining the assertion that ACE is dedicated to supporting community based arts projects (Romer, 2019). Significant reductions in UK arts funding over the past decade have also hit smaller projects hard (Rimmer & Phillips, 2013). ACE funding encourages applications from projects ‘strong enough to deal with the tough economic climate in the UK,’ equating the size of the project to its perceived risk of investment (Arts Council England, 2015). Grassroots projects, then, face difficulties at every stage of the funding process. For Freya, it was enough to say ‘sod ya, I’ll do it on my own

then.’

Freya’s experiences with arts funding have left T5V, along with many other grass-roots CM groups, unattached from both financial support and recognition from the research field. One CM facilitator articulates this in their own work with a community choir based in Leeds -

‘I do lots of work with adult community choirs who don’t get any funding from anywhere. They are community building groups. I don’t need to report that to anybody because nobody has invested in it. So from the one hand, that is lost isn’t it? Because nobody has invested in it, what you could find from that will never be found.’ (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 50-51).

Whilst the introduction of National Lottery grants during the 1990s were described as CM’s ‘best chance ever of decent funding’ (Deane, 1997, pg. 16), they have cultivated issues for grass-roots projects such as T5V over the past two decades. Funding now focuses on ‘interventionist’ style projects, with an expectation of ‘more immediate, visible and measurable outcomes’ of CM engagement (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 6). This is in direct contrast to the suggested long-standing values of CM activity, emphasising ‘empowerment, ownership... [and] openness’ (Higgins, 2017, 8:01). As a result, residents are excluded ‘from participating in decision making processes’ within their own communities (Borchert, 2012, pg. 57). An abundance of research exists focusing on measuring and evaluating outcomes of CM engagement, primarily emerging within the arts’ ‘subsidy revolution’ period from the late 1990s onwards

(Matarasso, 1996, 1997, 1998; Everitt, 1997; Kay & Watt, 2000). Research here becomes ‘resource oriented,’ working towards funders’ expectations of outcome, ‘rather than actively reflexive’ (McKay and Higham, 2012, pg. 93). What follows is a research culture that lacks appropriate visions and intents for research, focusing on outcomes of practice as opposed to the experience of practice itself. As discussed more broadly in Chapter 2, attempts to evaluate outcomes of arts engagement have faced criticism, primarily in their lack of ‘robustness’ and ‘theoretical grounding’ (Galloway, 2009, pg. 128 & 135). This is due to outcomes of practice seeming to fall back on the notion that ‘music is good for you’ and emphasising the concept of ‘something miraculous’ occurring through CM engagement (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 8; Bartleet & Higgins, 2018, pg. 7). Through this, it is suggested that advocacy considerations within CM research directly influence uncritical research approaches (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010).

It is in direct questioning and exploration of these assumptions that this dissertation arises, focusing on the processes of CM engagement for participants over solidified outcomes. In other words, ‘*understanding* the changes that are taking place rather than simply *proving* them’ (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018, pg. 7).

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a greater understanding of the experiences of CM participants through a phenomenologically inspired methodology. The following research questions determined the approach.

RQ1 – How are CM participants experiencing community music-making?

The aim here is to understand more deeply participants' experiences of their CM engagement in the wider contexts of their lives. Bartleet & Higgins (2018) suggest that, in light of accusations of uncritical research within the field, 'there needs to be a deep understanding of what change CM [is] trying to make, and the underlying aims, assumptions and processes behind it' (pg. 7). In support of this, Schippers & Grant (2016) advise against research reducing CM experience down to 'cause and effect' descriptions of activity in understanding the underlying processes of engagement. For these reasons, this dissertation will collaborate with T5V participants in allowing them to tell their own stories of CM from a processual perspective. This aim influences research question 2, relating directly to the methodological concerns of the dissertation.

RQ2 – How can the utilisation of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) help us to understand these experiences?

CM discourse calls for 'the production of research...capable of generating a better understanding of what forms CM activity takes, how it...functions and what corresponding outcomes it generates' (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 53). The use of IPA within this dissertation aims to understand CM engagement more deeply, through participants' reflections on their own musical experiences within a 'wider social, cultural and theoretical context' (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006). Whilst IPA has been used in broader fields, only a handful of CM studies have explored its use (Southcott, 2009; Southcott & Li, 2018; de Vries, 2010). This dissertation builds upon these initial studies. It takes into account the abstract and deeply personal effects of

arts engagement, often resulting in difficulty in articulation of outcome (Ramsey White & Rentschler, 2005). IPA, with its understandings of participant voice as the heart of discussion, has potential to develop a more detailed and rich articulation of CM experience.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation explores the issues discussed in the introductory chapter in more detail, highlighting the historical concerns felt by CM which have resulted in current methodological issues of research. Chapter 3 explores these methodological concerns within CM research. The hybrid methodology of this dissertation, employing aspects of ethnographic and IPA approaches, is discussed. Smith, Jarman & Osborn's (1999) IPA framework was used within both the data collection and analysis processes. Chapter 4 discusses the research findings of my time with T5V, presenting participant responses in the form of three thematic sections. These are 'degrees of formality within CM,' 'the 'Team' in Team T5' and 'barriers to CM engagement.' These key themes are examined within the broader context of CM practice and scholarship in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 summarises the place of this dissertation within the field, recommending areas for further study particularly within the adoption of IPA in CM research.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This chapter provides background context on the CM field, leading to discussion on methodological concerns within research. CM discourse has grown significantly over the past two decades, with ‘the UK...a pivotal national player within the development of CM practice’ (McKay & Higham, 2012, pg. 91). There is little comprehensively written, however, on the history of the field or its early developmental years, with this ‘only partly articulated and historicised within academic research’ (*ibid.* 2012, pg. 91). This dissertation does not aim to provide an extensive historical framework to CM. It does, however, assemble contextual information and key debates throughout CM’s history, necessary in providing understanding of broader methodological concerns within the field today.

Community arts practice emerged during Britain’s post Second World War era, with the establishment of arts organisations concerned with community development. Provisions supported ‘the fostering...of local cooperation, self-help and the use of expertise and methods drawn from outside the local community’ (Higgins, 2007b, pg. 23). Organisations such as the Council for Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), formed in 1940, aimed to offer ‘widespread provision of opportunities for...the enjoyment of the arts,’ particularly in community settings (Hewison, 1995, pg. 33). Providing ‘animateur’ positions to out-of-work local artists, CEMA’s provisions centred on ‘the encouragement of music-making...by the people themselves,’ in turn instituting the community-driven ethos of community arts practice (Hewison, 1995, pg. 33; Hope, 2011).

CM's early development lies within the broader formation of community arts movements of the 1960s (Higgins, 2007b; Deane, 2018). Socio-political discontent during this period saw community artists' collaboration in assembling activist, politicised practices, influenced by past community development movements. Understood as a 'product of cultural upheaval' of the time (Higgins, 2007b, pg. 24), early community arts practice adopted radical working approaches. Clear distinctions were determined between a perceived 'bourgeois...and repressive' art world (Matarasso, 2013, pg.15), and the work of community arts practitioners, giving cultural autonomy 'back to the people' and advocating the notion of 'access to art for all' (Kelly, 1984, pg. 22; Veblen, 2007, pg. 10). These core philosophies of accessibility existed in direct juxtaposition to the realities of a period of 'extraordinary cultural and social flux' for the British people, particularly in working class and immigrant communities (Sandbrook, 2011, pg. 12). The community arts movement acted as an agent towards altering sentiments of social disillusionment into 'practical' social development (Kelly, 1984, pg. 22). Groups such as the Free Form Arts Trust (est. 1973) aimed to foster a sense of 'genuine collaboration between artist and...community,' encouraging sustained and meaningful arts engagement for individuals who generally regarded the arts 'as irrelevant to them and their lives' (Crehan, 2017, pg. 148; Crehan, 2011, pg. 3). The community arts ethos is understood to inhibit a 'consciously left wing position' (Kelly 1984, pg. 58), in which the notion of empowerment for individuals and their communities acted as 'catalysts for social change' (Crehan, 2011, pg. 79).

Groups such as the ‘Association of Community Artists’ (ACA) soon formed during the early 1970s, creating a ‘national platform for community artists’ (Jeffers, 2017, pg. 37). This served as an ‘invaluable forum for the exchange of ideas’ offering community arts the chance to gain momentum enough to access funding from arts organisations such as the ACGB (Morgan, 1995, pg. 18). Although ACGB’s funding interests were traditionally placed within Western classical forms of ‘high art’ (Deane, 2018), a working group was formed by the organisation in 1974 in order to investigate community arts provisions in Britain (ACGB, 1974, pg. 3). Here, community arts legitimacy for funding from ACGB was scrutinised. The community arts movement at its inception held ‘no definite starting point, no manifesto...’ and was ‘loosely based on...the similarities in aims and methods in the work of its founders’ (Kelly, 1984, pg. 22). In light of this, the ACGB’s report found that inarticulacy concerning clear definitions of practice affected the ability to categorise community art within ACGB’s funding boundaries. To the question “is it art?” the working group could ‘find no simple answer’ (ACGB, 1974, pg. 9). If CM was not definable as ‘art,’ questions were raised as to whether the ACGB should fund a practice that adopted community development as its main driving point, as opposed to the ‘value of arts and excellence promoted by the Arts Council’ (Deane, 2018, pg. 325). Funding from the ACGB for some community arts activities was granted, however, upon the understanding that ‘because activity does not fall within the admin limits of any one official source of aid, they are in danger of getting support from none’ (ACGB, 1974, pg. 9).

Whilst some deemed grants from arts funding organisations as crucial to community arts’ survival (Guthrie, 1982), others disagreed. Acceptance of funding, particularly from the ACGB, represented ‘political emasculation’ for a movement seemingly committed to democratic arts opportunities for all (Deane, 2018, pg. 326).

Hope (2011) describes these sentiments as a ‘patronising democratisation of culture which further strengthened and maintained the values of the state at the expense of those fighting for cultural democracy’ (pg. 20). Community arts was increasingly seen as having lost its radicalised, activist roots in favour of support from arts funding organisations. These early issues surrounding funding and definitions of practice would prove an ‘enduring point of tension in the interface between policy makers and community artists’ (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 10), permeating practice and research over the next four decades.

Everitt (1997) describes the 1990s as a period of ‘subsidy revolution’ for community arts practice, with increasing interest ‘on the part of policy makers, educationalists and community development agencies alike’ (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 47). Newly established National Lottery funding in 1994 saw ‘public sector capital funding [become] available on an unprecedented scale’ for the first time. National Lottery grant provisions specifically for work ‘focused on...the development of accessible arts’ was in direct support of community arts’ ethos (Creigh-Tyte & Gallimore, 2000, pg. 27 & 30).

This guarantee of funding came at a price for community artists. Grants during this time focused on the implementation of short-term projects aimed at delivering ‘personal rather than community outcomes,’ leaving provisions that had traditionally supported ‘longer term community objectives’ struggling (Matarasso, 2013, pg. 2). Changing priorities from funders were influenced more broadly by the 1997 Labour administration and recognition of the role of the arts in tackling issues of ‘social exclusion’ in ‘distressed communities’ (DCMS, 2001, pg. 4).

Research conducted at this time supported government assertions that community arts activities ‘contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference...in deprived communities’ (DCMS, 1999, pg. 8). Community arts initiatives here aimed to tackle four government identified ‘priority’ areas, including ‘health, crime, employment and education.’ Expected outcomes were largely individualised, supporting educational and career attainment, and aiding in the development of ‘transferable skills’ (Matarasso, 2013, pg. 2; DCMS, 1999).

The claims of the PAT 10 government report influenced a continuing research emphasis on investigation of the correlation between arts engagement and social benefits. Matarasso’s formative study (1997) cited the social impacts of arts participation that could go on to ‘have a serious contribution to addressing contemporary social challenges’ as set out by governmental concerns of the time (Matarasso, 1997, vi). Subsequent reports supported Matarasso’s claims, most notably those produced through Comedia, a ‘research-based consultancy company...working towards a methodology for assessing the social impact of the arts’ (Newman et al., 2003, pg. 312). Research here focused on ‘impacts’ of arts participation affecting personal (Matarasso, 1996, 1997, 1998), social (Jones, 1988; Kay & Watt, 2000; Lowe, 2000), economic (Matarasso, 1996, 1997; Kay & Watt, 2000) and educational development (Matarasso, 1998).

These efforts to articulate, assess and evaluate impacts of arts participation, however, have faced significant criticism, centring largely upon methodological issues within research reports. Coalter (2001) cites reliance upon ‘anecdotal evidence’ as a key concern, whilst Merli (2002) directly critiques Matarasso’s (1997) approaches as ‘flawed...not applied in a rigorous way and...questionable’ (Merli, 2002, pg. 114). Jermyn (2001) refers to ‘reliance on self-report mechanisms [and]

presentation of case studies in a generalizable way' as core limitations of methodologies within evaluative arts research (pg. 29). Reasons for these methodological flaws stem from the perceived ideological bias and advocacy objectives of reports aimed at evaluating arts impacts (Brown et al., 2014). Belfiore (2009) argues for advocacy driven evaluation to be 'completely distinct and, ideally separate from genuinely explorative research' (pg. 354). She calls for 'disinterested' research within evaluative arts study, 'indifferent to the requirements of advocacy' with an 'ethos based on accuracy, precision and rigour' (pg. 354). Criticism does recognise, however, the issues surrounding the 'entanglement' between CM research and funding (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, pg. 124). For McCarthy et al. (2004), arts research is 'reluctant to emphasise the intrinsic aspects of arts experience lest such arguments fail to resonate with funders' (pg. 68).

As a result of these debates, there is a difficulty in articulation of the core purposes of arts research and what it should be striving for. As McKay & Higham (2012) suggest, CM itself is now in a position of 'resource' orientation as research considers funders expectations over 'actively reflexive' conceptualisation of research objectives (pg. 93). What follows is a 'paradox of a cultural sector that has experienced...a golden age, yet appears to be consistently...lacking in confidence when it comes to articulate its own value' (Belfiore, 2012, pg. 109).

The challenge for contemporary CM research is in exploring new avenues, not just with a focus on methodological concerns, but an active consideration of the place of research and what it aims to prove. Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) supports this position in stating that 'experiences with artistic forms cannot be guaranteed...predicted...or assumed to be good just because it involves something called "the arts"' (pg. 231).

This literature review gives context on CM's beginnings as a development of the community arts movements of the 1960s, and highlights the fields' politicised roots. Issues of funding felt to have damaged these activist foundations have been discussed. CM's more recent place within social and cultural development is examined, as interest from funders and government during the 1990s developed a 'noticeable shift in focus...from collective to individual outcomes' (Matarasso, 2007, pg. 449). Finally, the issues this has created for current CM research are acknowledged, primarily involving problems with research intent and methodology.

The following chapter further explores these methodological concerns within CM research. The utilisation of phenomenological alongside ethnographic approaches are considered in order to acknowledge and challenge the aforementioned methodological issues within CM and broader participatory arts research.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This chapter addresses the methodology employed within the dissertation. The first section explores and critiques methodologies employed within current CM impact research, most often ethnographic approaches. The second section introduces a hybrid research design between ethnography and IPA. The concepts of phenomenology and IPA are explored. This includes the defining facets of the methodology, and how these were adapted through the data collection and analysis processes, primarily through the adoption of an IPA framework (Smith et al., 1999).

3.1 Methodologies within CM impacts research

A small proportion of methodologies within CM literature have adopted quantitative approaches (Myers, 2008; Pitts, 2009; Corbalán et al., 2019). Quantitative research methods are typically perceived as rigorous and reliable when utilising appropriate levels of critical analysis. There exists the argument within arts research, however, that ‘important characteristics of people and communities... cannot be meaningfully reduced to numbers or adequately understood without reference to the local context in which people live’ (Choy, 2014, pg. 102). This is of particular importance when understanding the broader context of CM experience, as is the aim of this dissertation.

Traditionally, CM research has understood participant experience through a qualitative methodology, particularly with the adoption of ethnographic methods (Waldron, 2008; Kennedy, 2009; Sattler, 2013). Ethnography is especially relevant within CM research, in its aims to ‘experience the ethos’ of research participants’ musical groups and chart their development, particularly in disadvantaged or

marginalised communities (Kennedy, 2009, pg. 186; Sattler, 2013). Ethnography centres on the concept of ‘walking a mile in the shoes of others’ (Madden, 2017, pg. 1), generally through such techniques as ‘writing about...being with... [and] theorising about people’ (*ibid.* pg. 16-17). These tenets are adopted broadly within ethnomusicology, with focus on ‘the observation...and the description of cultural practices—in the case of ethnomusicologists the focus is on musical practices’ (Cooley & Barz, 2008, pg. 4). Close involvement with a social group in understanding their ways of thinking, being and doing are an asset for the collection of rich, original data. However, ethnography, and ethnomusicology as a sub-field, maintain historical associations with colonialism, and repressive power structures relating to this¹ (Pels & Salemink, 1994). Cooley & Barz (2008) describe this in terms of research focusing on ‘description and explanation,’ as opposed to understanding of the culture in which the research is based (pg. 7).

This links directly to issues of advocacy considerations within CM research, subsequently encouraging an ‘uncritical research agenda in this area’ (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, pg. 124). Higgins (2017) discusses the concept of ‘cultural democracy’ within his work, stating ‘we don’t need culture, we already have it. What we do need is someone to value it...to support it. It’s about valuing peoples’ experiences’ (35:45). With an arts impact research culture focussed heavily on ‘immediate, visible and measurable outcomes’ of practice, this appreciation or valuing of ‘peoples’ experiences’ of their own culture is overlooked (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 6). As practice moves away from ‘CM’s emphasis on community empowerment and grass-roots organisation processes,’ so too does CM research more heavily emphasise outcomes of practice (*ibid.* pg. 6).

¹ Although mention of ‘colonialism’ in its traditional usage invokes contexts relating directly to race or ethnicity, more current work on the concept within ethnographic research extends considerations of colonialism to broader ‘vulnerable populations’ (Hess, 2018, pg. 575) – these groups embody not just race, but a range of social identifies, including social class (*ibid.* pg. 576).

Creating conditions for authentic participant response is integral within the broader aims of this dissertation. This is realised in the objective of discovering a broader conceptualisation of CM participants' experiences on their own terms. As Creswell & Poth (2018) suggest, 'the reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual' (pg. 76). A further issue with the employment of ethnographic methods in the CM field is the descriptive nature of this particular methodology; they 'are not intended to establish causation. Ethnographic methods, therefore will not tell us how participation 'enhances or impedes...outcomes' (Gates, 1991, pg. 2; in reference to Brown, 1988, pg. 109). Conversely, the central purposes of this dissertation is a focus on 'process over outcome.' Utilisation of IPA is in direct recognition of this, enabling clearer conceptualisation of participant experience through individuals' perceptions of a phenomenon. The concept of phenomenology, and its methodological counterpart IPA, are outlined in further detail below.

3.2 Phenomenology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The foundations of phenomenology lie within philosophical thought of the early - mid 20th century. Edmund Husserl, the father of phenomenological philosophy, contested widely acknowledged schools of Cartesian thought. Here, the notion of 'dualism,' firmly separating the 'mind and body' of man, is fundamental. René Descartes' seminal *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641) discusses the inconsistency of human thought, observing 'the errors which proceed from the senses...while [demonstrating] means of avoiding them' (*ibid.* pg. 6). Husserl's phenomenology, outlined within *Cartesian Meditations* (1931), 'reject[s] all the well-

known doctrinal content of Cartesian philosophy' (pg. 1); here, acceptance of man's independent experience of particular phenomena is essential, in ascribing 'to his own essence his perceiving, his thinking [and] his valuing' (Husserl, 1970, pg. 236).

Firmly rooted in the concept of reality and perception as inherent co-constructions, phenomenology renders experience a fluid process that 'cannot be measured objectively' (McConnell-Henry et al., 2009, pg. 9). Hence, phenomenological methods are useful in the pursuit of subjective knowledge on especially abstract phenomena, such as that of musical experience, in itself described as a 'social and cultural phenomenon that cannot be explored independently of the social contexts within which it occurs' (Cross, 2005, pg. 114). Particular focus rests on the comprehension of experience within distinct and individual social, cultural and theoretical contexts (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006).

A handful of CM studies have used phenomenological methods. Southcott & Li (2018) explore the 'experiences, attitudes and understandings' of their research participants through a phenomenological approach, similarly to de Vries (2010) who 'endeavoured to find the essence' of his participants' lived musical experiences (de Vries, 2010, pg. 246). These works centre on musical experiences of older adults, and are evidence of phenomenology's potential further adoption in CM research. There are a paucity of studies adopting phenomenology when working with broader age ranges, however, particularly within inter-generational CM settings. This may relate to the relative infancy of CM research itself, with the first International Journal for CM only established in 2007, and phenomenology as a research approach.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) explores in detail how participants are 'making sense of their personal and social worlds' (Smith & Osborn, 2015, pg. 27-28). As Denzin (2003) states, all qualitative research requires researchers to 'critically interrogate structures and processes that shape individuals'

lives and their relations with others’ (pp. 463–464). With IPA, the meanings behind these structures and processes, and ‘the sensations and interpretations of individuals’ are considered ‘important and critical data’ for the phenomenological researcher in gaining as close an understanding of the phenomenon as possible (Stone, 2008, pg. 165).

In exploring these phenomena, IPA incorporates reflexive aspects as core features of the approach. Smith & Osborn describe this process as ‘participants...trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world’ (Smith & Osborn, 2015, pg. 26). The methodology recognises the often paradoxical relationship between the researcher and the researched; whilst understanding a phenomenon from the participants’ perspective is at the centre of the methodology, pre-conceptions and bias are inevitable (Swauger, 2011). IPA, rather than overlook this, directly recognises it, placing reflexivity from the researcher at the forefront of the methodology (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008).

This dissertation, whilst supporting the utilisation of IPA within CM research, does not prioritise the method over other qualitative models, such as that of ethnography. It puts forward a case for a symbiotic relationship development between IPA and CM research in the form of a hybrid approach, utilising aspects of ethnography and IPA. This is explored below, with further examination of the defining facets of IPA and how these were adapted throughout the data collection and analysis process.

3.3 The process of data collection

Data for this dissertation was gathered using ethnographic methods including participant observation, the writing of field notes and semi-structured interviews.

Participant observation was used throughout my time with T5V during active participation in rehearsals and choir performances. Such immersion allowed for a ‘deeper understanding of issues and values...critical to the creation of music’ within T5V (Stone, 2008, pg. 13). My participatory involvement with T5V led to the creation of positive working relationships with participants over the course of my time with them.

I recorded my thoughts on the research process through field-notes, offering context for participant responses. Throughout the fieldwork process, and in keeping with phenomenology’s ideas on positionality and interpretation, I carefully considered researcher reflexivity. In self-analysing my position and understanding my impact on the research process, I kept a reflexive research diary alongside my field-notes. This included observations on how I felt the research process was shifting and growing as it progressed, notes on choir rehearsals and interviews, and anything I found to be of pertinence to the research questions (see Appendix A for a sample of the research diary). Through this, I considered my own musical background – that of a classically trained musician – and the issues this could create concerning my position as both researcher and participant within T5V. As an example of my reflexivity, I chose to minimise my level of creative input, thus allowing Freya to feel comfortable engaging in her established informal practices within the group. Clancy (2013) emphasises the importance of a reflexive and honest approach in bringing ‘a more credible and realistic version of participants’ accounts to light’ (pg. 15).

Data collection incorporated semi-structured interviews (see ‘3.4 The IPA data collection process’). Interviews were digitally recorded and verbal consent, along with written, was obtained. I made sparse notes in the interviews themselves, choosing to write these up immediately afterwards. This was so there remained a good grasp of interesting interview observations committed to memory on my part. Digital recording also linked to the comfort of the interviewee, with fewer interruptions or distractions for both parties.

T5V participants were interviewed in familiar surroundings. Most interviews took place at T5V studios unless otherwise arranged by the individual participant themselves. Full information sheets, privacy notices and consent forms were provided. These were read, understood and signed accordingly. Parental consent was also required when interviews involved children under the age of 16. Full permission to proceed with the study was granted in late 2018 by the University of Nottingham Faculty of Arts Ethics Board, and data collection began in January 2019.

3.4 The IPA data collection process

Each project utilising IPA ‘holds its own integrity...and establishes its own procedures to facilitate the flow of the investigation and the collection of data’ (Moustakas, 1994, pg. 104). This fluidity is expected with a methodology as reflexive as IPA. A number of IPA scholars suggest frameworks for data collection and analysis in order to solidify the core systems of the methodology. Explained in more detail below, I designed my research around the IPA framework set out by Smith et al. (1999) at the data collection and data analysis stages.

I adopted semi-structured interviews within the data collection process (see Appendix B for the interview schedule/guide used). For Bartholomew, Henderson & Marcia (2000) a semi-structured approach allows the researcher flexibility from interview to interview, ensuring ‘any questions asked [are]...germane to the information required and the flow of the conversation’ (pg. 286-287). Conversational flow proved an integral component in data collection, particularly in regard to the building of rapport with T5V.

I implemented aspects within the data collection process to ensure interviewees felt comfortable, relaxed and safe in discussing their CM experiences. In accordance with IPA’s emphasis on understanding the ‘essence’ of a phenomenon, I attempted to lay the foundations for participants to ‘tell their own story in their own words,’ itself being a ‘central premise of IPA’ (Brocki & Wearden, 2006 pg. 91). A conversational, informal atmosphere throughout the interviews - purposely referred to as ‘chats’ – was striven for. I allowed my interviewees ample time to consider and articulate their own experiences with community music-making. In building this atmosphere for participants, I explained the research, discussed my past work in Bulwell and emphasised my desire to continue CM research within the town. I then offered participants the choice of a pseudonym before starting the interview. This relaxed the interviewee and gave us time to orientate ourselves within the setting before interviews began. Polkinghorne (1989) articulates one of the core outcomes of this rapport building as ‘understanding better what it is like for someone to experience’ a given phenomenon (*ibid.* pg. 46).

Interpretative facets of phenomenology separate the approach from that of other qualitative methods. Whilst Smith (1996) emphasises the importance of the role of interpretation during analytical stages, Brocki and Wearden (2006) equally stress the importance of this facet ‘prior to the analysis stage of research proceedings’ (pg.

91). In accordance with this, participants were asked for clarification on potentially misinterpreted areas of discussion, or abstract thoughts. Smith and Osborn (2015) suggest a malleable approach towards interview proceedings, encouraging the consideration of ‘novel avenues’ arising from movement away from interview schedules. This could prove ‘extremely pertinent to, and enlightening of, the project’s overall questions.’ (pg. 36). In light of this, I would attempt to steer conversation back on track if I felt it was straying far from the research questions in hand. However, I allowed participants to deliver narratives on issues they felt were pertinent to their understandings of CM engagement. Through this, interviewees discussed their experiences of CM engagement outside of T5V, at earlier stages of their lives, if they felt this necessary in articulating their current understandings of CM participation.

3.5 The IPA data analysis process

Upon gathering data, audio recordings were immediately typed up verbatim. This was in accordance with the centrality of authentic participant voice to IPA, allowing a closer consideration of raw data (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006, pg. 40).

Close analysis of the data was undertaken in accordance with ‘IPA in practice’ method of Smith et al. (1999, pg. 228). This analytical process provides an ‘exploratory account...of shared experiences across a group of participants,’ in direct accordance with the research objectives of this dissertation (*ibid.* pg. 229). The five step process remains faithful to IPA’s aim of emphasising the uniqueness of the participant voice (see Appendix C – E for examples of the IPA process).

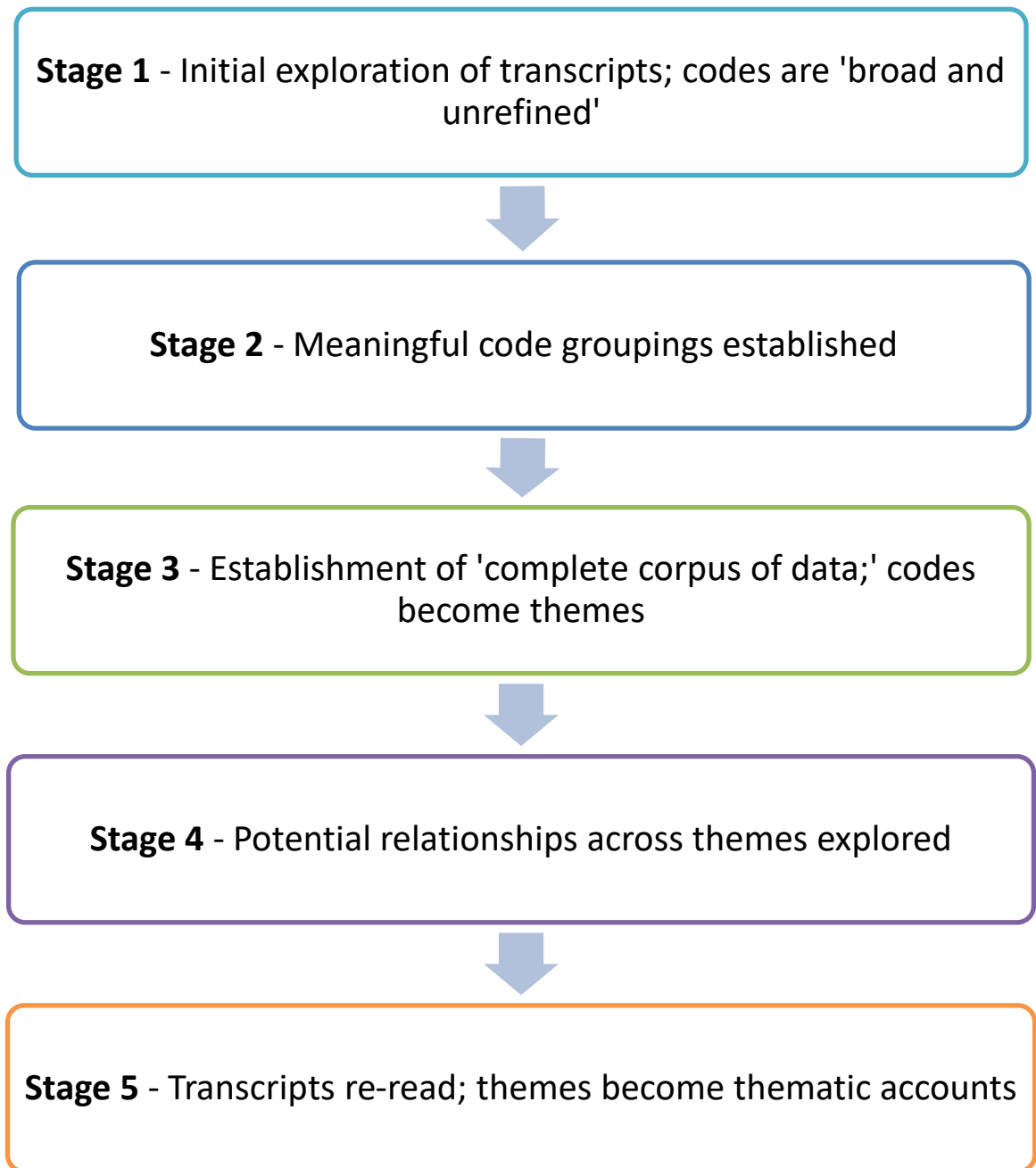


Figure 3.1 - Stages of the IPA data analysis process

The first stage in the IPA process involved the initial exploration of individual transcripts of T5V participants. Accounts were explored numerous times, with observations of note and possible codes identified. Initial codes were kept ‘fairly broad and unrefined’ (*ibid.* pg. 229). Once all T5V members accounts were coded, codes were ‘meaningfully grouped’ as shared themes were identified for the second stage of analysis (*ibid.* pg. 229). Codes unique to individual accounts from stage one were compared in stage 2, where they were examined to spot potential themes. The third stage of the analysis involved more focussed examination of these ‘meaningfully grouped’ themes, in order to create a ‘complete corpus of data’ on a particular theme (*ibid.* pg. 231). The active search for relationships between themes occurred in stage four, gaining ‘a more holistic perspective on the data’ (*ibid.* pg. 232). This stage highlighted the organic aspects of the IPA analytical process, as I discovered consistent links between narrative accounts. The fifth stage focussed on the transformation of analysed themes into thematic accounts, with participant voice at the forefront through the inclusion of verbatim extracts (see Fig. 3.1 for a visual representation of the IPA data analysis process).

The method laid out by Smith et al. (1999) is a useful, structured tool detailing the processes of IPA for the phenomenological researcher. The reflexive nature of the approach removes IPA from being ‘a prescriptive methodology’ (*ibid.* pg. 238). Smith et al. instead cite the researcher’s own unique interpretative role with the raw data a ‘crucial part of the analysis’ (*ibid.* pg. 238).

Chapter 3 has introduced methodological concerns within CM research, primarily issues within ethnographic approaches and criticism surrounding research frameworks as outcome orientated. From this, the utilisation of a phenomenologically influenced methodology within this dissertation has been considered and justified. This builds on a small number of IPA studies within CM (Southcott, 2009; de Vries, 2010; Southcott & Li, 2018). IPA, with efforts to put participant voice at the forefront of discussion and recognise reflexivity, can be furthered within CM research. This chapter has highlighted the potential for a symbiotic relationship development between IPA and the CM field. This is of particular importance in accordance with RQ1 of this dissertation, with an aim to more deeply understand and contextualise participants' CM experiences.

Chapter 4 - Findings of the interviews

This chapter details the findings of the collected data through thematic accounts of T5V interviews. In accordance with an IPA approach, each participants' voice stands at the forefront of the findings through the use of verbatim extracts. Key findings are categorised thematically into three sections. These include 'degrees of formality within CM,' 'the 'team' in Team Take 5,' and 'barriers to CM engagement.' Discussion of these themes within the broader context of CM and participatory arts scholarship follows, in 'Chapter 5: Discussion of the findings.'

4.1 Degrees of formality within CM

Formal and informal aspects of CM engagement proved an important discussion point with T5V members. Perceptions of formality, and the tensions occurring that affected CM engagement as a result of these, varied widely across individual members.

Colleagues Mary and Angela's friendship deepened as a result of their shared interest in singing through T5V. They were both vocal regarding degrees of formality within the choir. Mary discussed the "breaks" both friends had had from T5V over the course of their participation. Tensions surrounding formality of practice proved to be one of the major reasons for their leave of absence from T5V participation –

Mary: We've had a couple of breaks, we did try another one...because we thought we wanted something a bit more structured and maybe a bit more correcting, if you like. You know, if you're a bit off key to go "no that was rubbish." Cus you don't get that here at all. Which is quite a nice thing, but we thought we perhaps needed somebody to bring us along almost a bit.

Mary expresses the personal tensions she feels between formal and informal elements of CM provisions. She holds a preference for the incorporation of more structured, formal aspects, including an emphasis on progression in quality of musical technique ('to bring us along...a bit'). This contrasts with provisions offered through T5V ('you don't get that here at all'). Mary acknowledges the benefits of an informal approach ('which is quite a nice thing'), but ultimately justifies her original decision for her "break" from T5V, citing the lack of structure as a major influence.

Both Mary and Angela discussed their experiences with other local community choirs, specifically sought out for their 'more structured and...more correcting' elements. This desire for structure, however, did not live up to Mary or Angela's expectations in reality, highlighting the tensions felt between the nuanced levels of formality within CM provision. Angela summarised this by stating 'we were looking for something more formal, but when we actually went it was far too formal.' Through this, both women articulated their own interpretations of the boundaries between 'formal' and 'informal.' Connotations of formality incorporated musical and social features. Both cited the restricted age range of the choir as unappealing ('they were...that little bit older than me'), with Angela perceiving the choir's disposition as

one of ‘cardigan and crimplene.’ Specifically musical aspects of the choir perceived as ‘too formal’ included the ‘more traditional sort of chorally’ repertoire and a perceived emphasis from Mary on the ability to read musical notation (‘It was music and words, so you didn’t have to be able to read music, but you got the impression that a lot of people could’). Even though provisions existed for those who did not read music with an aim of inclusivity, Mary still felt excluded. This was due not just to her own acknowledgement of a personal lack of musical knowledge, but was worsened due to the perceived musical expertise of others. It is clear that a choir’s internal social environment must “feel right” for Mary and Angela to committedly engage with CM provisions. The perceived levels of formality within the described choir dominated Mary and Angela’s understandings of the group dynamic, and negatively impacted their CM experience. Subsequently, both reconsidered their participation (‘we were gonna go back...’), ultimately choosing to return to T5V (‘...but then we thought “well actually I think we’ll go back here.”’).

Other T5V members expressed their own definitions of formality, and the connotations that accompanied this. Flo, as a new starter to choral participation, desired a flexible, relaxed approach to provisions in order to comfortably participate. If this were not the case, she stated she would re-consider participation altogether (‘otherwise I don’t think I’d come’). For Flo, T5V’s informal provisions exist in direct contrast to those of the more formalised choir Mary and Angela described in their accounts.

Flo: I've got no music background. I wouldn't know where the altos or whatever they are, wherever they are. Never heard of them so I wouldn't know. So yeah and she [Freya] just makes you feel comfortable, and if you sing wrong, don't worry about it.

Flo's desire for informal aspects of practice directly related to her beginner status and the perceived issues that follow this. Flo is aware of the disadvantage of her novice status, and is cautious of the judgement she may face as a result ('I've got no music background'). Connotations of formality for her link directly to the expectation of musical knowledge and expertise; for example, having an understanding of choral structure ('altos or whatever they are') and the quality of the voice ('if you sing wrong'). Flo makes clear her respect for Freya in recognising her place as a beginner, and acknowledges Freya's efforts in making provisions as inclusive as possible ('she just makes you feel comfortable'). For Flo, the perceived informal aspects of T5V participation are integral in creating a positive CM experience for her.

Elaine, as one of the older members of T5V, discussed her past involvement with a choir she had participated in whilst working as a nurse at the local city hospital. We discussed her understandings of the levels of formality within this particular choir.

Elaine – ‘You had to rehearse - you had to go for rehearsal before you got taken into the choir and you had to have a special horrible blue dress to wear [laughs]. If it’s got to be professional...they do know who’s singing out of tune and you do get it. They do show you up in front of everybody if you’re singing out of tune.’

Although Elaine had expressed enjoyment through participation within this choir, there were clear expressions of tension she felt between this enjoyment and the perceived formal aspects of practice. Her suggestion that ‘you do get it...if you’re singing out of tune’ highlights the level of expected technical skill in the context of her former choir experience. This expectation of technical excellence, along with more ritualised aspects such as formal dress and audition before participation can take place, are in direct contrast to Elaine’s current experiences with T5V. Her observation that ‘they do show you up in front of everybody if you sing out of tune’ is a negative connotation of formalised practice. From Elaine’s perspective, participants were shamed for their efforts if they did not align with an expected level of musical excellence.

Elaine’s experiences compared to that of Micky’s, both of whom were of a similar age. Self-assurance and confidence gained through participation in T5V had opened up further CM opportunities for Micky, motivating her to join a local church choir. She stated she ‘wouldn’t have thought of doing that if I hadn’t have been doing this,’ citing increased self-confidence from T5V participation. Micky described the differences between this CM experience and that of T5V.

Micky: Erm that's more intense because everybody is trying to do it properly, if you know what I mean. You've got your tenors and your bass...the altos and the...sopranos. You know what I mean? So that's more, got to get it right sort of thing. Proper vocalist, proper teacher. You know she – that's her job, that's what she does.

Micky's description of the church choir as 'more intense' suggests a dynamic of formality and pressure due to the choir's emphasis on excellence, or 'doing it properly.' As with Flo's observations, this extends to the structure of the choir itself with the adoption of customary choral sections ('you've got your tenors and your basses...'). Being led by a 'proper vocalist, [a] proper teacher' whose expertise lies within choral conducting ('that's her job...what she does') was another signifier of formality. This is in direct contrast to T5V, led by Freya who openly admitted she had 'no training in music,' and whose knowledge lies more naturally within dance and performing arts. For Micky these aspects were not a disadvantage of engaging with T5V. The group's informality and emphasis on inclusivity increased Micky's confidence in pursuing participation in other choral groups. In this case, one with more of an emphasis on quality and technical excellence.

Discussions of past leaders of T5V were of interest in their underscoring of perceptions of formality, and the effects of this upon individual CM experience.¹ The

¹ T5V have seen five leaders of the choir over the course of c. ten years, including Freya. These are as follows, in order of leadership from least to most current; Kayleigh (2010-2014), Liam (2014), Moira (2014), Ella (2014-2016), Freya (2017- present).

topic of previous choir leaders arose in a number of interviews with members who had been a part of T5V since its establishment in 2010. Differing interpretations of the choir's running under each individual leader, and connotations of formality through this, were discussed (see figs. 4.1 – 4.4).

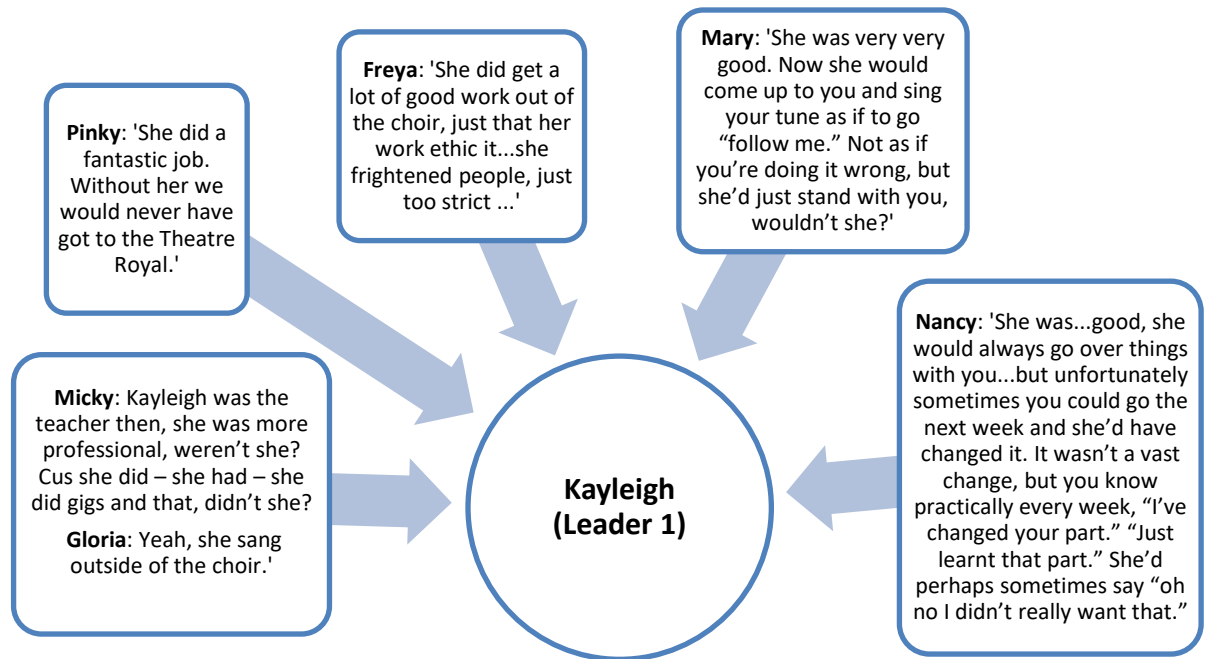


Figure 4.1 - Participant responses concerning Leader 1 related to aspects of formality

Kayleigh's knowledge of musical aspects put her at an advantage in the eyes of T5V participants, in terms of her place as a 'teacher.' There were positive responses to Kayleigh's 'style' of leadership, including those of Pinkie and Mary. Mary's desire for formalised structural elements is highlighted, in relation to Kayleigh's level of guidance and in her role as a 'teacher.' Mary appreciated the level

of structure offered ('as if to say follow me') whilst acknowledging Kayleigh's supportive nature ('she'd stand with you, wouldn't she?') For others, Kayleigh's leadership was perceived as too formal. For Nancy, the lack of creative autonomy under Kayleigh's leadership was frustrating ('just learn that part'). Freya perceived Kayleigh's leadership in a negative light and detrimental upon the experiences of T5V members ('just too strict').

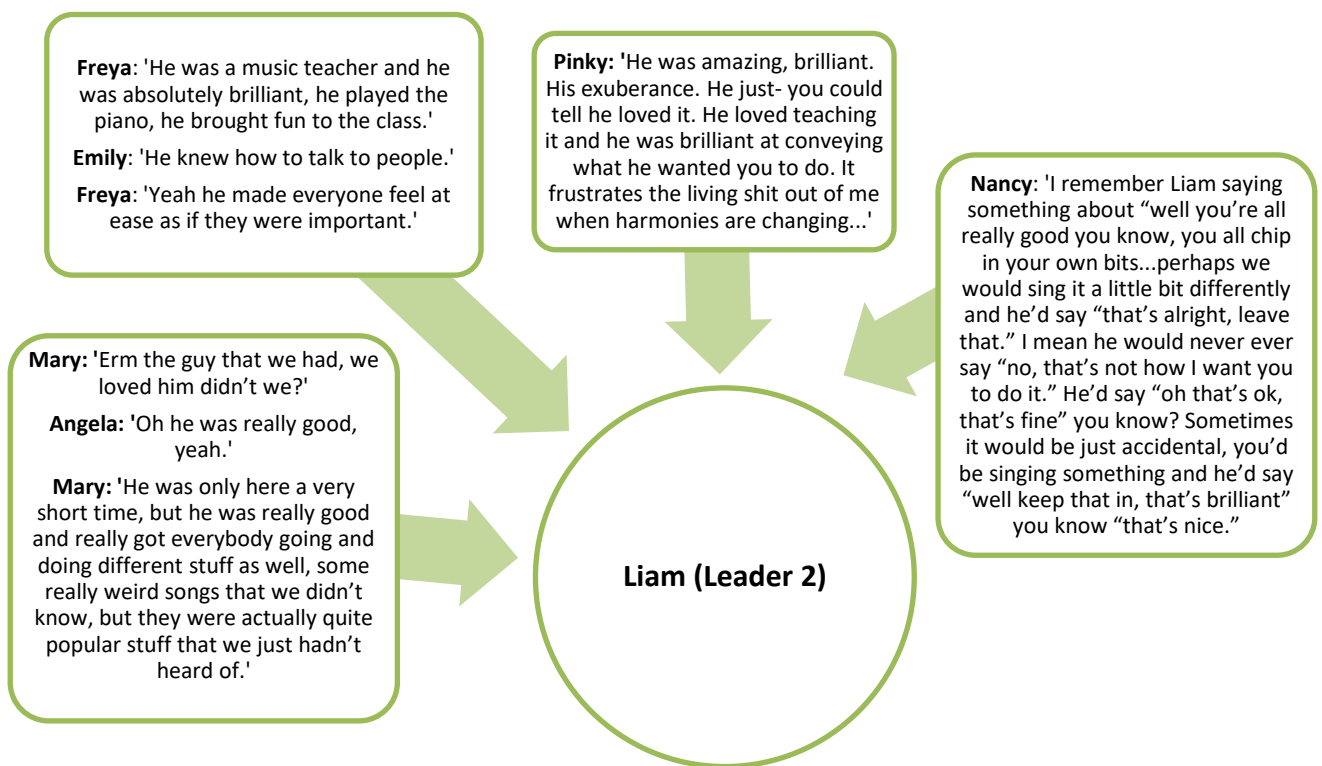


Figure 4.2 - Participant responses concerning Leader 2 related to aspects of formality

From most participants' perspectives, Liam was appreciated for his acceptance of the choir's pre-established skills, offering a level of creative control not immediately evident with members' descriptions of Kayleigh's leadership. His collaboration with T5V members, as described by Nancy, made members of the choir feel comfortable and created an environment in which all members felt respected ('he made everyone feel...as if they were important'). Under Liam, the traditional hierarchical divide between 'teacher' and 'student,' and the power dynamics relating to this, were reduced. For Nancy, this was a positive aspect of her CM experience, allowing her to negotiate ideas and work alongside her fellow participants and Liam ('you all chip in your own bits'). This hierarchical structure was befitting for members such as Pinky, who were appreciative of Liam's established role as a 'teacher' alongside the inclusion of these collaborative aspects ('he was brilliant at conveying what he wanted you to do.')

Descriptions of the choir's third leader (Fig. 4:3) highlight the very little perceived structure given to the choir during her tenure. As Nancy states, although Moira began as a 'teacher' of the choir, she soon understood T5V's internal workings, recognising the skills of each individual member in contributing their 'own bits.' This, for Freya however, felt too informal with such lack of structure 'throwing people off.' Mary agreed, and was left feeling unappreciated by Moira in her efforts in her own CM engagement ('it felt like she wasn't actually listening to you').

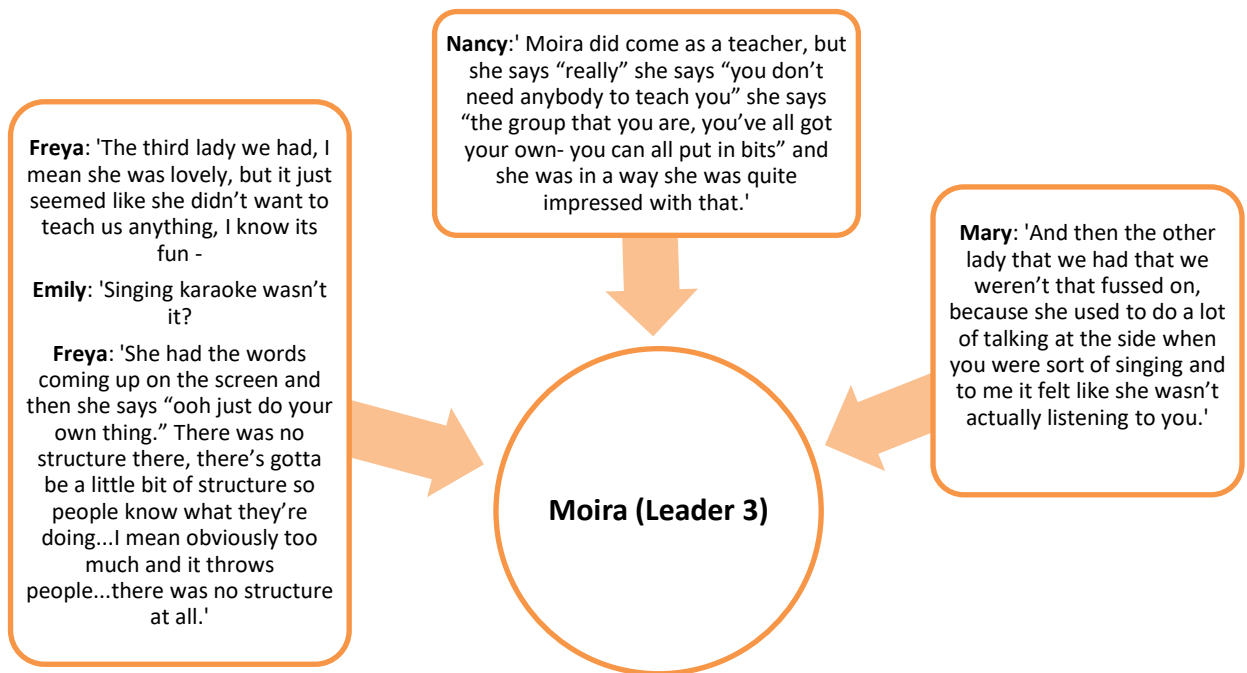


Figure 4.3 - Participant responses concerning Leader 3 related to aspects of formality

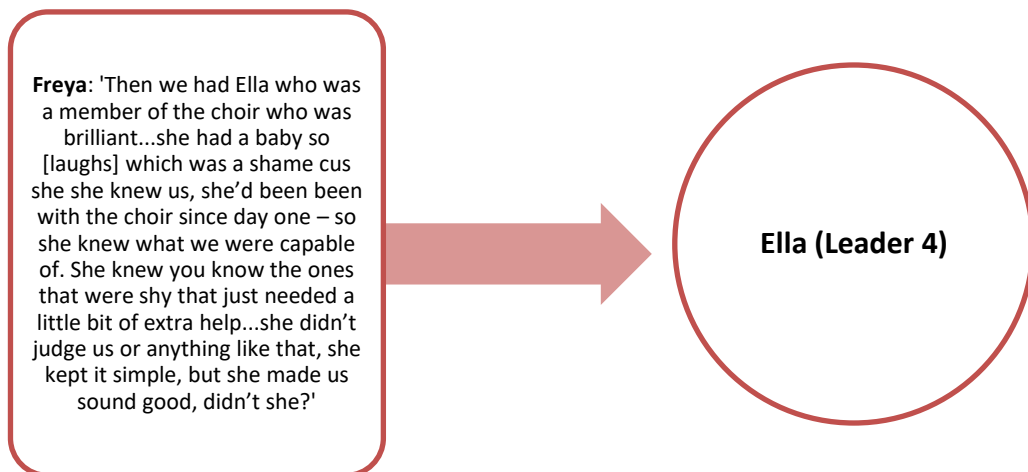


Figure 4.4 - Participant responses concerning Leader 4 related to aspects of formality

Freya's discussion of T5V's fourth leader, Ella, highlights her perception of the importance of a choir leader's familiarity with the group in order for successful leadership. Like Freya after her, Ella understood the skills and needs of T5V through lack of judgement and simplicity of provision, so often lacking in T5V members' perceptions of formal CM provisions. These aspects of informality are integral mechanisms in need of establishment for individual T5V members to engage positively and fully with CM.

Accounts on the four past T5V leaders highlight the tensions members of the choir feel concerning degrees of formality. Each account links equally to individual members unique perceptions of formality and how this is negotiated for the successful running of the choir. This, in turn, influences each members' personal understandings of and experiences with CM engagement. Freya's current leadership of the group takes into account negotiation of these levels of formality. This is illustrated in Freya's decision to recently change the name of T5V in an effort to negotiate these aspects of formality for the group, 'just to see if people thought the 'Take 5 Choir' sounded a little bit too formal.' Freya's understandings of the local community are evident here. She recognises that, for some, even the word 'choir' may be off-putting due to the connotations it retains. The term 'voices,' however, could be perceived as softer and more collaborative, highlighting the internal nature of the group for potential members. Freya went on to describe the nature of T5V she wanted to construe to the public, explaining her own running of the choir and the visions behind it.

Freya: I think the way I run it is I'm trying to get peoples' confidence [sic]. I think when people are confident they will sing and they will sing loud. I might not be able to do the best harmonies or...work out what notes they need to sing, but I'm trying to make people feel good when they sing and not feel judged or not make them feel as if they do the wrong note or the wrong word [laughs].

Throughout our interviews, Freya was always open with me about her lack of musical knowledge and acknowledged this as a limitation when providing more formalised, structured provisions. This was not a particularly negative factor, however, for her or the majority of T5V. The pursuit of technical excellence is not necessarily at the forefront of T5V provisions, which is a recognised and accepted facet of participation. The emphasis within T5V is on inclusion through a relaxed, supportive and collaborative musical environment. Within this setting, it is more likely that T5V members will fully enjoy and devote themselves to participation, as members have attested.

Inclusivity through informal, relaxed provisions was another theme I discovered throughout my time with T5V. I was interested in discussing the concept of 'Team Take 5,' as I had been made aware of this ethos from the start of my time with the choir. The next thematic section explores this 'Team' in Team Take 5 aspects of participation more closely.

4.2 The ‘Team’ in Team Take 5

During my early interactions with T5V, I recognised the ‘Team T5’ spirit that Freya had described to me in our interviews. This was extended to me as soon as I walked through the T5 studio doors, establishing an atmosphere of inclusivity and a welcoming nature from Freya, Emily and T5V members. As a result of this welcome, I was able to recognise key friendship groups and social bonds within the choir. The role that Freya played within these smaller social groups, the over-riding Team T5 environment and the processes within these, was of key interest. It became clear that all members of T5V respected and appreciated the time and effort Freya devoted to the choir. Equally, Freya understood her members, their individual needs and skills, and enacted a non-hierarchical, collaborative environment in order to realise the concept of the ‘Team’ in Team T5.

Freya and I explored her ‘team’ vision for T5V in our initial interviews in greater detail. It was clear that she recognised members’ potential individual motivations for T5V engagement. Freya emphasised the physical enactment of singing as an integral process within her members’ understandings of their own mental health and wellbeing.

Freya: I think that’s what people get out of it, it’s just their little escape from the stresses of life and just singing and making a nice sound, but again in a team environment. Yeah it makes everyone feel good.

Freya expanded on this concept of T5V as a ‘little escape from the stresses of life’ for her members. Her responses further highlighted her perceptions of CM’s broader positive impacts, and the importance of her role as an inclusive participatory arts facilitator in realising this for T5V members.

Freya: ‘We found a lot of the adults...have probably been through a divorce or they’ve lost a loved one or they’ve lost their job so they’ve lost their confidence. We’re like counsellors so we try and...build their self-esteem up so...they feel good about themselves.’

This vision of T5V as an ‘escape from the stresses of life’ is highlighted in Freya’s perceived responsibility in her role. In her eyes, a CM facilitator does not just engage musically with participants. Her role spreads deeper than that, going so far as to describe herself as a ‘counsellor’ for T5V members. The physical act of singing is used as a tool within T5V in order to bring people together in a ‘team’ environment with the specific purpose of building members’ confidence through a number of key processes. Freya further discussed her understandings of the ‘team’ aspect of T5 membership, and what the processes behind her CM provisions may mean for her members.

Freya: I've always wanted a...school or...a place where everybody felt welcome and not when they walked through the door they didn't feel part of a team. Not everybody's gonna be the best, but you can do the best you can. Not everyone wants to do it as a career...but they can still enjoy it week after week so that was my aim.

Freya's running of T5V does not surround an emphasis on technical ability or being 'the best' as perceived by others. Instead, Freya wishes for her members to enact their own definitions of achievement ('you can do the best you can do') and gain long-term enjoyment of CM engagement ('enjoy it week after week'). It is clear that Freya's desire for inclusivity is at the forefront of T5V provisions. Her familiarity with T5V members allows her to recognise the mechanisms and processes behind positive CM engagement for them – in this case, a genuine understanding of individuals through familiarity and friendship.

Freya's key role in creating 'Team T5' became clearer through T5V members descriptions of their relationships with her. Particularly important processes in positive CM engagement included Freya's consideration of their needs as individuals and the collaborative, non-hierarchical elements of T5V participation.

From my first rehearsal with T5V, the inter-generational nature of the choir struck me and I was keen to explore T5V members' understandings of this aspect of participation. A number of parents brought their children along to choir, with some actively participating (in the case of Gloria and Flo's teenage daughters, and Sue's eight year-old son, Ethan) and some not (in the case of Keeley's six year-old

daughter, Kylie, and Sue's youngest son, Logan). Upon my interviews with Sue and Keeley, both mothers with young children attending T5V rehearsals, it became clear that the topic of both Ethan and Kylie's presence within the choir was an integral aspect of CM experiences for both women. This aspect highlighted Freya's consideration of Sue and Keeley's responsibilities as parents, in her welcoming of their children's presence within rehearsals.

Both Sue and Keeley's accounts of their initial engagement with T5V are testament to barriers faced by working parents in pursuing participation in CM activity (a theme extended upon in section 4.2.3). Whilst their children were involved in dance classes offered by T5, both women felt they could not attend T5V primarily due to lack of childcare provisions. For Sue, she felt she 'could never go because of the kids. My husband's shifts never worked out.' Keeley reflected this in her responses – 'I didn't have childcare cus my husband, got a chip shop so he was out in the evening. I thought 'well I can't do it.'

Upon discussion with Freya and Emily, both Sue and Keeley were offered the means to participate in T5V without the worry of seeking out childcare arrangements – that is, to bring Ethan, Logan and Kylie along to rehearsals with both individual women's situations accommodated for. With Ethan's age just under that of the accepted lower age limit for admission into the choir, Freya suggested Sue attend alongside him. Whilst Kylie does not actively participate in T5V as of yet, both Emily and Freya have extended a welcome of membership to her when she is 'that little bit older.'

Freya's understanding of the personal needs of those within the T5 community enable inclusive provisions for parents such as Sue and Keeley, who would struggle to

engage with CM otherwise. Freya's negotiated provisions around individuals' needs creates highly positive experiences for both women. With T5V they can pursue their love of singing on their own terms, incorporating aspects of their lives as working mothers into their CM activity. For Sue, this incorporates both an opportunity for childcare in the case of her younger son, and the joy of singing with her older son, Ethan.

Sue: I can get up and attend to Logan if I have to bring him along and things like that with my husband's shifts, I wouldn't be able to come for several weeks in a row if I couldn't bring him. So I do like that and I really appreciate the fact she [Freya] lets me do that.

Sue: Yeah. I'd say proud, to do it with Ethan...I do like doing it with Ethan, even though like I say he does stress me out. When there's a bit of an emotional song, he'll cuddle up tight and get all lovey. First time we sang 'You Say' he was right into my arms.

For Keeley, T5V allows her the chance to pursue CM activity within her busy working week as an organisational development manager at the city hospital. During the weekly hour-long T5V rehearsal, Keeley can be a parent to Kylie in a safe, supportive and trusting environment whilst simultaneously enjoying singing.

Keeley: Even though like generally Kylie's there and I keep looking over I kind of – it is like, it feels like it's my time. And I can like kind of switch off to some degree so it's quite nice.

Alongside Freya's understandings of the personal needs of T5V members, there exists a uniquely collaborative element to the choir that highlights individual members' musical skills. This proved an important aspect of CM engagement for Nancy, one of the formative members of T5V. Described by Pinky as 'the matriarch' of the choir, Nancy possessed an eclectic CM background. This included experiences in both formal, learning based environments, and in more informal CM settings. Nancy held a well-developed musical knowledge in comparison to other T5V members and that of Freya. This knowledge is utilised within T5V, with Nancy's implementation of harmonies in the alto section, consisting of herself, Pinky and Elaine.

Nancy: Quite often I can pick a harmony out...for us altos so even if it's only an octave lower it's there. It's just something to – something to give it a bit more body so, and it's a challenge. I love the challenge of it [laughs] it can be a bit nerve-wracking at times, but it's the challenge and it's lovely.

Nancy used the term 'challenge' in her account a number of times in our discussion on the collaborative elements of T5V participation. It was an important

aspect of CM experience for her. The creation of harmonies allowed Nancy to showcase her musical abilities before herself and other members, support the alto section and achieve a unique sound for the choir overall.

Freya, as a self-defined ‘non-musician,’ encourages T5V members to explore these collaborative musical pathways in their own CM engagement. In my first rehearsal with T5V, Freya encouraged me to ‘put in any harmonies that feel right.’ I found the adoption of a backing track for most songs a unique aspect of T5V activity, and discussed this with Nancy during our interview. Nancy’s other community choir – a much bigger group with a fuller complement of SATB voices – sang mostly a cappella. Nancy described her enjoyment of this and the musical ‘variety’ that participation in both choirs offered. Nancy and I discussed T5V’s potential for exploration of a cappella arrangements, which she was unsure of.

Nancy: I don’t know if it would be a bit too much of a challenge for Freya. Freya likes to try and pick fairly popular songs...but what she does pick is usually easy to pick up anyway... Freya will tell you herself, she perhaps might be able to work out a higher one, but certainly not a lower one.

Nancy uses the term ‘challenge’ here to infer level of difficulty compared to level of ability, and the negotiation of these levels for other members of T5V, including Freya. In both Nancy and Freya’s recognition of these individual levels of musical knowledge, a harmonious, non-hierarchical environment is created in which T5V members can explore their own abilities on their own terms. Nancy’s voice falls

within the alto range and her musical knowledge lies within this section. A collaborative relationship arises for Freya and Nancy who can work with their section in individually creating harmonies. Through this, the ‘challenge’ aspect Nancy holds dear to her own CM experience is realised.

Various other members of T5V discussed elements of collaboration, understanding them from the perspective of their own unique participatory arts engagement and through their relationships with Freya. Lizzie, Flo’s fourteen year-old daughter, discussed her dance experiences with T5 initially, which I permitted as interviewer. I felt her perceptions of her participatory arts experiences were important in understanding the inter-disciplinary nature of CM engagement. Collaboration and decision-making were important aspects within Lizzie’s participatory arts experiences. Lizzie described her dance activities as a process, stating ‘we’ll all like choreograph it together...then perform it to our parents afterwards.’ For Lizzie, teamwork and collaboration fed directly into her social relationships with fellow members, working with them in a professional, supportive and creative environment. Lizzie discussed these feelings of inter-personal connection, in T5V and in her dance groups, and the members’ shared motivations.

Kristen: Do you like working towards the performances with the
choir?

Lizzie: Yeah. I like it, the atmosphere when it’s coming
towards the show, like we’re all raring to go, we wanna be on the stage and
just perform.

These shared motivations among members and T5V's 'team' ethos, described by Lizzie as a unique 'atmosphere' leading up to performances, have influenced progressively more rewarding and positive experiences for Lizzie over her time with the T5. Friendships established through T5 were of great significance to Lizzie, along with most other members of T5V. Collaborative, non-hierarchical aspects of T5V participation allowed social bonds to flourish, providing members with a safe, supportive space to establish friendships with like-minded individuals.

One of the major themes discovered in accordance with this were members' descriptions of T5V as 'family.' This term was understood in its definitional sense (i.e., one of close relational family, considering the inter-generational nature of T5V) and in an attributive manner, highlighting members' understandings and connotations of 'family' through CM engagement. 'Familial' attributions within T5V highlight the strong, established bonds many members experience as a result of their long-term T5V participation. This was particularly strong for Georgia, Gloria and Micky, three generations of women from the same family, and their close friends, Flo and Lizzie. Micky humorously described all three generations' T5V participation as a 'family affair.' Other members of their family had some involvement with T5, whether participating in T5 dance or having previously participated in T5V, as with Gloria's older daughter, Catherine. Georgia, Gloria and Micky's understandings of family extended further than relational bonds into their perceptions of T5V as a family attributed community, incorporating 'togetherness' and 'family vibes.' These understandings tended to focus on the supportive, non-judgemental environment of the choir, with Gloria and Georgia in particular valuing this aspect of participation. Gloria recounted one of Georgia's school choir performances she attended, comparing the context of this particular performance and that of her own T5V membership.

Gloria: We seen a performance and...it's gotta be professional but what I think he [choir conductor] forgets is, it's a school choir. Some of the kids are petrified to be up there, they wanna do it, but they're petrified. And there was one lad...he burst out into tears on stage. And it's like, that shouldn't be how a choir is. I just thought, do you know what? I have never felt like that here and I think that's what it's all about.

Gloria's emphasis on the perceived unrealistic musical expectations and demoralising aspects of Georgia's school choir are in direct juxtaposition with her perceptions of T5V participation ('I have never felt like that here'). Georgia herself epitomised her contrasting perceptions of her in-school and out-of-school experiences with T5V, stating 'that's why I prefer it here cus Freya listens. I can talk to Freya.' Freya's relationship with Georgia, developed as a result of the non-judgemental, supportive nature of T5V participation, is akin to the support network in place within an established, relational group – that of a family.

For some T5V participants, however, strong, established social bonds within T5V proved troublesome. The social aspects of T5V participation were pivotal in Mary and Angela's understandings of their own CM experiences, particularly in their negotiation of their own places within the group. Both women saw themselves as 'sitting on the outside' of the pre-established social bonds of T5V, and stated that they, at times, 'hadn't really felt part of the choir.' This disconnect from T5V was felt most strongly due to the differences in shared social values and relationships between other members of the choir, and Mary and Angela.

Angela: Sort of a lot of them are dance mums aren't they?

Mary: A lot of the people here have got children or grandchildren or relatives. Well we haven't, we've got no connection to anybody else. A lot of them know each other through the kids.

Whilst other members of T5V hold a common social connection – family members' attendance at the dance school – Mary and Angela do not. As a result, they find it harder to build mutual companionship. It was interesting to hear that Mary and Angela both perceived these circumstances of disconnection as consequences of their own choices. During their time with T5V, neither Mary nor Angela had 'gone and sat with other people' or 'got too involved with others,' subsequently forming a social reliance on one another, with both women only attending choir rehearsals if the other were present. Mary stated that 'everyone's always been really, really friendly,' however, and Angela admitted 'we've excluded ourselves in lots of ways.' Both women faced issues in negotiating the social bonds of the choir, but recognised and were willing to alter this. By making more of an effort socially with other T5V members, Mary and Angela were becoming more a 'part of the choir' and, consequently, the 'team' aspect of Team T5.

4.3 Barriers to CM engagement

One of the themes uniting various member of T5V were discussions of barriers that had come between, or were threatening to come between, participants' full CM engagement. These narratives were highly individualised and ranged from events that occurred years before that affected past engagement, or issues occurring today. Two dominant categories surrounding CM constraints surfaced. These involved life commitments or restraints, including financial and parental pressures, and a distinct 'fear' of full CM participation. Particular focus was placed on both fear of judgement from others, and from the individual themselves.

4.3.1 Life commitments

Financial costs of provisions was genuine issue for some T5V members and had a significant effect on their perception of engagement. Members such as Sue and Pinky discussed past experiences surrounding the high cost of arts engagement in an in-school setting. These experiences during their school-years forced them to forsake engagement (in Pinky's case) or to dismiss the prospect of engagement altogether (in Sue's case).

Pinky: We used to do it at primary school and then that's where we used to play the violin. And then they started charging for lessons and my mum had seven kids, could barely afford to put food on the table never mind do anything else so we had to just discontinue the second they started charging for it.

Sue: At secondary school, I never really did it cus you had to hire the instruments and it was, well we couldn't afford it when I was a kid. Mum and Dad couldn't afford to hire the instruments cus it costs quite a lot.

Although T5V aims to keep the cost of provisions as low as possible for its participants, the implementation of a small membership fee is in place. Due to the choir's position as an independent CM group, receiving little funding from charity grants, membership fees contribute a significant percentage of the school's revenue each year. However, it seems T5V members are supportive of these circumstances in their desire to see T5V continue, and in their support of Freya as an independent participatory arts facilitator.

A number of T5V participants discussed the difficulties they faced in pursuing CM provisions due to their individual parental responsibilities. Section 4.2.2 explored the struggles Sue and Keeley's have previously faced in accessing CM provisions suited to their individual needs as working mothers. Similarly, issues of parental responsibility arose in my discussions with Elaine, herself a mother to her now adult son, Thomas. Elaine discussed her past experiences as a working mother, and the difficulties she faced in keeping up her choir participation.

Elaine: I enjoyed it, but I finished because I had Thomas, my son and then I didn't go back until I got fed up of being in the home, in the house on my own and nobody to talk to really. I went back to work when he was a 3 month old and it was hard, it was hard going that was. But then obviously yeah I didn't go back for years and obviously then I come up to this one here.

Elaine's motivations for CM participation are highlighted here. She expresses the social isolation she experienced as a young mother, underlining the broader difficulties childcare often brings for parents. Elaine's return to work just three months after the birth of her son furthered the pressures of her position as a full-time mother and worker. Elaine recognised CM as a medium of temporary relief from challenging parental responsibilities. Both Elaine and Nancy explored the differences in participatory arts opportunity they felt were available for them as young working mothers compared to those of today. I asked both women if they felt participation in a choir such as T5V, offering inclusive provisions for mothers with young children such as Sue and Keeley, would have made a difference to the level of responsibility they felt as working mothers. Elaine responded to this particularly strongly.

Nancy: Yeah it would have made a lot of difference yeah. I say, there was nothing around here.

Elaine: There was nothing, there was no help. I think we all do, I don't care whoever they are, we need space from us children. Cus you end up all you know is baby talk really. But you need that normal adult conversations. So I think it would yeah I think it would.

Once again, Elaine highlights the potential for social isolation that can develop as a result of constant parental responsibility ('you end up all you know is baby talk really'). This isolation can be alleviated through CM engagement, especially in a group setting comprising members experiencing similar phenomena. Elaine speaks as a collective for socially isolated mothers ('we need space from us [sic] children'), and perceives participation in a community choir as alleviative of this, citing the social aspects of participation ('you need that normal adult conversations').

Elaine's observations offer a comparison of experience between herself, and Sue and Keeley as working mothers. Whilst Elaine desired a space for CM participation in a 'normal adult' context detached from her parental responsibilities, Sue and Keeley are content in including their children within their T5V experience. These comparative experiences lie in the differing circumstances in which all three women were offered CM provisions. T5V actively accommodates Sue and Keeley in participation and negotiates their membership in the choir on their own terms as mothers. During Elaine's earlier experiences as a young working mother seeking inclusive CM provisions, however, she found 'there was nothing, there was no help.'

Elaine, Sue and Keeley's contrasting experiences highlight the importance of inclusive provisions offered through T5V in the context of parental responsibility.

4.3.2 Fears attributed to CM participation

Fear surrounding CM engagement was a uniting factor across T5V members' accounts. The reasons behind these fears tended to focus on other's judgements of the individual voice or the individuals' perceptions of their own voice in different contexts.

Elaine discussed her own formative singing experiences, initially reminiscing on the positive, carefree attitude towards singing of her early childhood. However, inhibitions soon arose for Elaine as she faced judgement of the voice from peers at school.

Elaine: I remember when I was a little girl, used to all sit on the steps the kids did. "Zippidy doo daa" -! I was really going for it. But as I got older - I was supposed to sing in class on me own and I started, but the lads started laughing so I slammed me paper down and walked off! [laughs] It does put you off when somebody does laugh, you know what I mean? I mean when I was a kid it didn't bother me. When you grow older, when they start laughing at you, you get more conscious of yourself.

Elaine's account highlights the fear often bred of singing from negative experiences in early childhood, in this case her peers publicly criticising her vocal

abilities. She sees a clear distinction between the experience of singing as a carefree, uninhibited girl among others, and the experience of singing ‘when you grow older.’ This move away from the unrestrained, creative nature of childhood and into an age group ‘when they start laughing at you,’ underlines the negative consequences judgement of the voice can have over one’s long-term self-confidence (‘you get more conscious of yourself’). Elaine’s recounting of these memories highlights their importance in influencing her understandings of fear of the voice.

For Sue, the fear of singing alone without support from others was palpable. Although Sue had a confident solo voice in private contexts, she was cautious of revealing this in public settings. In the latter context, she stated her ‘voice goes funny...I sound very differently [sic] when I sing in front of other people cus I get quite nervous.’ Sue recalled a time Freya gave her a solo line in T5V, discussing the fear she felt at the prospect.

Sue: Yeah I’d not been here that long and I got a bit that was quite hard to hit. I couldn’t do it and the first time I did it I felt like nearly crying. I went really wrong...inside you just think “that was awful, I’m doing it in front of everyone,” first time I’d been asked to sing something on my own, and other people were singing things and not hitting the notes, but to me it was like I know I can do better so I was really disappointed in myself.

Sue is aware of her own vocal capabilities and desires for these to be showcased fully (‘I know I can do better’). When this desire is not fulfilled, personal

dissatisfaction ensues. Sue understands that other voices within T5V are potentially not as strong as hers ('other people were...not hitting the notes') yet this is secondary to Sue's own understandings of her individual voice, and the centrality of this in her fear or 'nervousness.' The main barrier for Sue here is the prospect of revealing her voice to others and not living up to her own imposed expectations. In contrast to Elaine's experiences, Sue disappointing herself with failure is worse than other's judgements of her and her voice.

The topic of fear equally arose in Freya's interviews. She articulated theories behind the individualised fears described by Elaine and Sue, understanding them through the lens of her own early experiences.

Freya: I can relate because I didn't start singing til I was seventeen. Before then if I was meant to sing in a competition...I'd just burst into tears because I was so shy. I could dance, but singing is a completely different kettle of fish. But once I'd overcome that fear you realise how much you enjoy singing yeah so I can understand why people are nervous.

Freya elaborated on why she had found singing to be a more challenging undertaking than dance in her early participatory arts years, stating 'it's more a part of you, it's your voice. If it goes wrong I think it's more destroying than getting a dance wrong.' Freya understands the voice to be a highly individualised and vulnerable aspect of a person. Her perceptions go beyond that of the voice used primarily for singing and into the understanding of the voice as a representation of one's core

identity ('it's more a part of you...your voice'). In this way, failing to deliver upon one's own expectations or the expectations of others does not just result in a level of judgement, but actually damages one's own perceptions of individual identity. Effects of this are most obvious in loss of confidence in the voice, as Elaine articulates in her account. Freya recognises the consequences of fear, with the supportive and collaborative aspects of T5V participation aiming to alleviate this, especially with the emphasis on collective singing.

Freya: I think people hear you and think "oh they sound really good, I don't want to join cus I can't sing." It's trying to get that fear of people coming and thinking "oh I don't want to sing on my own" and they don't have to sing on their own, you know, I want them to sing with each other.'

Freya, having experienced these fears of the voice herself and overcome it, aims to offer an inclusive CM provision with an emphasis on 'team' aspects, thus allowing T5V members the opportunity to 'realise how much [they] enjoy singing' in a supportive and collaborative environment.

The findings of this chapter explicitly highlight various tensions experienced by individual T5V members in their perceptions of their own CM engagement. Some members expressed positive experiences of informal provisions offered through T5V, particularly for new starter Flo. Others, however, felt tension in negotiating these

levels of formality, and the perceived connotations of this, in realising positive participation, in the case of Mary and Angela. Discussions on T5V previous leaders revealed members' nuanced perceptions of formality, with the formal and informal aspects of each leaders' approach praised and criticised in equal measure. Freya, as current leader, ultimately offers less formal provisions due to her 'non-musician' status. This manifests itself, however, in Freya's emphasis on inclusive group provisions. Through the 'Team' in Team T5, the social conditions behind the act of singing, and the effects of this on members' understandings of engagement, were prominent. A heightened sense of collaboration and non-hierarchical structures resulted in members' successful participation on their own terms, evident in Nancy's meeting of the 'challenge,' Sue and Keeley's participation as mothers, and Georgia, Gloria and Micky's understandings of 'family.' Tensions did exist, however, in Mary and Angela's feelings of exclusion from the 'team' aspects of T5V. Consequently, potential barriers to engagement are recognised, felt most strongly within life commitments and a distinct 'fear' of the voice, described most prominently by Elaine and Sue. Freya realises her members' perceptions and understandings of their engagement, however. T5V aims to exist as a place for members to 'escape from the stresses of life.' This is mostly achieved through the facilitation of inclusive provisions under Freya, taking into account the skills and needs of individual members through a collaborative, non-hierarchical structure. Informal provisions offer support and encouragement resulting in the establishment of a 'team' ethos running deeply through the values of the school and its members.

Chapter 5 - Discussion of the findings

The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a greater understanding of the experiences of CM participants and their perceptions of CM engagement. IPA was adopted in order to achieve this. Semi-structured interviews with T5V members were analysed using the IPA framework set out by Smith et al. (1999), and revealed diverse perceptions of individual CM participation.

Chapter 5 presents the key findings of the dissertation in three corresponding sections in relation to themes identified in Chapter 4. These are ‘the formal and informal of CM’ (5.2), ‘the social in CM’ (5.3) and ‘the barriers to CM’ (5.4). The experiences of T5V members through these thematic narratives are discussed in relation to broader CM scholarship, developing conversation on the relationship between CM and music education, broader socialisation theories within CM and inclusive CM provisions.

5.1 The formal and informal of CM

Degrees of formality within CM proved an integral aspect of T5V members’ understandings of participation. There existed clear tensions across members in regards to their own perceptions of formality and how this affected the processes behind their engagement. Tensions surrounding formality through T5V accounts support the significance of the topic in current CM scholarship, underlining debates relating to CM’s relationships with formalised music education and the core aspects that define CM practice.

While studies exist surrounding levels of formality within CM provisions, there are clear debates pertaining to definitions of these.

Finnegan (1989) introduced formative explorations of degrees of formality in her work with grass-roots CM groups in Milton Keynes. Participants' methods of practice are articulated as 'on the job' learning. Emphasis is placed upon self-taught elements, with less of a reliance on standard notation and Western classical art traditions, as is the case with T5V (pg. 136). These approaches exist for Finnegan as aspects of CM that function successfully outside of formalised music-making practices. Informal approaches are 'recognised as another system in [their] own right' despite their perceptions as 'undisciplined, low levelled' music-making practices (pg. 137). Green's (2002) work with amateur rock musicians furthers this, introducing the processes behind informal music-making contexts and considering formal and informal practices 'extremes existing at two ends of a single pole' (pg. 6). Her work cites earlier articulations of informality in support of this, highlighting the core differences in approach between the formal and informal.

Folkestaad (2006) furthers Green's definitions, offering more specific understandings of the formal and informal in different learning situations. Four criteria influencing formal and informal approaches are proposed, as understood from the perspective of previous literature (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 An abridged version of Folkestaad's interpretations of formal and informal music-making processes from the reviewed literature (see. Folkestaad, 2006, pg. 141-142)

	Formal	Informal
1. The situation - where does learning take place?	Inside institutional settings.	Outside institutional settings.
2. Learning style – pertaining to the character, the nature and quality of the learning process.	Activity sequenced beforehand. Inclusion of a person within a ‘teacher’ role, who organises and leads the activity. Learning to play by written music.	Learning situation not sequenced beforehand. Music-making processes progress through interaction of participants. Learning to play by ear.
3. Ownership - who ‘owns’ the ‘what,’ ‘how,’ ‘where,’ and ‘when’ of the activity?	Didactic teaching.	Open and self-regulated learning. Self-chosen and voluntary.
4. Intention - towards what is the mind directed whilst participating?	Towards learning how to play/make music.	Towards playing/making music.

Whilst defining factors of formal and informal music-making approaches are clear here, they are notably definitive in their understandings of formal and informal as dichotomous, contrasting stances. T5V provisions, through Folkestaad's definitions, encompass both formal and informal aspects of practice. With its informal features, T5V participation takes place outside of an institutionalised setting, with emphasis on collaborative ('open and self-regulated') processes in music-making. Participation does not rely on members' abilities to read notated music, with word sheets provided instead. The focus of T5V provision fits more naturally with a 'making music' objective, as opposed to the focal point being on necessarily learning to sing.

Conversely, T5V provisions feature formal aspects as set out by Folkestaad. T5V rehearsals are organised beforehand. Freya chooses the music, assigns parts and runs rehearsals in a continuously structured manner by singing a song, offering advice, and singing it through again. This is repeated throughout the rehearsal. Freya, in this way, provides a form of didactic teaching to the group and is therefore, from these definitions, a teacher. There exist considerable tension for Freya in this proposed role, however. Throughout our interviews, Freya did not describe herself as a teacher. She actively expressed a desire to re-join T5V as a member, a role she had previously inhabited under past leaders of the choir. Freya felt 'it was nice to be not in charge, being part of the team.' She sees a direct contrast between the role of the teacher in a group setting (being 'in charge' and in a position of authority) and that of the democratic, collective nature of 'being part of the team.' Accordingly, T5V members themselves did not perceive Freya to fulfil a teacher role. Lizzie described her in-school dance facilitator and Freya on conflicting terms, stating of the former 'she's a lot stricter than Freya because she's like, she's a dance teacher.' Higgins (2017) recognises these tensions, offering distinctions between the role of the CM

facilitator and that of the traditional ‘teacher.’ The CM facilitator still holds a level of responsibility and leadership within the group setting, as does Freya, yet ‘hasn’t got a hierarchical curriculum...they’re impressing upon people, but more a negotiated curriculum’ (*ibid.* 2017, 38:29). In this sense, Freya’s role as a CM facilitator fits more naturally with her running of the choir. Her emphasis upon collaborative, non-hierarchical provisions – or the ‘negotiated curriculum’ - proved an integral aspect for T5V members, particularly for members such as Nancy in developing the ‘challenge’ aspects of implementing harmonies within her section.

It is clear that tensions exist in articulating the formal and informal in community music-making. Folkestaad (2006) provides alternative understandings of formality, accepting the definitions set out in Table 1 are ‘far too simplified’ (pg. 142). Green’s (2005) articulations of formal and informal existing at ‘two ends of a single pole’ are re-evaluated and refined by Folkestaad as ‘two poles of a continuum’ (pg. 143), with elements of formality and informality interacting throughout the process of music-making. Folkestaad’s articulations of a formality spectrum are supported through T5V members’ experiences of degrees of formality present in their own engagement. Positive aspects of formal approaches were highlighted by Mary and Angela in their desire for ‘more structure [and] more correcting’ provisions in order to progress in musical technique and quality. Both women cited T5V’s contrasting informal approach to provisions as an aspect negatively influencing their participation, and was a deciding factor in them searching for alternative, more formalised CM provisions that they perceived as offering more ‘correcting’ aspects. The perceived positive aspects of informal CM approaches, however, were directly tied to negatives of formality. Mary and Angela, after seeking out more formalised CM provisions, perceived them as ‘too formal.’ This was largely down to the exclusion felt particularly by Mary due to the group being ‘stuck in their ways,’

emphasising notated sheet music and in their choice of musical repertoire. Other members of T5V felt a direct contrast between the formal provisions described by Mary and Angela and that of the informal provisions of T5V. Flo, for example, perceived the informal nature of T5V to be largely positive, with less emphasis on traditional forms and pre-conceived expectations of musical ability resulting in a lack of judgement from the group. As a result, she felt comfortable in her participation. Creative autonomy and non-hierarchical structures were also positive aspects of informality for T5V members, with members' such as Nancy's input encouraged and valued. This was felt not to be the case with the more formalised provisions of past leaders, including Kayleigh whose 'strictness' as described by Freya 'frightened people.'

Folkestaad's articulations of formal and informal approaches existing on a continuum aid in our understandings of the nuanced nature of both stances. For T5V members, aspects of both hold equal merit and disadvantage depending upon the individual, and exist to inform their perceptions of their own CM experience. As Folkestaad's spectral understandings support the tensions felt by T5V members in their perceptions of formality, so too do contrasting comprehensions of formality within broader CM discourse. There exists a particularly dichotomous understanding of formality within CM, stemming largely from CM's historically complex and difficult relationship with music education.

Clear distinctions are often made between the informal (or 'non-formal') music-making aspects of CM activity, and those offered through more formalised provisions, in attempts by CM practice to categorise itself outside of the realms of music education (Campbell & Higgins, 2015). Brown et al. (2014) offer direct distinctions between CM and 'formal music' aspects of practice they, alongside a

network of CM practitioners, believed were distinguishable ‘values’ of both (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 ‘Distinctive values’ separating CM from formal music. (see Brown et al., 2014, pg. 43)

CM Values	Formal Music Values
Engagement	‘Excellence’
Inclusive	Exclusive
Participation	Expertise
Democratic	Directed/led
Egalitarian	Hierarchical
Negotiated	Prescribed
Facilitated	Managed/directed
Enquiring/exploratory	Pre-ordained
Radical/subversive	Conformist/obedient
Open-ended	Pre-determined
Concerned with quality of process	Concerned with quality of output
Person-centred	Music-centred
Personal development	Musical/skill development

This table represents key debates surrounding CM’s own understandings of its ethos and the perceived contrast of this to formal music provisions. For Campbell & Higgins (2015), formalised music-making incorporates a ‘structured framework within formal education system[s]’, centring on the ‘achievement of learning’ (Scheffler, 1967, pg. 120). Provisions are concerned with the technical development of participants in a controlled, top-down setting, with an expected result of ‘excellence’ and ‘expertise.’ Conversely, CM provisions offer ‘person-centred’ music-making outside of an institutionalised setting. ‘Negotiated, democratic’

processes are at the fore, with the CM facilitator ‘claiming no superiority or special status’ over participants (Higgins, 2017, 14:45). In keeping with this holistic ethos, there exists doubt within CM discourse as to whether ‘systematic musical development and learning should be a goal for community music’ at all (Kertz-Welzel, 2016, pg. 124). For Heyes (2017), CM is ‘not music education,’ where ‘learning a technique or skill...or making a sound out of an instrument’ is perceived to be a key focus (4:42). Instead, Heyes perceives CM to be ‘more than that’ (4:46). As a result of these dichotomous views of CM and music education, Mullen (2002) implies that CM holds an ‘anti-teaching’ rhetoric. Kertz-Welzel (2016) examines these issues, suggesting that the divide between both practices lies in the institutionalised setting in which music education traditionally takes place, and the negative connotations surrounding this for CM practice. Kertz-Welzel juxtaposes these connotations, claiming that ‘while music education in schools is often connected with the hardship of learning,’ CM ‘romanticizes music-making... because everything seems easy within the realm of CM’ (*ibid.* 2016, pg. 121).

Brown et al. (2014) accept the ‘oversimplification’ of clear distinctions between CM and formal music within their perceived ‘values’ of both (pg. 43). However, the context of these understandings of CM and music education as dichotomous entities does hold ground within the wider literature. Research acknowledges a distinct ‘problem’ with formalised music education, existing within institutional settings for ‘decades’ (Wright, 2010, pg. 64). With in-school music, learning is often based on long established traditions, with emphasis on ‘serious’ Western art music (*ibid.* pg. 64). Provisions occur in a context far removed from that of participants’ musical experiences outside of the institute (Jaffurs, 2004). Music-

making in these contexts becomes ‘supplementary to and preparatory to life instead of being life itself’ (Frakes, 2018, 3:58).

Higgins’ (2017) descriptions of his own formative music-making experiences highlight these issues, in relation to the ‘problems’ of formalised music-making. Frustrations with in-school music education were formed through perceptions of ‘elitist’ provisions and a depreciation of individual musical and cultural values. These initial experiences resulted in creating ‘a binary, a divide,’ between his own informal music-making and that of more traditional formalised in-school learning (Higgins, 2017, 3:34). ‘Informal music learning,’ as described by Higgins, underlines CM’s perception of itself as in direct opposition to the ‘values’ of formal music (Brown et al., 2014, pg. 43). Informal values of CM, thus, prevailed over those of more formalised approaches for Higgins, creating a boundary between the two practices as exemplified within CM’s own understandings of itself as outside of the realms of music education.

As heard through the voices of T5V participants, however, the concept of formality within CM is one of importance and friction. Folkestaad’s continuum of formality, in which ‘both [formal and informal] aspects...are in various degrees present and interacting’ (pg. 143), supports T5V members’ nuanced and individual understandings of formality within their CM participation. It accepts, along with T5V members, the issues that arise from both stances yet does not articulate one as superior to the other, as seems to be the case with CM’s dichotomous understandings of formal and informal practice.

5.2 The ‘social’ in CM

The ‘team’ ethos identified through T5V members’ accounts, and its role as a defining characteristic of CM their engagement, supports the literature on the significance of social aspects of CM participation. For Schippers & Bartleet (2013) social engagement is ‘widely considered to be at the heart of many community music activities’ (pg. 461). This is exemplified in a wide range of literature, pertaining to the social benefits of CM across the age range. Research has found the social aspects of music-making particularly integral to young peoples’ CM engagement. Bartolome’s (2013) work with a community based girls’ choir identified the ‘predominance of social values’ (pg. 415) in participant accounts, signifying for them CM ‘as a constant, as interpersonal development’ and ‘as a place of belonging’ (*ibid.* 2013, pg. 407-408). Social aspects of music-making have been found to be of importance with young peoples’ music-making in both in-school and out-of-school contexts (Rohwer & Rohwer, 2009; Ferrer et al., 2018). Equally, conditions for sustained musical participation with adults has been described as ‘embedded within social contexts’ (Veblen, 2018). The social benefits of CM engagement have been well documented with older adults, as research suggests social isolation and loneliness are common factors in compromising the physical and mental health and wellbeing of older people (Hawton et al., 2011; Ong et al., 2016). The literature surrounding older peoples’ CM participation has, thus, focused on benefits of CM participation, and suggests the importance of active social engagement through music- making in achieving ‘successful ageing’ (Southcott, 2009). Factors pertaining to this include the establishment and maintenance of friendships (*ibid.* 2009), and the

achievement of a ‘sense of belonging’ and ‘giving back to the community’ through music-making (Hallam et al., 2012, pg. 162 & 164). Through these processes of the social within CM engagement across the lifespan, ‘self-esteem and confidence are the most commonly cited benefits’ of community arts activities’ (White, 2009, pg. 130).

Although it is clear that social functions of music-making are important within CM, some studies identify these as secondary to the musical aspects of participation. Palmer (2008) found that, although participants valued the opportunity to establish friendships and social bonds with ‘like-minded people,’ music-making components of participation were of greater importance. With Palmer’s participants, progression of technical skill and musical quality were a pre-dominant group objective. This was realised through the desire to work towards the providence of the ‘best possible performances,’ and perceiving the value of music-making to be within ‘overcoming technical challenges and extending skills’ (pg. 209 & 212). These purposes and intents of Palmer’s groups are in contrast to that of T5V’s, exemplified in Freya’s admittance that ‘not everybody’s gonna be the best, but you can do the best you can.’ It seemed that the social aspects of participation in Palmer’s study exist as natural bi-products to engagement, with music-making recognised as a ‘social activity within itself’ (pg. 210). This stands in direct contrast to T5V where social aspects, involving the aim of confidence building and the formation of a ‘team’ ethos, proved central to group processes. Palmer suggests further exploration of the ‘perception of aesthetics and meanings that [participants] attribute to the music they make’ (pg. 214). This dissertation aimed to examine these perceptions, with responses from T5V members pertaining to social aspects of participation revealing varying understanding of these ‘aesthetics and meanings.’

Several T5V members perceived the processes of music-making an integral component in their CM participation, as with Palmer's (2008) participants. For members such as Mary, Angela and Gloria these processes involved the establishment of goals and working towards the T5 Summer Show. Gloria's understandings of the term 'professional' – in this case, working towards and eventually producing a subjectively high quality performance – was significant in forming and developing confidence in her abilities. Mary and Angela's responses equally held music-making processes integral to their CM experience, with the stages of learning and refining a song culminating in a sense of personal achievement for both women. The opportunity for collaboration in the form of devising harmonies was, for Nancy, a defining factor in realising the 'challenge' aspect of CM participation, allowing her to develop previously established musical skill and knowledge.

Literature identifies the importance of 'the collaborative...learning experiences adults tend to prefer' in their musical engagement (Myers, 2018, pg. 227). For Nancy, the strong sense of creative autonomy within 'challenge' aspects offered through T5V's supports 'personal growth and development [and] chance(s) to meet challenges and find meaning in that effort' (Southcott & Li, 2018, pg. 284). Through these autonomous aspects of practice, T5V realise and achieve the 'team' ethos of the group. Those in a stronger position for leadership, such as Nancy, aid in progressing the choir. Einarsdottir (2014) acknowledges the importance of these aspects of collaboration, as 'individuals contribute their talents to the group using...social force and dynamics to create something great' (pg. 288). These understandings link to growing research within informal learning processes, such as those adopted through T5V, emphasising the benefits of this approach. Einarsdottir (2014) cites Green's (2005) work, indicating that the use of 'group learning rather than individual...leads

to the process of peer-learning through imitation, observation and discussion' (pg. 291). Collaborative group processes within T5V aid in the realisation of individual self-efficacy, of particular importance with older adult participants. Withnall and Percy's (1994) research on the necessary conditions for successful older adult learning imply autonomous processes to be a key facet, developed in supportive settings where individual input is recognised and respected.

For other T5V members, the social aspects of CM engagement came through more strongly in responses, suggesting its significance and influence upon their perceptions of CM. This appeared as a central discussion point in Freya's accounts, and is realised in her efforts to provide a supportive, 'team' space for personal development through T5V. Freya clearly articulated the role she felt T5V inhabits in participants' lives, equally emphasising her desire to accommodate these. She asserted that whilst members may have 'lost their confidence,' T5V aims to 'build their self-esteem up so...they feel good about themselves.' Freya's perceptions of her own role as a CM facilitator are highlighted through these accounts. Bonshor (2016) understands encouragement to be 'one of the most powerful social tools for building positive self-efficacy beliefs' (pg. 300). This is recognisable in Freya's own aims of personal development for T5V members. Impacts pertaining to positive self-efficacy are heightened 'when the encourager is seen as assured, trustworthy and credible' (Bonshor, 2016, pg. 300). Inclusivity is fundamental to Freya's T5V provisions. She achieves this through genuine understanding and insight into the local community in which these provisions take place, and in the lives of her participants. T5V members

perceive Freya as ‘one of them’ through her living and working in Bulwell for the majority of her adult life, as have many of her adult participants. Her broader grasp of community life and needs were exemplified throughout her accounts. She expressed a strong sense of obligation to local residents when renovating the current T5V studio, in keeping many of the original features of the old town library and preserving local residents’ ‘fond memories of growing up and coming to the library.’ She went on to state that many were ‘really pleased with what we’d done. [It] brings back memories for them.’ Freya also recognised the necessity of her provisions, stating that ‘there isn’t many facilities in the area’ that offer inclusive CM provisions for all ages.

Bulwell itself has historically struggled with social problems. Although the area has seen some levels of regeneration over past decades, the town still remains consistently in the worst 10% nationally for crime, living environment and educational/skills development (Nottingham Insight, 2018). Freya aims to actively address this within her CM provisions, embodying the notion of the CM facilitator as a ‘self-reflective, process-person who has a human...knowledge, together with a variety of experiences to assist groups of people to journey together to reach their goals’ (Hogan, 2002, pg. 57). Freya’s desire to identify and address local needs within her community support the view that sustained, personalised CM engagement holds significant impact for participants, as evidenced in T5V members’ accounts of Freya’s close personal relationships with them. This person-centred approach conveys ‘realness in the facilitator, unconditional positive regard and empathy’ (Rogers, 1983, pg. 121). This is emphasised in understandings of CM activity, such as that offered by T5V, personifying an ‘act of hospitality’ towards participants (Higgins, 2007a).

Alongside research surrounding the importance of social aspects of CM engagement, the findings of this dissertation align with wider established theories of

socialisation processes within CM activity, particularly in community choir settings. Stewart & Lonsdale (2016) in their explorations of the psychological benefits of choral participation discuss the concept of *entiativity*. This envisages groups and communities not just as ‘physical places and networks of social relationships’ (Mannarini et al., 2012, pg. 952), but understands them as real and intelligible constructs with strong meaning for individuals (Campbell, 1958). Stewart & Lonsdale articulate the facets of *entiativity* specifically within choral singing, suggesting that participation induces a ‘blurring of perceived conceptual bounds between individuals,’ enabling participants to adopt a ‘we perspective rather than egocentric’ (pg. 1242). This is strongly realised within T5V’s enduring ‘team’ ethos and in Freya’s understandings of the benefits of this ethos in producing confidence within participants in a collective environment.

Linking with the concept of ‘*entiativity*,’ Langston (2011) draws heavily on the theory of ‘social capital’ in his work with a community choir. Interpretations of social capital within CM settings allows for the creation of ‘strong community connection and individual autonomy’ through a number of indicators (Langston, 2011, pg. 179). ‘Trust’ between members is realised in ‘reliability as a manifestation of loyalty to the group’ (pg. 172), whilst ‘networks and connections’ are empowered through ‘feeling valued or appreciated by the community one belongs to and valuing/appreciating others in the community’ (pg. 174). Langston’s understandings of social capital in a community choir are expressed in T5V members’ accounts pertaining to social aspects of participation. Freya’s place as a facilitator who reciprocates mutual respect to her participants – as signified in Georgia’s observation that ‘Freya listens. I can talk to Freya’ – encourages and develops levels of social capital within T5V and positively influences members’ perceptions of their CM engagement. Langston’s

ideas surrounding networks and connections also resonate with members' understandings of T5V as 'family.' Within these accounts, particularly from Georgia, Gloria and Micky, the social capital developed by 'relational' family members - identified by Langston as the 'initial source of social capital and crucial in its formation' (pg. 166) - was equal to that accrued by T5V.

Langston equally recognises the drawbacks that a strong sense of social capital can induce – 'whilst bonding social capital may be very important for creating a sense of unity within a group...its very nature tends to preclude others from joining' (pg. 164). This concept draws on McClenaghan's (2000) observation that 'the same strong social ties that help one community, or some members of the same community, also enable them to dominate and exclude others' (pg. 573). This is particularly indicative of Mary and Angela's perceptions of the exclusion they experienced through T5V participation, attributable to the differences in shared social values felt between both women and other members of the group. For Langston & Barrett (2008), 'bonding social capital enhances solidarity of groups with specific interests; however, it may...exclude individuals who do not...exhibit group norms and values' (pg. 119). This goes some way in understanding Mary and Angela's perceptions of themselves as 'sitting on the outside' of T5V, in their observation that 'a lot of the people here have...relatives. Well, we haven't.' This sense of exclusion was heightened for both women in their descriptions of other members of T5V as 'dance mums,' with Mary and Angela's values dissociative here due to their not having children.

Although both women faced issues in negotiating these social bonds within T5V, however, they felt them ultimately possible to overcome, with a recognition of the effort needed from themselves in becoming part of T5V's 'community of practice' (Wenger, 2005). Defined by Wenger as 'not merely a club of friends or a network of

connections between people,’ but ‘an identity defined by a shared domain of interest,’ T5V’s community of practice centres on the act of singing in a supportive, encouraging environment. Mary and Angela acknowledge this desire to sing shared by all members, a binding factor in the development of both women feeling ‘more part of it.’

Through T5V’s ‘community of practice’, aiming to develop an ethos of inclusivity through the act of singing, the ‘team’ ideology of the group is fulfilled for a number of participants. There exists issues here, however, in Mary and Angela’s observations of exclusion from social group processes due to their perception of themselves as ‘sitting on the outside’ of established social bonds. For all CM’s understandings of practice as an inherent ‘act of hospitality’ (Higgins, 2012, pg. 133), findings on this theme highlight the difficulties CM participants can feel in accessing this.

5.3 The barriers to CM

A number of barriers existed for T5V members in their CM participation. These ranged from the practicalities of life commitments affecting time available for pursuing arts activities, to more personal barriers, resulting in a fear of the voice and, thus, unrestricted participation. T5V members’ accounts highlight processes within CM engagement influencing negative perceptions of participation, particularly for adult participants with significant life commitments. The benefits of long-term participation in CM have been well-researched, thanks to the growing interest in ‘lifelong’ or ‘life-wide’ engagement (Smilde, 2008; Jones, 2009). The difficulties associated with participation for children and young adults have been explored (Hallam, 1998; Evans et al., 2013). There still remains, however, a paucity of work

relating to the potential barriers to CM engagement as faced by adults, and the reasons behind these.

The work of Pitts et al. (2015) on ‘non-participation’ in music-making considers adult life factors influencing the temporary ceasing of CM participation or the abandonment of it altogether. Their research offers similar understandings of the barriers facing CM engagement to that of T5V members’ responses. Five unique stories of ‘dropping in and out’ of musical participation highlight the individuality of cases and ‘the many demands, challenges and satisfactions involved in maintaining musical participation as an adult’ (pg. 142). The findings highlight ‘how...musical aspects of the experience intersect with...personality, emotional and social needs, as well as with the complexities of everyday life’ (Pitts et al., 2015, pg. 142). These ‘complexities of everyday life’ are influential of CM engagement, especially for working adults with personal commitments as highlighted by T5V members’ narratives. Selph and Bugos’ (2014) exploration of adults’ perceptions of their CM choral engagement revealed the significance of this, encouraging the creation of CM provisions ‘more readily accessible by working adults’ (*ibid.* 2014, pg. 43).

The findings of this dissertation support current research in its understandings of barriers facing CM participants in their engagement, primarily in these understandings proving highly individualised across participants. For T5V members, barriers to provisions were attributed to the varying life experiences of each individual. A number of members highlighted cost of provisions as a barrier, in particular Pinky whose past experiences with cost acting as a barrier during childhood are still apparent in effects upon her engagement today (‘there are times when I have

literally not been able to afford it'). Elaine, Sue and Keeley's barriers to provisions centred on parental responsibility, previously proving detrimental to Elaine's CM participation ('I had Thomas and that were the end of...me singing'). Sue and Keeley's experiences differed to Elaine's. In Freya's understandings of their responsibilities as working mothers, inclusive provisions were implemented. Findings here link to the necessity of flexible, inclusive CM provisions, as set out by Selph & Bugos' (2014), in order to aid adults in full CM engagement. This need for flexible provisions is imperative for CM participants such as Pinky, with the perceived cost of provisions negatively affecting her CM engagement. This is particularly pertinent given that 'structured adult programs...tend to serve...middle and upper-class individuals with discretionary time and financial resources' (Myers, 2018, pg. 227).

These findings arise in light of recent reports suggesting an increase in both adults' arts engagement and the benefits of singing in community settings in the public perspective over the past decade (DDCMS, 2018). Television programmes such as 'The Choir: Sing While you Work' (Cooksley, 2012), highlight the 'rise of the choir' and have stimulated interest in CM's role within the lives of working adults (Bramall, 2015). Through this, CM research could aim to further understand potential barriers to CM engagement, as the findings of this dissertation have highlighted alongside that of the small quantity of literature currently in the CM field.

Alongside life commitments acting as potential barriers to CM engagement, T5V members highlighted fear surrounding CM participation as another factor influencing their perceptions of their experience. Research surrounding barriers to CM engagement on the topic of fear identify a perceived 'lack of talent as one of

the major factors that prevent [participants] from engaging in music' fully (Lamont, 2011, pg. 372). T5V members' accounts support this, particularly in Freya's theories on potential participants' reticence in joining – 'people hear you and think 'oh they sound really good, I don't want to join cus I can't sing.' Fear pertaining to a perceived lack of talent has been theorised to stem from elitist models of performance inherent within Western musical culture (Bailey & Davidson, 2005). Research suggests that amateur music-makers are left to feel their participation is subordinate to that of more professionalised engagement. These 'elitist notions of musicality' perpetuate a dichotomous view of general society separated into the 'talented few' and the 'untalented majority' (Small, 1998, pg. 8), ultimately resulting in 'fear of participating in, and exclusion from, musical activities' (Bailey & Davidson, 2005, pg. 299). Research into the effects of this for participants, and how they view their own participation as a result, could be furthered within the CM field.

CM provisions through T5V, however, aim to alleviate these fears of participation as a result of elitist models through the establishment of inclusive provisions. Lamont (2011) observes that 'musical groups set up for adults...often emphasise the fact that talent is not required to participate, make progress or make a contribution' (pg. 371). This exists in direct correspondence with T5V's provisions. These inclusive provisions are understood more deeply through the emphasis of CM on 'practical concerns of making and creating music opportunities for people of all ages and abilities' (Higgins, 2017, 14:13). This is realised in T5V provision. Freya as a CM facilitator holds an explicit desire to reduce participants' fears, and to provide

provisions that take into account the individual needs of T5V members. The un-auditioned and inter-generational nature of the choir directly encourages participants of ‘all ages and abilities,’ with T5V’s offering opportunities to ‘anyone who loves to sing from ages 9 – 100 years.’ T5V does not rely on members’ abilities to read notated music, or possess any level of previous musical knowledge in order to participate, in keeping with the identified informal aspects of provisions.

Collaboration and non-hierarchical values of practice are emphasised through this in T5V’s ‘team’ ethos. T5V provisions, then, are directly aligned with CM’s desire to provide access to music-making opportunities on a genuinely inclusive framework.

This chapter has explored T5V members’ accounts of CM participation in the context of broader understandings of CM engagement in the wider literature. Members’ perceptions of engagement highlight deeper tensions within CM’s own understandings of itself in practice. Whilst CM perceives itself as offering inclusive, empowering experiences for individuals and their communities, difficult relationships with the concept of formality, and connotations accompanying this, dominates provision. Further discussions surrounding CM’s relationship with formalised music-making have been addressed here, in this case concerning interconnections with music education. Whilst there exists a clear sense of divide between CM and music education, research development is exploring the relationship between the two fields (see the ISME’s commission on Community Music Activity or CMA). Further development of conversation between the fields of practice and research are needed, however, in understanding the complexities behind formal and informal approaches and their nuanced manifestations within CM provisions.

Socialisation theories, including social capital and communities of practice, aid in articulating participant understanding of the social aspects of CM engagement. Research could be furthered here in CM's exploration of the processes behind the formation of social bonds through participation, and its integral role in participants' perceptions of engagement, particularly those of perceived 'excluded' members. This links to the identified barriers to participation a number of T5V members felt, particularly those affecting working adults. Within the three broad themes identified and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the adoption of IPA has been integral in eliciting deeper exploration of the processes of CM engagement in the full context of participants' experiences. Further investigation of the relationship between IPA as a methodology and CM as a research field is proposed here. This could aid in identifying ways to further report and address the tensions felt by CM participants in their engagement, and in investigating CM's 'values' of practice.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions

The main research questions grounding this dissertation were focused on the experiences of CM participants, and the processes behind these that result in perceived impacts of participation. The work has highlighted aspects of importance regarding CM research and practice equally. These include intersections between music education, and sociological and psychological areas. Through these, debates within current CM discourse were acknowledged including levels of formal, informal and non-formal approaches, degrees of understanding between the social and musical aspects of practice, and potential obstacles to engagement. Processes and mechanisms behind CM participation felt to be of importance for T5V members were revealed, aided by the ethos of a phenomenological approach.

Discussion surrounding degrees of formality within CM provisions highlight clear tensions that exist within the CM fields' own understandings of its practice. CM's perceptions of informal approaches, with aspects informing inclusive music-making opportunities, are seen to contrast more formalised provisions, perceived as naturally exclusive in 'hierarchical, prescribed, conformist' approaches. A divide between understandings of the formal and informal within CM is created here, with 'something miraculous occurring' (Bartleet & Higgins, 2018, pg. 7) through CM participation believed to be due, in part, to the aforementioned aspects of inclusive provision. CM recognises the issues advocacy considerations such as these present in creating 'uncritical research agendas' (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, pg. 124) for CM scholarship. This dissertation, in aiming to understand participants' full perceptions of CM participation in the context of their own lives, identified clear tensions with formality of provision. This, in turn, raises questions of CM's definitions, intents and purposes of practice, and challenges issues of advocacy within CM research. This

dissertation has focused on the processes at work behind the direct music-making aspects of practice, in accordance with the issues felt pertinent for discussion identified in current CM discourse. Future research, however, might investigate specifically musical details of CM provision in relation to understandings of formality. This is especially pertinent in light of some T5V members' identification of the desired formal aspects of CM incorporating musical progression as a key factor.

The research here has equally highlighted issues of inclusivity within CM, as understood through the identified social aspects of engagement. T5V members' experiences within the social constructs of group music-making identify issues of full engagement and, thus, potential barriers to CM participation. This is a rarely identified facet within CM research. In acknowledging these facets of CM participation and recognising that, as within everyday life, participation can never be wholly successful or positive, findings of the dissertation on this theme bring us closer to articulating CM's place within participants' experiences. This is particularly fitting within CM research, oft described as 'anecdotal' due to difficulties in articulating impacts of CM activity for participants.

Consequently, the utilisation of an IPA methodology, in its encouragement of individual narratives surrounding phenomena, is enlightening for CM research. This dissertation aimed to explore a potential research relationship between the fields of CM and phenomenology that has not yet fully developed. Whilst the work has experimented with the adoption of a hybrid ethnographic/phenomenological approach, it has gone some way in more readily identifying the processes behind CM engagement as a result of IPA. Through a person-centred ethos, incorporating flexible interviews schedules, emphasis on verbatim narrative accounts, and a reflexive researcher position, clearer understanding of CM participation as genuine life

experience for participants was achieved.

A number of limitations existed through the adoption of IPA, however. Whilst IPA works well with a case study research design, the findings of this dissertation could have benefitted from a reduction in participant sample size. Data collection was confined to the space of just under a year; further studies in the CM field employing IPA could be undertaken on a longitudinal basis, adopting lengthier, more in-depth semi-structured interviews with fewer CM participants. The issue of researcher positionality in the utilisation of phenomenological methodologies is an additional consideration here. As stated within the introduction of this dissertation, the foundation for the work was based on a collaborative ethos between myself, Freya and T5V members. The fact that our relationships could be regarded to have been ‘close’ throughout the process, owing to the person-centred nature of the IPA approach, undoubtedly influenced participant response. This could manifest itself in participants regulating their behavior under the realisation that they are being observed, thus affecting the authenticity of responses. However, the research findings here suggest otherwise. Through a more person-centred approach, T5V members felt comfortable in explicitly discussing tensions within their own CM experiences. Those engaging with phenomenological methods in future CM research, however, should be mindful of their positionality, aiming for consistent and deep reflection throughout the research journey (that is, from rapport building, to data collection, data analysis stages and, finally, the writing up process). In respect to these methodological limitations, nonetheless, this work serves as a basis for future IPA informed studies within CM.

This dissertation ultimately aimed to explore the processes of CM experience more deeply through the adoption of a methodology with emphasis on participant voice as the heart of the discussion. CM research could benefit from diverging from the aim of identification of expected participatory outcomes, in efforts to prove CM’s

worth, towards the objective of understanding participant experience with fewer pre-defined or pre-determined conditions. When CM participants are afforded this, their voices of experience, as with the voices in T5V, speak volumes.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Example page of the reflexive research diary

Seems that there is an accepted occurrence w/ choir's Comm. / Feel that kids are disciplined by everyone - described themselves as "one big family."

Still feel a little apprehensive and awkward: eg. Went to see [redacted] earlier than 6.15 pm to discuss interview(s) in coming weeks - beforehand was on my own drinking tea with 2 members and their children chatting at another table - felt apprehensive about going over but did in the end - "I feel abit lonely over here, Can I come and chat with you?"

* difficult to talk w/ at first but once chatting, began to flow easier: [redacted] and [redacted] liked discussing children - noticed I asked [redacted] when she herself had started attending choir - She briefly talked about herself but quickly began discussing her son instead - (perhaps a theme??)

Let [redacted] know of plans - incredibly hard working and pushing to limit w/ work. - organises everything herself, works with support from TSV.

Rehearsals always same structure -

- * Sing a song
- * [redacted] suggests changes/ what went wrong
- * Sing again.

Appendix B – Interview guide

Initial background to engagement with choir

- ‘Tell me more about how you got started with Take 5.’

History of community music engagement

- ‘Is this your first experience being in a community choir or CM group?’
- ‘If not, when were your other experiences? How have they differed?’
- ‘Are you currently part of any other CM activities?’

Personal singing experiences

- ‘How does being part of the choir make you feel?’
- ‘What is it your personally get out of singing?’
- ‘Think of three words to describe your overall experience of T5V participation.’

Appendix C – An example of Stage 1 of the IPA process with initial exploration of transcripts

1 (8) Comment on Mary/Angela's decision to interview together - supporting each other in views/exp.

Mary and Angela interview – 2nd May 2019 – Take 5 base, 5.30pm (13 on tape recorder)
 – length: 37:14
 {NT: 00 – 0.14 – discussion of pseudonyms}

1 I: So why don't you tell me firstly about how you both got started with the choir, how you became members? Did you start together or –

2 Angela: No-

3 Mary: No I started first. I think I've been coming about six, seven years, I'm not exactly sure but I know I've lived in this house five but I've been coming longer than that so, six, seven years.

4 I: Ok.

5 Mary: I came here with another work colleague to start with because we're both the sort of people who walk round the office singing. And we're like [gesticulations] you know it's that sort of thing. Originally we went to a gospel choir in [nearby town], tried that, and it was very nice but a bit 'God-ey' for us so it wasn't our thing.

6 I: Ok.

7 Mary: And we'd been looking all over the place and then suddenly saw this, erm she lived at [nearby town] and I lived at [nearby town], the other end of town at the time. But we gave it a go and we came for, [name of friend] probably came for about three, four months? And then, had you already started at [name of workplace] when I told you about it?

8 Angela: Yeah well I then, when Mary was singing in the office, I was- started to sing with her and she was getting quite offended by this.

9 Angela: But then she eventually says "you ought to come to choir with us" so erm I think you'd been coming probably a year.

10 Mary: Do you reckon?

11 Angela: I think so, before I started coming.

12 Mary: Yeah. And [name of friend], was she still coming at that point?

13 Angela: She was, yeah.

14 Mary: When you first came and then [name of friend] dropped off cus she changed jobs and basically it was too difficult for her. So then we carried on coming, somebody else came in a short spell [inaudible]. So we've been coming ever since. We've had a couple of breaks, we did try another one in [name of town] because we thought we wanted something a bit more structured and maybe a bit more correcting, if you like. You know, if you're a bit off key to go "no that was rubbish."

I: Ok.

Work/ life getting 15 in the way

turned out they didn't??

desire for formality/ structure

wish to improve with voice: seeing more as learning than social

Theme = dichotomies between formal/informal and learning vs "just for fun"

Similar to pinky. (But still in a supportive setting - doing it with someone, in this case work colleague)

clear desire to engage in singing but difficulty in finding an environment

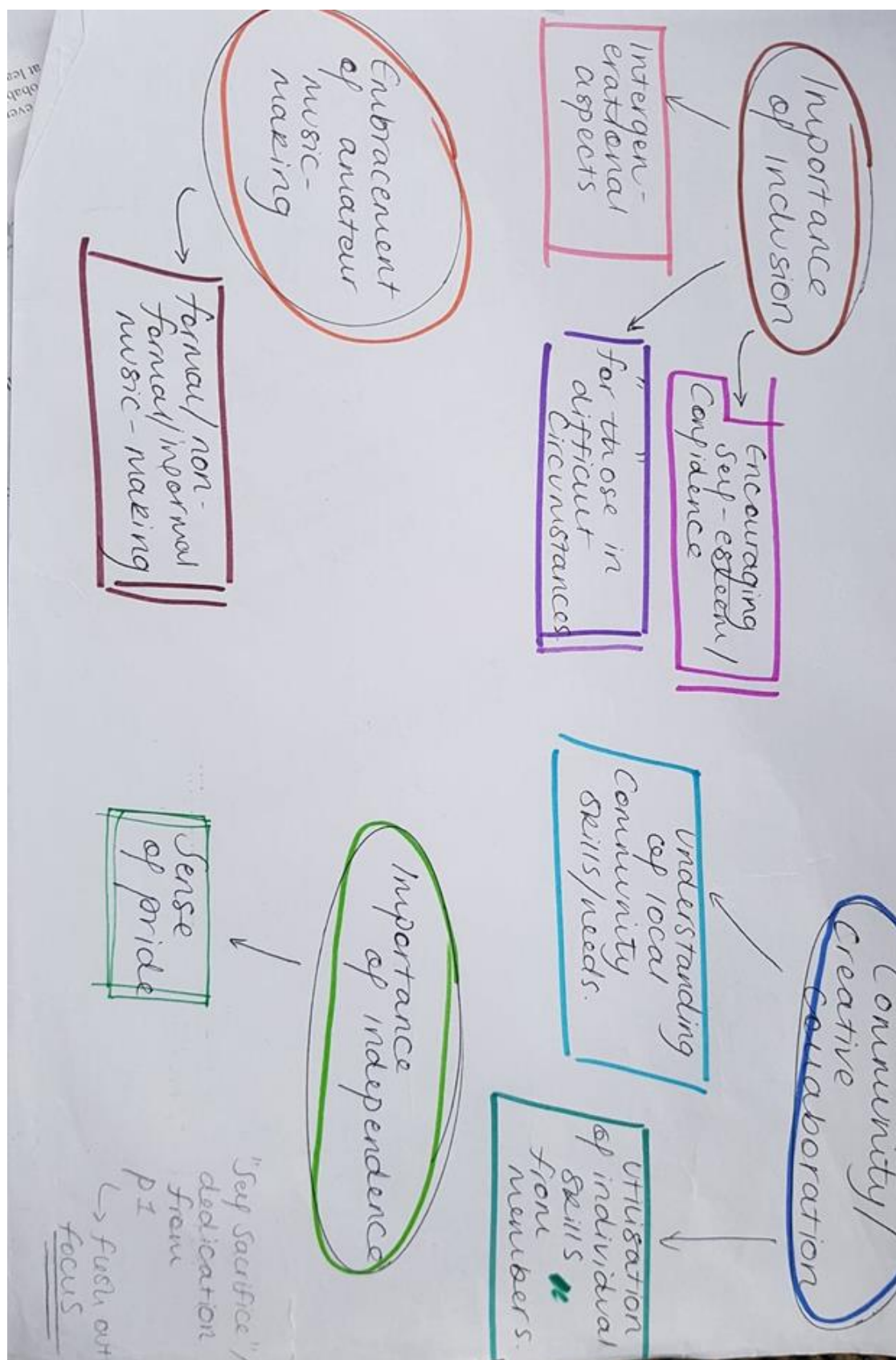
humour but social bond created through singing

social band established and developed through opport. to sing together in choir.

"Stealing limelight?"

* they felt comfortable in and could "fit in"

Appendix D – An example of Stage 2 of the IPA process with meaningful codes identified



Appendix E – An example of Stages 3 & 4 of the IPA process with codes transformed into themes and relationships between them explored

THE GROUP – own identity within Take 5 and as a CM participant								
Transcript No.	1/2/3	4/5	6	7/9	8	10	11	12
Negotiating pre-existing social bonds		5:24-26 – “cus a lot of them it’s family...”		8:7 – “when Freya gave me that solo line, I hated it. But then I didn’t know anyone in the choir yet...I was still the newbie and I felt odd.”	4:8 – “at that point, not now, as we are not, but at that point we didn’t really feel part of the choir.”			7:7 – “: I think now I come here, I get more acknowledgement if I see anyone here, like on a Saturday.”
COUPLED WITH.....					5:20 – Angela story of brass band – “I didn’t have anyone to pal around with and it was very male dominated.”			
					10:14 – “a lot of the people here have got children or grandchildren			

Appendix F – Participant Information Sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Date: 29/10/2018

Title of Study: **The 'Take 5 Voices' of Community Music – phenomenologically exploring the lived experiences of a UK community choir**

Name of Researcher(s): **Kristen Horner**

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide I'd like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. I will personally go through the information sheet with you and answer any questions you have if necessary. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study will evaluate the impacts of engagement with local community music (CM) groups through a collaborative process between the researcher, CM practitioners and group participants. It will investigate ways in which CM may benefit local communities and the individuals within them. The research project will be based on collaboration, giving voice to participants and supporting CM practitioners in evaluating and further developing their own work. Self-reflective evaluation is not often utilized by smaller, localized CM projects; the research will also investigate potential methodological frameworks for community music practice including longitudinal impact assessment and evaluation methods.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part because you are member of a community music group (choir) within the identified area for study (Nottingham North).

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form (completion and return of a Questionnaire can be taken as implied consent). If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. This would not affect your legal rights.

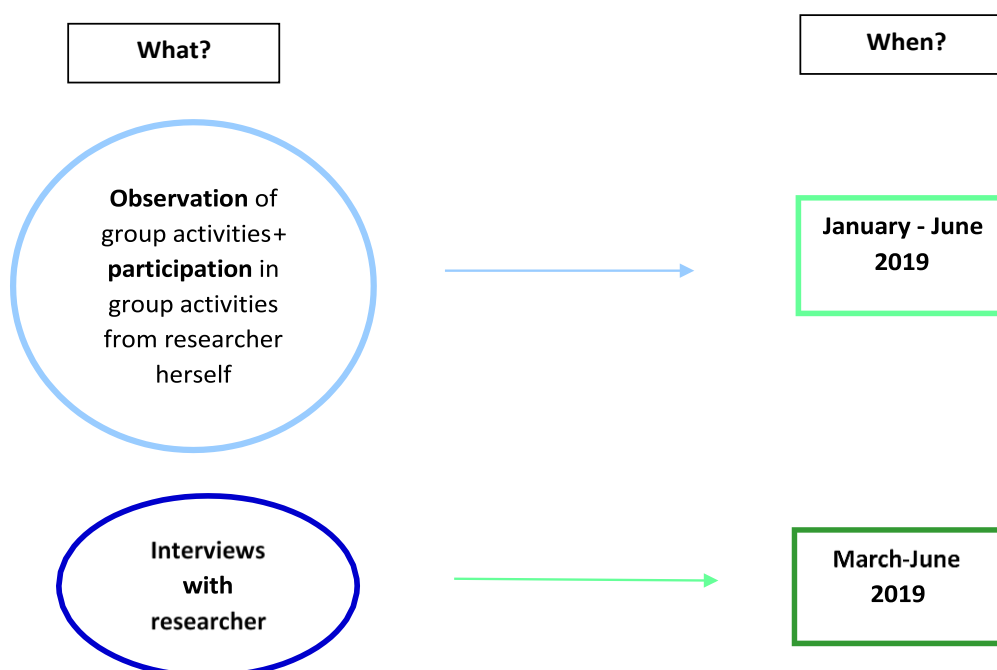
What will happen to me if I take part?

The overall aim of the research is to work collaboratively with participants such as yourself in identifying and discussing the benefits of participating in community music groups and the subsequent impact this has upon local communities and individuals. The research element of my project will run **from January through to June 2019**. Research will take place in the form of one-to-one and/or group interviews where you will have the opportunity to discuss the importance of music and communal music-making activities for you as an individual and what impact you recognise this to have upon your own well-being and that of your local community. Every effort will be made to make sure interviews will commence with the attendance of your group leader present. A responsible adult will be required to sit in on interviews with those under the age of 16 for safeguarding reasons.

These interviews are completely voluntary. However, an integral aim of the study is to give voice to individual participants within local CM groups, allowing participants and leaders to evaluate and reflect on their own participation and practice. This will, in turn, contribute to the growing academic and social interest in community music today, and its importance within your own community and in society general. **No opinion is wrong and your individual one matters.**

Below is a breakdown of what the study will involve and when these elements will take place. Times of interview sessions will be arranged in accordance with your individual commitments and the researcher's timetable and will be held in the venue of your community group.

Timeline of your participation in the study



There will be no monetary reward for participants of the study. However, I am grateful as an independent researcher that you are giving your time and input to contribute to my work. Your overall effort will help further community music research, enhance your own personal musical experiences and further develop the future of your own local creative groups within Nottingham North.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Although there are no immediate risks in taking part, your involvement may be of slight inconvenience due to research taking place in your music group activity time. However, due to safeguarding reasons it is more appropriate for study activity to take place in a neutral setting for both participants, leaders and myself as a researcher. An effort will be made to ensure music-making activities are disrupted as little as possible. Also, due to time constraints and me being a lone researcher, it is unlikely that all data collected will be used and therefore it is not guaranteed that your own personal opinion will be included explicitly within the final report. I as a researcher, however, will aim to include as broad a range of opinions and data from you as participants as possible.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

I cannot promise the study will help you personally, but the information gained will help you reflect on your own experiences within community music-making and could go on to contribute to the growing collective of community music research out there now. Opinions of those involved in community music practice are valuable to the discipline itself, and your ideas could go on to help shape community music practice and evaluation in the future.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you can speak to me and I will do my best to answer your questions fully. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting the University's Research Ethics Officer. All contact details are given at the end of this information sheet.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

I will follow ethical and legal practice and all information about you will be handled in confidence.

If you join the study, the data collected for the study will be looked at by authorised persons from the University of Nottingham who are organising the research. They may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do our best to meet this duty.

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept **strictly confidential**, stored in a secure and locked office, and on a password protected database. Any information about you which leaves the University will have your name and address removed (anonymised) and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be recognised from it. Anonymised data may also be stored in data archives for future researchers interested in this area.

Your personal data (address, telephone number) will be kept for 7 years after the end of the study so that we are able to contact you about the findings of the study *and possible follow-up studies* (unless you advise us that you do not wish to be contacted). All research data will be kept securely for 7 years. After this time your data will be disposed of securely. During this time all precautions will be taken by all those involved to maintain your confidentiality, only members of the research team will have access to your personal data.

Although what you say in the interview is confidential, should you disclose anything to us which we feel puts you or anyone else at any risk, we may feel it necessary to report this to the appropriate persons.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights being affected. If you withdraw then the information collected so far may not be possible to extract and erase after the interview stages, and this information may still be used in the research project analysis.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the study will be published in a dissertation in the autumn of 2019. There is a guarantee that you will **NOT** be personally identified within the report. Alternative names or markers will be used for the sake of anonymity for all who participate in the study. A copy of the research report will be made available online. Contact the main researcher for more information on this nearer to the publication date.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised by the University of Nottingham and is independently funded.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research in the University of Nottingham is looked at by a group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and approved by the School of Sociology and Social Policy Research Ethics Committee.

Further information and contact details

Lead researcher: Kristen Horner, amxkh@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisor/PI: Duncan McLeod, Duncan.mcleod@nottingham.ac.uk, Tel: 0115 951 3139

Research Ethics Officer: Jeremy Taylor, Jeremy.Taylor@nottingham.ac.uk, Tel: 0115 951 5845

Appendix G – Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Date: 29/10/2018

Title of Study: The 'Take 5 Voices' of Community Music – phenomenologically exploring the lived experiences of a UK community choir

Name of Researcher/s: Kristen Horner

Name of Participant:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without my legal rights being affected. I understand that should I withdraw then the information collected so far may not be able to be extracted and erased and that this information may still be used in the project analysis. ☐
3. I understand that relevant sections of data collected in the study may be looked at by authorised individuals from the University of Nottingham, the research group and regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records and to collect, store, analyse and publish information obtained from my participation in this study. ☐
4. I understand that the interview/focus group will be recorded and that anonymous direct quotes from the interview/focus group may be used in the study reports. ☐
5. I understand that the information collected about me may be used to support other research in the future, and may be shared anonymously with other researchers. ☐
6. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

2 copies: 1 for the participant, 1 for the project file

Appendix H – Participant Consent Form for Parents

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS

(Final version 1.0: 29/10/2018)

Title of Study: The 'Take 5 Voices' of Community Music – phenomenologically exploring
the lived experiences of a UK community choir

Name of Researcher: Kristen Horner

Name of Parent:

Please initial box

Name of Participant (Child):

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet version number 1 dated 29/10/2018 for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐

2. I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without their legal rights being affected. I understand that should they withdraw then the information collected so far cannot be erased and that this information may still be used in the project analysis.

☐

3. I understand that relevant sections of my child's data collected in the study may be looked at by authorised individuals from the University of Nottingham, the research group and regulatory authorities where it is relevant to our taking part in this study. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records and to collect, store, analyse and publish information obtained from my child's participation in this study. I understand that my child's personal details will be kept confidential.

☐

4. Consent for storage and use in possible future research (Optional)
I agree that the information gathered about my child can be stored by the University of Nottingham, for possible use in future studies. Any data used will be fully anonymised, and my child will not be identified in anyway.

☐

5. I agree for my child (named above) to take part in the above study.

☐

Name of Parent

Date

Signature

_____	_____	_____
Name of Person taking consent	Date	Signature

(OPTIONAL) Section for children to give assent

I agree to take part in this study

_____	_____	_____
Name of Child (for assent)	Date	Signature