

Connecting Communities through Youth-led Radio

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Abstract

Connecting Communities through Youth-Led Radio

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This thesis explores the extent to which, and the ways in which, KCC Live, a volunteer youth-led community radio station situated in Knowsley, neighbouring Liverpool, UK, provides a space for young people to find and realise their voices. The body of geographical work on radio has predominantly focussed on large-scale geopolitical questions at the international scale. In particular, there has been a deficit of research considering community radio in the UK. Research from other countries is not easily transferable, due to the specific regulatory paradigms in different countries. This study takes a step towards remedying the neglect of community radio in geographical research in the UK.

This research project adopts a participatory design in collaboration with young people at KCC Live. Mixed methods were employed, including: 18 months of observant participation; interviews and focus groups with volunteers; interviews with management at KCC Live and Knowsley Community College; a listener survey, listener diaries, and follow-up interviews. Accompanying this thesis are two co-produced audio artefacts: an audio documentary named 'Community to me is...', which explores young people's musings on community, and a three-part radio series called 'What we found', which discusses the findings of this research in audio form.

First, my research provides insight into a twofold vision of youth voice as both restricted and creative concurrently. This thesis shows that community radio is not a cure-all solution for disenfranchised and silenced young people, as young people at KCC Live work within a pre-censored idea of speech. Second, this thesis finds that young people conceptualise the KCC Live community in multiple ways. These include: friendships which constitute communities of choice; geographic communities within specific locales; the functioning of KCC Live as a community of practice; imagined communities of listeners; and virtual communities, formed through use of social media. This research therefore advances recent debates that shift notions of community away from static place-based understandings to more networked approaches. Third, this thesis demonstrates that young people are capable of learning skills, locating resources and building networks, thereby generating their own stocks of social capital. It therefore challenges the dominant perception within the literature of young people as receivers, rather than producers, of social capital.

Dedication

*This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my mum,
the bravest woman I know.*

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It is important to acknowledge from the outset of this thesis that I share the credit of this work with young people at KCC Live, my PhD CASE partner. This work has been shaped by their colourful contributions at various stages throughout the research. The Economic and Social Research Council [ES/J500094/1] funded this work. I would therefore like to thank the ESRC for their financial support, which made possible the undertaking of this research and the completion of this thesis.

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List of Acronyms

A-Level	Advanced Level
AM	Amplitude Modulation
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (French acronym)
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FM	Frequency Modulation
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
IBM	International Business Machines
KCC Live	Knowsley Community College Live
n.d.	No date
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
Ofcom	The Office of Communications
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RAJAR	Radio Joint Audience Research
RnB	Rhythm and Blues
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

Chapter One

Introduction

I'd sit alone and watch your light,
My only friend through teenage nights
And everything I had to know
I heard it on my radio
(Queen, 1984)

The above passage is from 'Radio Ga Ga', a song by British rock band Queen, recorded in 1983 and released in 1984. The song is a commentary on television surpassing radio's popularity for tuning into much-loved comedies, dramas and science fiction programmes. Fans also rumoured that the song critiques radio stations of the day, which were becoming increasingly commercialised and provoking frustration amongst listeners by playing the same songs repeatedly (see MusicBanter, 2015). Radio Ga Ga is insightful in exposing young people's engagement with radio in this era. Radio in this song was a "friend through teenage nights", and a source of knowledge and information. Queen drummer Roger Taylor, who wrote the song, implores that radio must not "become some background noise, a backdrop for the girls and boys", in recognition that children and young people had started watching music television instead of listening to the radio (Furniss, 2011). Taylor ends the song on a triumphant note: "you've yet to have your finest hour, radio".

Coincidentally, in the same year as the song was recorded, the Community Radio Association was formed in the UK. Now under the rubric of the Community Media Association, this organisation campaigned for a third tier of broadcasting, alongside the BBC and commercial stations. This new tier of broadcasting was piloted in 2002 by the regulator at the time, the Radio Authority, with the licensing of 15 Access Radio¹ stations (Everitt, 2003). Resulting from campaigning by academics and activists, The Communications Act 2003 allowed the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to introduce community radio by secondary legislation². In 2004, the Community Radio Order established the legal framework for community radio licences in the UK (Ofcom, 2004).

¹ 'Access Radio' was the name given to the not-for-profit radio stations in this pilot scheme, 'Access Radio' has now been superseded by the term 'community radio' (see Everitt, 2003).

² Secondary legislation allows the Government to make changes to the law, using powers conferred by an Act of Parliament.

In the UK, community radio³ refers to a system of licencing of micro-local, non-profit radio stations. Ofcom (The Office of Communications) functions as the regulatory body for this tier of broadcast radio. To obtain a community radio licence, applicants must demonstrate to Ofcom that the station has a number of social gain objectives, will be accountable to the community, and will provide access and training opportunities (Ofcom, 2015). According to Ofcom (2004), a target community can be defined either by geography or by a particular sub-community in an area, for instance ethnic group or age group. The broadcast transmission of community stations is smaller than commercial and BBC local stations; typically, the coverage radius is up to five kilometres of their transmitter (Ofcom, 2015). The length of a community radio licence as set out by legislation is five years, and applicants can apply twice to Ofcom to extend their licences for a further period of up to five years⁴ (Ofcom, 2015). According to the Community Media Association (2015), there are more than 200 community radio stations licenced in the UK. KCC Live, the station on which this research is based, is one of these.

1.1 *Tuning in to KCC Live*

This research project uses the case study of KCC Live, a volunteer youth-led community radio station situated in Knowsley, neighbouring Liverpool, UK. Founded in 2003, KCC Live was originally set up as a college-based enrichment and work experience radio station, based at the Roby Campus of Knowsley Community College. Roby Campus hosts the Sixth Form, which offers A-Levels and BTECs, aimed predominantly at school leavers (Knowsley Community College, 2015). KCC Live was created by Sir George Sweeney in 2003, knighted for his work within education and then Principal of Knowsley Community College, and Hywel Evans, who was employed by the college under the official job title ‘Fun Formulator’ and given the remit to ‘bring the corridors to life’. KCC Live acts as an important element of the college’s retention strategy and intends to function as a bridge for young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to re-enter

³ Although there are a range of alternative radio spaces, for instance pirate radio (channels that are not regulated), internet radio stations (which stream audio via the internet rather than through a traditional signal), and the related phenomenon of podcasts (a form of digital media that consists of an episodic series of audio), community radio is the focus of this thesis.

⁴ What happens after the second extension is a matter for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and for government, as any changes to the licence period will require further legislation.

education and training. The station typically has a 14-25 year-old volunteer base (KCC Live, 2007), although at the time of conducting this research all volunteers were over the age of 16, and there were a number of volunteers over the age of 25.

When first set up, KCC Live had three full-time staff positions (Programme Controller, Station Co-ordinator, and Community Liaison Co-ordinator). However, due to staffing cuts to reduce costs in the college, this dipped from three to two and then to one during the course of this research project. With just the Programme Controller (Station Manager) remaining, the number of community engagement and fundraising events KCC Live has facilitated or participated in (typically overseen by the Community Liaison Co-ordinator) has declined. Alongside this, the station has found fundraising increasingly difficult as “the country has tightened the purse strings” (Hywel Evans, founder of KCC Live, quoted in Belger, 2015, no pagination). In August 2015, the station declared in local press that it is struggling to survive in the current economic climate, and could face closure unless new funders come forward (see Belger, 2015). KCC Live positions itself as a youth-led radio station, with volunteers (unpaid) from both the college and the wider community assuming the role of presenters, producers, newsreaders, copywriters, segue-technicians, jingle producers, music programmers, web-editors, designers, and assistant managers. KCC Live also recruits students for unpaid work placements. Since the station’s conception, there have been around 50-200 volunteers at any one time. The estimated value of the ‘in-kind’ support provided by volunteers annually is around £140,000, based on KCC Live’s (2012) calculation of 150 volunteers, working an average of three hours per week, at approximately six pounds per hour.

KCC Live originally operated as a college radio station, broadcasting on AM with a limited range, within Knowsley Community College. In 2009, Ofcom awarded KCC Live a five-year licence to broadcast on 99.8FM; this licence was extended for a further five years in 2014. The move to FM increased the broadcast range of KCC Live beyond Knowsley Community College to the Borough of Knowsley. KCC Live remains based at Knowsley Community College, who act as “landlords and supporters in kind” to the station (KCC Live, 2007:9). KCC Live now broadcasts 24 hours a day seven days a week, with a combination of live and pre-recorded shows. The station office and studios are accessible to volunteers Monday to Friday 8am to

8pm, and on weekends if they book in advance. Since 2004, KCC Live has also broadcast via the Internet on www.kcclive.com, and via the KCC Live smartphone application since 2013. KCC Live has a social media presence, holding Facebook and Twitter accounts. At the time of writing, KCC Live has 3,858 likes on Facebook, and 2,391 followers on Twitter. It is worth mentioning here that, other than statistical data gained from website tracking software, social media counts, and small self-solicited surveys, KCC Live lacks robust data, both regarding the volunteer body (for instance, KCC Live does not know the total number of volunteers that have engaged with the station), and also in terms of listenership. Regarding the latter, due to high costs, professional audience measurement such as RAJAR⁵, is not suitable for community radio (Hallett, 2012).

KCC Live endeavours to serve an audience with characteristics unique to young people in the deprived Borough of Knowsley. The station has four key aims: encourage the positive self-image of a young audience; provide minority voice representation; actively engage with the citizenship agenda and ideas of responsibility; and engage young people in non-commercial radio, through the provision of unique niche music programming (KCC Live, 2007). The station's target audience is 10-24 year-olds in the centre of the Borough of Knowsley (KCC Live, 2007). KCC Live positions itself as an "exciting, non-elitist, highly-varied radio" (KCC Live, 2007:4), which values and explores young people's musical tastes, opinions and daily lives, in ways that are relevant to them. KCC Live's ethos is to provide "Community Radio with Attitude" and the station aims to sound like a "youth club in your bedroom" (KCC Live, 2007:23; 56). KCC Live is three-time award winner of 'Best Station in the North West', by The Radio Academy in the Nations and Regions Awards (2010, 2012 and 2014). In 2011, KCC Live was nominated for Station of the Year (for a listenership of less than 300,000) at the national Sony Awards.

KCC Live prides itself on a volunteer body that is representative of a variety of subgroups and cultures, particularly in terms of hobbies, musical tastes, and sexuality. However, KCC Live is not diverse in terms of ethnicity and religion, reflective of Knowsley's population. For instance, within Knowsley, 97.3% of the

⁵ RAJAR, Radio Joint Audience Research, is the official body in charge of measuring radio audiences in the UK.

population has a white ethnic background (Knowsley Council, 2012a). During my fieldwork, there was only one non-‘White British’ identifying volunteer at KCC Live. The station is committed to playing music omitted from commercial stations’ playlists, for instance, because it is not ‘popular’. Music aired on KCC Live predominantly falls into the following genres: Dance; Trance; Scouse House; Urban; Hip Hop; Trip Hop; Heavy Metal; 80s and 90s; RnB; Chart; Classic Rock; Rock Pop; Alternative; and Acoustic. The station also airs music by local unsigned artists. Of the daytime output broadcast on KCC Live, 24% is speech (KCC Live, 2013). Speech outputs on KCC Live include: current affairs; talk shows; news; quiz shows; entertainment; local arts and music; social interest features; sports coverage; and general free ‘personality’ speech time.

1.1.1 The Knowsley Story

KCC Live is based in Roby, a town within the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley (referred to as Knowsley throughout this thesis), in Merseyside, and forms part of the wider Liverpool City Region, in North West England. While many researchers anonymise the communities in which they study, I chose to identify Knowsley, for its exact geography is crucial to the telling of this story. Knowsley is among the most deprived Boroughs in the country. Growing up in poverty can affect every area of a child’s development and future life chances. It is thus worrying that 29.8% of children (under 16) in Knowsley live in relative poverty, 21.4% of children live in a house where no parents work, and 49% of lone parents are out of work and claiming benefits (Knowsley Council, 2014a). Notably, 70% of children are born outside of marriage, leading to a rhetoric in the media of Knowsley as “the town that marriage forgot”, and a social class stigma of “single mother central” (see Platell, 2010, no pagination).

More so than almost any other metropolitan area, the communities within Knowsley are a creation of the Twentieth Century, largely a result of Liverpool’s over-spill development (Knowsley Council, 2012b). Knowsley, which came into being in 1974, is a mixed area of 33.40 square miles containing a belt of towns, suburbs and semi-rural areas. The majority of the approximately 145,936 (ONS, 2012 mid-year projections) population are clustered in ten dispersed, deprived, suburban townships, namely: Knowsley Village; Huyton; Kirkby; Roby; Prescott; Tarbuck; Whiston;

Halewood; Stockbridge Village; and Cronton. Knowsley is located around nine miles from Liverpool and around 32 miles from Manchester, and lies at the centre of a comprehensive transport network, including the M62 motorway and Merseyrail stations. Importantly, however, Knowsley Young People’s Commission identified a number of barriers to travel for young people (aged 10-19): cost of public transport; low levels of car ownership; availability of public transport; unwillingness of travel far from home; and safety of public transport (4Children, 2010). In this study by 4Children (2010:43), a national charity delivering childcare, family support and youth services, a number of young people in Knowsley spoke about “missing out” on the culture and entertainment of neighbouring Liverpool, owing to transport-related concerns.

The creation of Knowsley, drawing together these dispersed centres of population, has resulted in an area facing unique problems relating to rural and urban deprivation. See Figure 1.1:

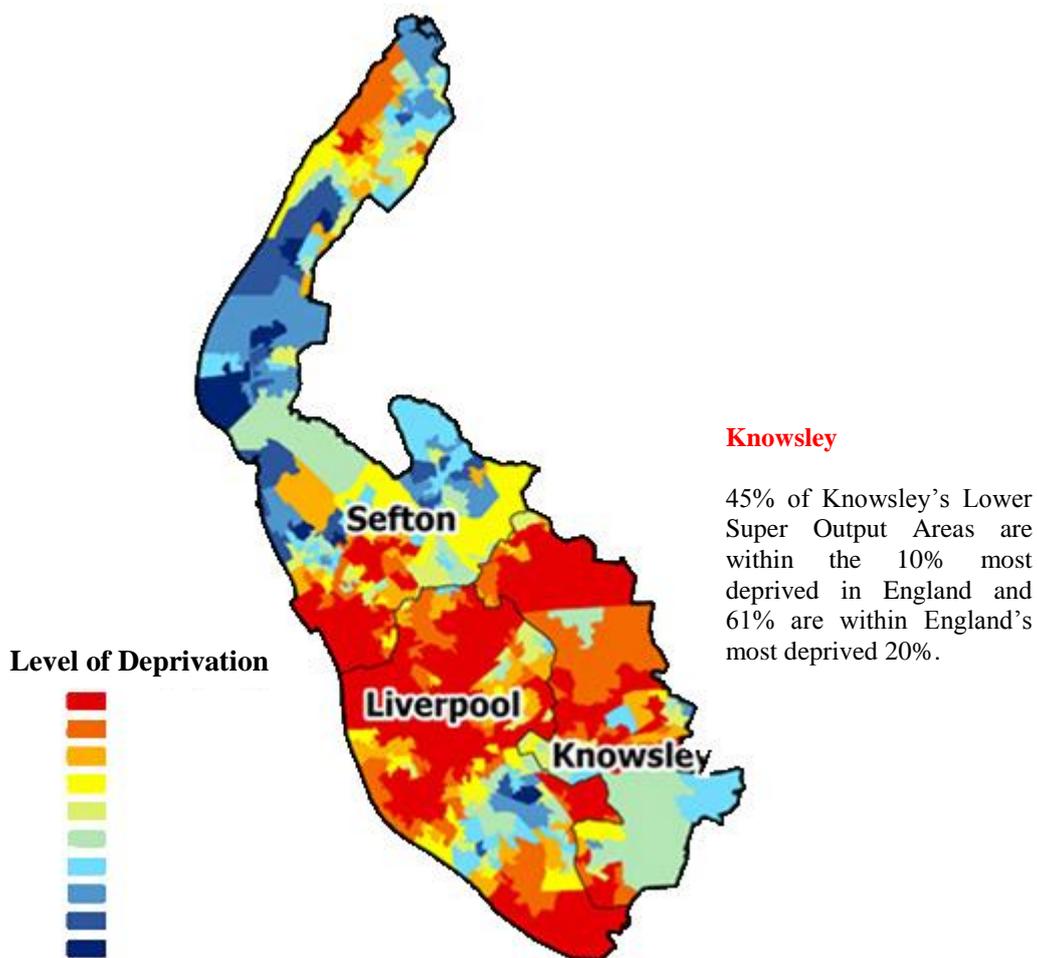


Figure 1.1 English Indices of Deprivation 2010, Liverpool, Sefton and Knowsley (adapted from Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011).

As can be ascertained from Figure 1.1, Knowsley is ranked highly in all measures of deprivation in the Government's 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. The most deprived areas of the Borough are Kirkby, North Huyton and Stockbridge Village (Knowsley Council, 2012b). The 2010 mid-year estimate for the National Census projected 38,000 people as under the age of 20 (see Knowsley Council, 2012b), that is around 26% of the total population. Significantly, 9.79% of 16-18 year-olds in Knowsley are characterised as NEET; this is one of the highest rates nationally (Knowsley Council, 2012b). Though Knowsley has made progress in raising educational attainment, its performance lags behind the national level, and Knowsley remains at the bottom of the league table nationally for GCSE grades (see Knowsley, 2012b). 43.7% of young people achieve five A*-C GCSEs, compared to a national average of 59% (Knowsley Council, 2014a). Knowsley Council (2012b) has also found that, for those residents in employment, Knowsley has low average wage levels.

Owing to migration (described by Knowsley Council, 2014b, as both internal, cross border and international), Knowsley has experienced significant loss of residents in previous years and this trend is anticipated to continue. This is worrying, as loss through migration can decrease the viability of amenities such as schools, health services, and other community facilities (Knowsley Council, 2012b). Included in those who leave Knowsley, and the most mobile group, are those who are young, skilled and qualified. The study by 4Children (2010) revealed that although young people living in Knowsley face significant challenges in their lives, the majority are 'happy', and possess ambition and the desire to do well at school. This research also revealed that young people are optimistic about the jobs they will secure in the future. Notably, 70% of young people in the 4Children (2010) study said that having a good job is one of their main ambitions in life. Of the young people interviewed, 20% aspired to a celebrity career, and 37% wanted more advice on jobs and careers (4Children, 2010). The research also found that young people had a strong sense of loyalty to their immediate neighbourhoods and communities. Interestingly, 71% of people in the 4Children (2010) study considered community as people who live in their area, including their home and street.

1.2 Research Context

Youth service provision, which is the responsibility of the local state, has seen significant reduction in available central funding since the financial crisis of 2007 (Youdell and McGimpsey, 2015). Further, an emphasis on localism and the role of voluntary organisations in the ‘Big Society’⁶ means that, since the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition Government took office in 2010, voluntary and community organisations have been given increased responsibility for the delivery of social and welfare provision, and in community development (Hogg and Baines, 2011; Lowndes and Pratchett, 2012). Simultaneously, such organisations have faced a significant cut in possible funding sources. As such, there is greater pressure on community organisations to compete for an ever-shrinking pot of funding (Public Administration Select Committee, 2011).

Cuts to government spending have significantly affected young people. Recent figures released by the House of Commons show that, in the UK, 729,000 young people aged 16-24 were unemployed in March to May 2015 (Dar, 2015). This unemployment rate sits alongside cuts to State support for young people in education and training. For instance, under the 2010 to 2015 coalition government, the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16 to 18 year-old pupils in education or training was cut (see Department for Education, 2011). Correspondingly, there has been a significant increase in University fees (see Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010). This combination has resulted in heightened uncertainty for young people. It is therefore important for research to investigate ways to support NEET young people in gaining the skills and social capital necessary to (re-)enter employment or further education.

Within the above context, this study adopts a qualitative and quantitative mixed methods, participatory, approach. The overarching aim of this research is to explore the ways in which a community youth-led organisation can create opportunities for young people to find and realise their voices. The main objectives that guided this study are:

⁶ Big Society is a political ideology developed in the early 21st century. The idea proposes integrating the free market with a theory of social solidarity based on hierarchy and voluntarism (see Alcock, 2010).

1. To explore the notion of ‘youth voice’ in relation to a youth-led radio station
2. To develop understandings of community in relation to a community radio station, for listeners, staff and volunteers
3. To establish the ways in which KCC Live enhances both ‘bonding’ social capital (within particular communities) and ‘bridging’ social capital (across social divides and groups) within Knowsley for both listeners and volunteers
4. To develop a participatory approach to documenting the value of a community radio station

In pursuing these objectives, my research makes important contributions to debates on youth voice, community and social capital within geography and the social sciences.

1.3 Who are Young People?

The terms ‘children’, ‘youth’, ‘teenagers’ and ‘young people’ are used almost synonymously in the literature (Weller, 2006a). Weller (2006a) advises that researchers must critique and deconstruct the labels they assign to research participants. Within this thesis, I use the term ‘young people’, as I believe it avoids the association of the term ‘youth’ as ‘deviant’ (Ayman-Nolley and Taira, 2000). Further, I agree with Skelton (2000) that the term ‘young people’ presents a more positive and a future-oriented picture. In line with Skelton (2008), I did not use the term ‘younger people’, as ‘younger’ implies a comparative identity of young people in relation to adults. I must mention that, though I advocate the use of ‘young people’ over ‘youth’, the terms ‘youth-led’ and ‘youth radio station’ appear throughout this thesis, including in the title; this is in keeping with KCC Live’s own conceptualisation of itself within its broadcast licence application and funding bids.

The young people I worked with in this research were aged 17-38 (four volunteers were over the age of 25 at the time of recruiting). Authors define the age range of children and young people in various ways. For Arnett (2006), ‘youth’ is best viewed in two periods: adolescence (roughly aged 10-17), and emerging adulthood (roughly aged 18-25). Kraftl (2008) defines childhood as roughly 0-25 years, and young people as those aged 16-25. Within this study, I use KCC Live’s own flexible adoption of age categorisation. Though KCC Live typically defines young people as

aged 14-25, station management allow older volunteers at the station. As outlined in the KCC Live (2007:44) licence application: “adults and experienced volunteers from the community will not be excluded from taking part, but their roles will be monitored to ensure they are contributing something to the station which enriches the experience of the young people around them”. In line with KCC Live’s logic, then, I have not excluded volunteers over the age of 25 from taking part in this research project.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into nine chapters and contains two audio artefacts, co-produced by the young people and I at KCC Live: a documentary and a three-part radio series, accessible via hyperlinks within this thesis. The audio documentary, titled ‘Community to me is...’, captures young people’s musings on community⁷. The reader is encouraged to listen to this alongside reading Chapter Eight. An accompanying three-part radio series named ‘What we found’⁸ discusses the results of the research sonically. The reader can decide whether they wish to listen to this before, after, or alongside reading the thesis.

The next three chapters situate this thesis in academic literatures. Chapter Two is concerned with different understandings of community that have shaped geographical thinking. The chapter argues that territorial approaches to community are too rigid, and are losing presence to more the adaptable conceptualisations of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983), social networks (e.g. Bradshaw, 2008; Smith, 1999a), and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). In discussing community radio, I critically reflect on the ways in which shifting conceptualisations of community, particularly virtual communities, have redefined community radio and its purpose (Sujoko, 2011). Following Gumucio-Dagron (2013), I argue that, owing to the Internet, community radio has evolved from serving geographically situated communities, to more diffused communities brought together by common interests, which may or may not be united by geography.

⁷ To listen to ‘Community to me is...’ visit: <https://soundcloud.com/kcclive/community-to-me-is>

⁸ To listen to ‘What we found’ visit: <https://soundcloud.com/kcclive/what-we-found>

Chapter Three explores young people's relationship with community radio. It reflects critically on the limited literature on participation, exploration of self, and youth voice. I argue that discussions of youth voice on the airwaves must move *beyond* voice in a more literal sense (Soep, 2006). This leads me to review prominent contributions to the literature on performance (Goffman, 1959; 1967; 1981; Butler, 1993; 1997). I argue that a performance lens for the study of youth voice on the airwaves can account for some of the failings of more basic notions of voice, which do not consider that young people may experiment with voice (Soep, 2006). Further, I draw on contributions to the sonic geographies literature (e.g. Boland, 2010; Matless, 2005; Reville, 2000) to argue that a sonic geographical approach to the study of young people and community radio has great potential for exposing insight into the politics of voice on the airwaves. That is, whose voices are considered to belong (Boland, 2010), and whose are sonically excluded.

Chapter Four focuses on navigating adulthood. In considering ways to conceptualise young people's visions for the future, I challenge the concept of aspirations as lacking specificity (Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015), and being overly focussed on educational achievement and, to a lesser extent, career pathways (Rose and Baird, 2013). Instead, I argue that a 'possible selves' approach (Markus and Nurius, 1986; Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015) offers the potential to explore the link between imagined, possible outcomes and motivation in the present. In considering that the transition to adulthood is the route to social inclusion (Sharland, 2006), yet has exclusionary potential (Allatt, 1997), I review ways to re-engage NEET young people. Though recognising that young people have been characterised as passive recipients of culture in much social capital literature, I join authors (e.g. Holland *et al.*, 2007; Raffo and Reeves, 2000) in arguing that young people have the agentic potential to contribute towards capital-building.

In Chapter Five, Methodology and Research Design, I argue that the validity of the research has been increased through using a mixed methods qualitative and quantitative research approach (Denscombe, 2008), including: 18 months of observant participation; interviews and focus groups with volunteers; interviews with management at KCC Live and Knowsley Community College; a listener survey, listener diaries, and follow-up interviews. I problematise the alleged emancipatory

potential of participatory research (Merriam and Simpson, 2000). In considering whether the co-production of audio artefacts in this project was ‘methodologically sound’, I argue that the meaning of ‘participatory’ in participatory research should be determined in communication with research participants.

Three empirical chapters follow. In Chapter Six, ‘Youth Voices’, I devote attention to stories of empowerment from young people and staff, both present and former, at KCC Live. I detail the restrictions placed on voice at KCC Live, principally with reference to rules set by the regulatory body Ofcom, and then pursued by station and college management. Despite various institutional constraints, however, I argue that community radio is also a space of performativity and experimentation. I draw on Goffman’s (1959) work on performance, and present examples of young people’s ‘creative audiobiographies’, carefully cultivated ‘fake interactions’ and crafted debates.

In Chapter Seven, ‘Communities’, I explore different manifestations of community in relation to KCC Live for volunteers, station management and listeners. These include: relationships (described in terms of home and family), which constitute communities of choice; geographic communities within specific locales; KCC Live as a community of practice; imagined communities of listeners; and virtual communities, formed through use of social media. It is alongside this chapter that the reader is encouraged to listen to ‘Community to me is...’.

In Chapter Eight, ‘Skills, Development and Imagined Futures’, I unpack the technical and transferable skills acquired by young people at KCC Live. I find that, for young people, KCC Live provides opportunities, both formal and informal, for what Battaglia (1995:1) describes as “self-making”. I argue that, by developing relationships with people outside of their typical networks and through contribution to community-based projects, young people at KCC Live generate, and then mobilise, stocks of social capital. This Chapter presents the narratives of young people as they attempt to make sense of, and imagine, their futures.

The Conclusion outlines some broader conceptual contributions that cross-cut the individual empirical chapters. I also offer policy recommendations for other youth-led community radio stations. Further, the Conclusion contains a sub-section functioning as a letter to Ofcom, which includes written contributions from young people at KCC Live. In foregrounding future research considerations, I argue that, by combining a performance lens with a sonic geographical lens, we can begin to develop a much more nuanced understanding of the relationship between youth voice, identity and presentation of self.

Chapter Two

Community Radio

2.1 Introduction

The concept of ‘community’ has provoked considerable debate within the social sciences and beyond. However, it remains plagued by conceptual confusion (Vaisey, 2007), leading Keller (2003:4) to label community a “chameleon term”. Commentators have warned of the dangers of becoming seduced by ‘community’ (Amit, 2002), cautioning that the abundant debates surrounding the term render community pointless (Valentine, 2001). This chapter progresses through four key ways in which community has been conceptualised: the territorial understanding of community; imagined communities; social networks; and communities of practice. I position these different conceptualisations as useful in understanding how community radio has come to be understood. Throughout this chapter, I argue that, owing to technological advancements, community radio has evolved from serving geographically situated communities, to more diffused communities brought together by common interests (Gumucio-Dagron, 2013), which may or may not be united by geography.

2.2 What is Community Radio?

Research on radio within the geography literature is typically focused on large-scale geopolitical questions in relation to international, as opposed to small scale, community stations (Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). Significantly, most research into community radio has used case studies from developing nations (Pardue, 2011), and there is limited research on community radio in the UK. Specific policy and political regulatory structures exist within different countries (Cammaerts, 2009), and so research is not easily transferable. One possible reason for the lack of studies in the UK is that it is a relatively recent site of development for community radio (Cammaerts, 2009; Foxwell *et al.*, 2008), with legal status for the service only created in 2002 (although community radio existed unregulated before this). Writings on community radio are a multidisciplinary effort, drawing on fields including human geography; communication and media studies; journalism; cultural

studies; and musicology. As Hopke (2015) tells, despite a multidisciplinary fan base, researchers have struggled to develop conceptual definitions of community radio.

When searching for a definition of community radio, one would assume that the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC by its French acronym) is a promising point of departure. However, AMARC (n.d.) returns the task of defining community radio to its members, providing an assemblage of definitions that acknowledge the fluidity of the term. For instance; they can be recognised by the fact that they are non-profit; radio in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community; characterised by the active participation of the community in the process of creating news, information, entertainment and culturally relevant material, with an emphasis on local issues and concerns; radio stations that practice broadcasting as a community service and see communication as a universal right (see AMARC, n.d.). Similarly, rather than providing a single definition, Ofcom (2004) provide eligibility criteria. According to these criteria, to be eligible for a community radio licence, a station must: be provided mainly for the good of community members in order to deliver social gain; serve one or more communities (either people who live, work or undergo education or training in a particular locality, or people who have one or more interests in common); not be provided with the intention of making a financial profit; provide community members with opportunities to participate in the operation and management of the service; and be accountable to the target community.

A review of definitions of community radio in the literature suggest a consensus on its constituent elements, namely: free from the coercive powers of advertisers and commercial interests, and owned, managed and run by local communities. For instance, community radio for Myers (2011:5), is “radio by and for the community, be it a physical community or a community of interest, with an emphasis on community ownership and management on a not-for-profit basis”. Reed and Hanson (2006) provide a similar rendering, acknowledging that two key characteristics distinguish community radio from its counterparts: localism and access; it is tailored to meet community needs, and it emphasises the involvement of individuals typically excluded from mass media. Discussing community radio in Ireland, Day (2007) uses the allegory of the ‘bicycle highway’ to depict community radio as a self-motivated

medium for community development; a low resource device for easing political indifference and civic disengagement; and an inexpensive and simplistic means of delivery that unites disparate people and places. Coyer (2006:129), discussing community radio licensing and policy, states that, notwithstanding the difficulties in defining community radio, what is clear is that it is “more than just radio”; it is a means of social organising and representation surrounding communities of interest and/or small-scale geographic locales.

Thus, in attempting to define community radio, it becomes more productive to consider its role. Earlier discussions of community radio prosaically considered such stations as a communication medium to support programmes including teaching, health, literacy, nutrition and farming practices (Nwaerodu and Thompson, 1987). More recent studies have discussed myriad benefits of community stations as a pro-people media. For instance, community radio’s ability to transform public space (Navarro, 2009); empower community members (Olorunnisola, 2002), in particular young people (Marchi, 2009; Wagg, 2004) and women (Aleaz, 2010); develop and revitalise communities (Heanue and Walsh, 2012; Kanayama, 2007); revive notions of democracy (Foxwell, *et al.*, 2008); foster civil society (Siemering, 2000); and bridge the digital chasm between the information rich and information poor (Megwa, 2007).

The role of community radio, for Cammaerts (2009), is to promote civic cultures through their function as critical watchdogs and, as a platform for marginalised voices, promote both external and internal media pluralism. This point is consistent with Lewis (2006:6), who positions community radio as giving “a voice to the voiceless”, thereby empowering previously silent community members. Supadhiloke (2011), in a study of community radio in Rural Thailand, argues that community radio has the potential to transform rural people into active citizens, owing to its ability to empower the grassroots as well as to treat listeners as participants, as opposed to passive audiences. According to Supadhiloke (2011:297), through community radio, hill tribe minorities have the means to realise their rights, duties, freedoms and responsibilities and articulate their views to the public, thus “serving as a mouthpiece of the marginalised and the underprivileged”. In short, the author argues that citizenship can be created through community radio. This corroborates

Sujoko's (2011) view, in relation to the Indonesian broadcasting system, that community radio is concerned with sustaining aspects of local culture and everyday life. The author considers how Balai Budaya Minomartani FM preserves Javanese local culture, including ethnic song, traditional drama, leather shadow puppet shows and Javanese languages. Overall, it appears that community radio allows for expression of a collective community voice, as well as individual voices.

A related argument is that the shift to local radio production is eradicating barriers of language and dialect. Hence, radio has fast become a valuable medium for disseminating information (Zijp, 1994). For example, Nyareza and Dick (2012) report an investigation into the benefits and shortcomings of radio to communicate information to peasant farmers in Zimbabwe. The findings reveal that community radio was the preferred medium of communication for rural peasant farmers. The radio programs are relevant to the farmers' agricultural activities, their language and accents used, and the farmers have freedom to contribute to program content. Similarly, Leal (2009) discusses Brazilian community radio stations as important public spaces whereby different political, cultural and social discourses are evident in a number of opinion-oriented genres. Often, community stations utilise the local discourse, to reflect local reality, thus providing "a privileged space for publicizing the voice of the common citizen" (Leal, 2009:162). Leal (2009) finds that community radio stations in Brazil are vital for assisting public educational campaigns, owing to their infiltration of the lower-income sectors of society. The article contributes to the growing field of evidence (e.g. Forde *et al.*, 2002; Foxwell, 2001; Rodríguez, 2005) for community radio stations as a vital resource for nurturing social cohesion and contributing to social gain.

As is evident from the preceding discussion, researchers have largely romanticised the community radio sector, focussing on stories that exemplify community radio's practicality and worth (Ewart, 2012). This relates to Bryson and Mowbray's (1981:255) notion of community as a "spray on solution"; that is, whilst they stand under the expression of 'community' radio, such stations are assumed essentially good. Bryson and Mowbray (1981) acknowledge that the concept of community has been the subject of increased popularity, reflected in the use of community as a prefix in the titles of different programmes, for instance *community* politics, and

community centre. Bryson and Mowbray (1981) note that much literature discusses community in a positive way, representing a return to social cohesion and harmony. However, they acknowledge that considering community as a ‘spray on’ solution to social problems does not assure progressive outcomes. As such, a more critical approach to the study of *community* radio is warranted (Ewart, 2012). Studies that offer such an approach include Leal’s (2009) work, which recognises that community radio stations disseminate the private opinions of their owners. Leal (2009) offers a sobering thought - although they stand under the rubric ‘community’, such stations are not necessarily devoted to the causes of the common good. Hartley (2000) similarly acknowledges the potential for abuse. The author states that, because radio’s ubiquitous nature means that it is available for the free expression of ideas, it can be used to build communities of hate. Hartley (2000) argues that politicians and other leaders in society can abuse community radio.

Such arguments throw doubt upon the notion of community radio as a solution to community ills. Further, taking the example of Kothmale community radio station, Harvey-Carter (2009:1) questions whether the station is a true community radio initiative that empowers local communities, or another “feel-good” project controlled by repressive Sri-Lankan governments and international partners. The findings from the research support those within Pavarala and Malik’s (2007) study into the struggle for community radio in India; if community radio is to succeed, control of the station must be exclusively in the hands of the community. This viewpoint can be critiqued for assuming that ‘the community’ is homogenous and egalitarian; it does not reflect the “complexity and dynamic of actual community processes” (Wiesenfeld, 1996:338). Mirroring this view, Mhiripiri (2011), discussing Zimbabwe’s community radio initiatives, maintains that ownership is critical to the notion of ideal community radio and the station’s ability to aid community development. As Davidson (2004) points out, to claim that participation has been realised simply because the community runs the station, neglects that specific individuals and groups are in control, and this may reveal discrepancies of power and resources within the community.

2.3 Understandings of Community

Gregory (2009:103) defines community as “a group of people who share common CULTURE, VALUES, and/or interests, based on social IDENTITY, and/or TERRITORY, and who have some means of recognizing, and (inter)acting upon, these commonalities”. Of these, a territorial understanding of community is perhaps the most familiar and the most basic (Keller, 2003). Many early conceptualisations of community were based on a geographic region, assuming homogeneity amongst people living there (Woelk, 1992). Researchers adopting this approach (e.g. Daraganova *et al.*, 2012), regard human relationships to be predominantly local, believing that, as the distance between actors increases, the probability of a social tie diminishes. Following a re-theorisation of community in the 1980s, a range of alternative understandings are possible.

First, ‘imagined communities’, as outlined by Anderson (1983), counters the idea that communities are defined by territory, claiming that communities are mental constructs. Anderson’s (1983:4) point of departure is that nationality, “nation-ness” and nationalism are cultural artefacts. Anderson (1983:6) defines the nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”. He argues that it is imagined because nation members will never know their fellow-members, yet they carry with them the image of their communion. This is notwithstanding that there may be exploitation and inequality between fellow citizens. Further, Anderson (1983:25) considers the power of the novel and the newspaper for providing the means for “re-presenting” the imagined community that is the nation. For instance, the newspaper reader observes replicas of his/her own paper being consumed in various locations, and thus is continually reassured that the imagined world is rooted in everyday life. Anderson (1983) tells how print media gave a new fixity to language, which helped to build the image of the community in the reader’s mind. However, despite the power of print media in shaping ideas of the modern nation, Anderson (1983) positions geography as remaining important. To explain, the nation is imagined as ‘limited’ because it has finite boundaries, beyond which other nations lie.

Drawing on Anderson (1983), Friedland (2001) argues that, when assuming an imagined community perspective, identities are formed from a collective sense of history and culture that meshes communities together. This has resonance with Levine (2008), who discusses community in relation to identities associated with music, graphic design, narrative history, and other forms of culture. According to Levine (2008), people form clusters in communities, each of which has a distinct character. However, for Friedland (2001), the cognitive, moral, and imagined aspects of community only cohere within the set of social structures that bind the community domain. Rose (1990) argues that, although communities may be imagined, they are not idealist, because such imaginings are grounded in specific social, economic and political circumstances. Work in children's geographies has also been concerned with young people's imaginings of community, or rather "the borderlands of the mind" (Swanson, 2010:430). Swanson (2010) is concerned with the physical border between the United States and Canada. The author shows how young people in Canada use their "revolutionary imaginations" to overturn internal borders, as they struggle to navigate tenuous identity paths (Swanson, 2010:429). Often treated as outsiders by dominant culture, the author finds that indigenous young people are playfully reworking borders, to build bridges between communities, thus helping other community members to break down the borders enveloping their lives. Following Jung (2014), this important shift towards imagined communities draws attention to community as a symbolic framework for conveying social and cultural differences.

Discussing imagined communities and educational possibilities, Kanno and Norton (2003), describe imagined communities as clusters of individuals who, although not corporeal and reachable, are connected through the power of the imagination. Although the authors do not dispute the existence of territorial communities, they maintain that imagined ties extend both spatial and temporal location. In imagining ourselves bonding with fellow members across space and time, we can feel a sense of community with people we have not yet met (Kanno and Norton, 2003). The authors conclude that imagined communities are as real as the ones in which learners participate daily, and suggest that imagined communities may have greater influence on their current actions and investments. Pahl (2005), too, argues that geographic communities should not be conceptually privileged over the 'real' community in the

mind, concluding that communities in the mind may have greater resilience and more acting power than communities of fate or common economic experience.

Secondly, seeking to discredit the notion of community as spatially defined, Webber (1963) argues for ‘community without propinquity’, an approach which recognises that friendships can be maintained at a distance, and communities can exist based on professional groupings and organisations, as well as neighbourhoods. Stanger-Ross (2015) has recently adopted this concept in tracing the patterns of post-war community in Little Italy, Toronto. Through analysis of parish publications and marriage registries, including the addresses of people who were connected to the parish, Stanger-Ross (2015:397) found that social ties demonstrated a “geographic spread”. Residents developed close connections with Italians dispersed through the city and beyond, and St Agnes/St Francis parish played an important role in these connections. Church events, including street processions, associational meetings, and communions, drew outsiders into Little Italy, and social bonds developed between residents in Little Italy and Italians in the wider metropolitan area. Thus, Stanger-Ross (2015:401) positions this parish as the centre of a community without propinquity, where geographic “outsiders” accepted invitations into a shared space.

A focus on social networks thus has the potential to overcome some of the conceptual and methodological “blind spots” of neighbourhood/territorial analysis (Bunnell *et al.*, 2012:497). This viewpoint maintains that social networking structures are the glue that creates togetherness, as opposed to the existence of defined social groups of geographical boundaries (Fabiansson, 2006). According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), community can exist independent of territorial context so long as four elements are present, namely: membership; the community’s influence on members and vice versa; reinforcement of the individual’s identity by community membership; and shared affective connections. Such affective connections can be seen as ties. Bradshaw (2008) suggests that community is usefully understood in terms of networks of people. Such networks are tied together by a shared identity and set of norms. It is in this regard that Bradshaw (2008:5) introduces the term “post-place community”, emphasising the changing nature of personal relationships and a lack of emphasis on locality. The basis for this viewpoint is the search for social linkages and resources, thus allowing for the

discovery of communities distinct from a certain neighbourhood. Work in children's geographies has been concerned with the virtues of social networks for young people. For instance, Wells (2011) finds that social networks provide young refugees in her study with emotional and material support. This research finds that weak ties, and specifically formal ties, are effective in connecting young refugees to a range of material and cultural resources. Further, Wells (2011) argues that through the ties formed by connecting people to new networks, refugees have the potential to change their social positions and cultural locations.

Thirdly, related to the discussion of social networks is the vibrant research area of virtual communities. Multiple studies (e.g. Hampton and Wellman, 2003; Rheingold, 1993; Valentine and Skelton, 2008; Wellman *et al.*, 2001) extol the Internet as creating online communities of support, whilst providing an electronic means of supplementing, and potentially strengthening, face-to-face interactions. A key proponent in the discussion of virtual communities, Rheingold (1993), asserts that, when there is a mutual interest of importance, those engaged in a virtual community may have more in common than those living in the same building. For Rheingold (1993), cyberspace allows for the development of community distinct from the locale. On a similar tack, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008) observe that web 2.0 technologies, manifested in social networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace, satisfy people's social needs for maintaining contact with existing friends who may be physically separated, as well as making new ones. Taken overall, technological advancements have reshaped the community debate, thus reopening the community question for another generation (Hampton and Wellman, 2003). What is clear is that geographic proximity is not, at least in certain cases, a precondition for community.

Grudz *et al.* (2011) pay homage to microblogging website Twitter as forming the basis of interlinked personal communities and fostering a sense of community. Applying Anderson's (1983) notion of imagined communities, Grudz *et al.* (2011:1294) conclude that Twitter users form an imagined community and, more significantly, that Twitter is the basis for a "real community". It is imagined because members of Twitter have some sense of interpersonal commitment, and it is real because the participants interact, especially those who mutually 'follow' each other

on the website (Grudz *et al.*, 2011). Such findings appear to lend credence to suggestions that people who access virtual communities typically have more sociability, produced through interaction with individuals and groups of people, than those who do not (Lee and Lee, 2010). Also employing the theory of imagined communities, Acquisti and Gross (2006) discuss social networking service Facebook, detailing how this online social network offers exciting opportunities for interaction and communication, due to its vast membership, but also raises new privacy concerns. Such concerns support Lee and Lee's (2010) argument of the importance of face-to-face communication for ensuring the worth of community in the historical sense.

A key debate in early work on virtual communities was whether a virtual community should be accepted as a legitimate substitute for a real community (e.g. Calhoun, 1998; Etzioni, 1997; van Dijk, 1997). This critique does not deny the benefits of the Internet for developing community in spite of physical distance. Rather, it questions whether, when a person frequently engages in computer-mediated communication with geographically dispersed others, a smaller proportion of their social contacts will be friends and family (see Kraut *et al.*, 1998; Shah *et al.*, 2001). Bélanger (2005) argues that though virtual communities will not replace organic communities, principally because they cannot exist without them, they may be able to strengthen them. It is in this regard that Bélanger (2005) proposes that online public spaces must be allowed to thrive as an alternative to offline spaces. Children's geographies have also been concerned with online spaces. For instance, studying British children's use of the internet, Holloway and Valentine (2001) found that children's online experiences were often Americanised, though recognising that many of the children's offline interests are already shaped by American culture, for instance television shows and music artists. Thus, the authors conclude that when children go online, they do not enter a world that is divorced from their offline realities. Rather, they pursue offline interests online. This reveals the importance of "place-routed cultures" in online space (Holloway and Valentine, 2001:156). Other research (e.g. Giddens, 2009; Ruckenstein, 2013), too, argues that online activities are not disconnected from children and young people's offline practices and social relations, but are produced in, and through, everyday actions. Virtual communities in this sense are spatial extensions of offline social networks.

A fourth understanding of communities relates to ‘communities of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), as found within the organisational literature. This interpretation offers a novel approach to understanding learning, with a focus on learning in the workforce (Cox, 2005). As Cox (2005) maintains, Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of community does not imply a precise identifiable group with visible boundaries. Lave and Wenger (1991) concentrate on informal and situated social interaction, as opposed to processes that are deliberate and mechanistic. Following Lave and Wenger (1991), newcomers to a community negotiate meaning prior to becoming fully-integrated community members. Community, on this reading, is based on a practice, not a locality, though, as Cox (2005) maintains, such communities are local and situated. Kanno and Norton (2003) extend Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of communities of practice to study how learners’ associations with imagined communities affect their learning trajectories. Communities in this reading include future relationships that exist in the learner’s imagination as well as affiliations, for instance nationhood, that extend beyond the locale.

Scholars have employed the communities of practice concept to studies of/with young people. Within a youth-led action research project, Goodnough (2014) considers the practices that support mutual learning with 10 high school students, a university researcher and two high school teachers. Goodnough (2014) found that in the ‘community of practice’ of her research project, young people and adults developed relationships and roles through working towards a shared goal. Further, Goodnough (2014:372) tells how “considerable learning occurred” as group members engaged in idea sharing. Chan and Short (2011:134) consider communities of practice in a voluntary youth organisation, Air League, South Australia. The authors track the progress of Air League, starting as a “loose network of volunteers engaged in a sporadic array of activities” to a “learning community that worked collaboratively” through to a “potential community of practice” (Chan and Short, 2011:134). Chan and Short (2011) highlight the challenges surrounding maintaining commitment to one’s immediate unit, while sharing experience and building capacity community-wide. The authors found that, throughout the creation of a new learning culture, volunteers benefitted from membership of an organisation that was awash with support, information sharing and participation. Chan and Short (2011) suggest

that volunteers who work in community organisations eagerly assimilate and transfer their new learning within their wider lives, an essential feature of building social capital.

Each of these understandings is relevant to my research in exploring understandings of community in relation to KCC live. To explain, FM broadcast means that KCC Live has a defined geographic community. Further, the station aims to cater for a ‘youthful’ audience (community without propinquity). KCC Live broadcasts online and has a social media presence (virtual community), and within the station itself, KCC Live functions as a community of practice. Thus, rather than trying to find one definitive definition, my research looks at how these different understandings co-exist within (and beyond) KCC Live.

2.4 Community and Community Radio

Despite a range of alternative understandings of community, a critical question remains unanswered: who is the community in community radio? Telling of the confusion surrounding this conundrum, several authors pose this question (e.g. Bailur, 2012; Mhlanga, 2009; Gaynor and O’Brien, 2011). Does ‘community radio’ refer to the geographic community within which the station is situated, or does it refer to a community of interest? Alternatively, is the prefix ‘community’ a spray on solution (Bryson and Mowbray, 1981), presenting the station as a remedy for social ills?

Reed and Hanson (2006:214) define the community served by community stations as “in a specific geographic area”. As such, the authors use a place-based approach to community, akin to that of authors within the community literature (e.g. Daraganova *et al.*, 2012). Others take a more networked view, asserting that community stations reach people who live in dispersed locations, yet have shared interests (e.g. Gumucio-Dagron, 2013; McCain and Lowe, 1990). Encompassing both strands, Coyer (2006) presents community radio as serving communities of interest, providing the examples of lesbians and gay men, blind and partially sighted people, Afro-Caribbeans and Asians, and/or small geographic areas. Crucially, however, while being broad in appeal, these stations remain situated within the context of their local areas. As well as considering the wider community served, Leal (2009) devotes

attention to the community of staff and volunteers working within the stations or, to borrow Gaynor and O'Brien's (2011:31) term, the "community within". Leal (2009) finds that the 'community within' exhibits a considerable degree of diversity with regards to gender, age and cultural background, although predominantly including marginalised sections of the population, particularly the unemployed. Leal (2009:156) refers to community radio stations as "communities manifested from the discursive practices of individuals who share physical space and a similar social situation", depicting a community that has a geographical base, yet serves a common interest. These conceptualisations of community reflect a social network approach (e.g. Fabiansson, 2006), whereby community is (dis)located - situated in, yet distinct from, the locale.

Other community radio research has recognised the contested nature of community. Using the case of Radio KC in Paarl, Western Cape, Davidson (2004) considers the steps that staff must take to understand the communities they serve. The importance of this lies in identifying programming content that includes stories and voices from within the community. From observations and participatory research, Davidson (2004) concludes that the concept of community extends beyond the geographical community outlined in the station's broadcast licence, being cognitive, normative and imagined. Interestingly, Davidson (2004) discovers that, while staff and volunteers at Radio KC came from within the geographical vicinity of the station, they did not perceive themselves as 'the community', rather they considered themselves as *servicing* the community. In a study of XK FM, a community radio station in Platfontain, South Africa, Mhlanga (2009) finds heterogeneity in the community served by the station. Kanayama (2007) draws the same conclusion in a study of the role of community radio in Japan. These readings stand to counter understandings of community as homogenous, which as Young (1990) argues, typically privilege unity over difference.

A niche area of the community radio literature is dedicated to community radio as a space/place. In a study of the role of community radio in Japan, Kanayama (2007) observes that while community radio is essentially a medium to listen to, it is also important for stations to be visible to the community. This is known to some stations as "see the radio, show the radio" (Kanayama, 2007:18). Kanayama (2007)

concludes that the visibility of a community radio station increases levels of trust in the station, creating a more personal attachment to it. As a result, the radio station may function like a hub of the community. This appraisal has parallels with Sujoko's (2011:17) observation that the detailed descriptions of conditions and activities inside the studio, by radio presenters, position the space akin to "home". Bosch and Mullins (2012:118) make a similar remark, presenting the interactions between radio presenters and listeners as simulating "informal living room type of conversations". Informed by theories on place creation, Keough (2010:77) states that community radio station WDVX is "more than just an FM frequency, but rather a meaningful place to station personnel and the listening community". The author argues that WDVX's success is a result of its efforts to connect local and non-local audiences to the importance of the station as a place, adopting old and new forms of technology, and providing listeners with opportunities to interact. WDVX is a case in point of how community stations are capable of mediating the local/non-local divide. Considering the above, it is clear to see how community radio as a meaningful place is an important source of "community glue" (Foxwell *et al.*, 2008:16). These authors present community stations as places of physical identity and importance - a disparate stance to studies that typically present community stations as audio phenomena. However, the importance of space and place to community radio remains an under-theorised and under-explored area.

Just as the Internet has been integral to the re-conceptualisation of community, it has also been important in shifting understandings of community radio. Although the reach of community stations is typically limited, there is increasing recognition that use of Internet technologies for online simulcasting is expanding this reach, making content available at the time of broadcast, and afterwards through downloads and podcasts. In accordance with Coyer (2005), Internet broadcasting offers a redefinition of community radio, away from geographical restrictions, to transnational broadcasting. As Sujoko (2011:17) puts it, due to technological advances in mobile and Internet:

Community radio is no longer broadcasting 'outwards' and downwards, from a central source of information. Instead, the messages exchanged are multi-sourced, constantly adjusting to and recognising their location(s), and so producing a consistent adaptability and negotiability, even as they rework the existing cultural perspectives of their community.

The virtual communities' literature, which recognises the development of community distinct from the locale (e.g. Rheingold, 1993), is therefore important. For Rooke and Odame (2013), the Internet holds potential as an outlet where listeners can learn about, and interact with, station DJs, participate in competitions, find out about upcoming events, and obtain local news bulletins. However, the opportunities offered by the Internet, as envisioned by Sujoko (2011) and Rooke and Odame (2013), have been met with sharp critique. Hallett and Hintz (2010) argue that community radio's convergence online has created a widespread impression that the Internet is a viable alternative for frequency allocation, thus incorrectly implying that the access problem is solved. For instance, it is assumed that if somebody listening in a certain location cannot typically access a community radio station via FM, they can listen to the radio station online. However, this does not take into consideration factors such as the digital divide.

To interrogate this further, it is useful to consider Coyer's (2005) argument that the aspiration to create a community radio project, as a collective, transcends the technological means of distribution afforded by the Internet. Therefore, while the Internet has renovated public access to content, it fails to acknowledge people's social or political motivations to create their own media. Coyer (2005:32) believes that "the potential for endless possibilities within the digital arena cannot serve as a remedy to the issue of scarcity on the traditional dial". Whilst the (relatively) limitless space available to broadcast online in some ways addresses the problem of restrictions, the authors suggests that the Internet has its own limitations, including the digital divide and community access, arguing that the traditional format of radio is more intimate, despite there being fewer opportunities for interaction. If Coyer (2005) is correct, it is questionable whether there is any advantage, bar increased listening figures, to moving community radio online. However, Coyer (2005:40) confesses that even increased listener figures may be overly presumptuous: "just because something is online doesn't mean anyone is listening". Other authors, too, believe that debates have a myopic focus and question whether, owing to technological advancements, community radio's locally distinctive identity is being demolished (e.g. Dunaway, 1998). Such work brings into perspective the challenges faced by community stations. Following Gumucio-Dagron (2013), it is clear that, owing to technological advancements, community radio has evolved from serving

geographically situated communities, to move diffused communities brought together by common interests, which may or may not be united by geography.

2.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have explored some of the key ways in which community has been conceptualised. Territorial definitions of community are increasingly losing presence to more adaptable conceptualisations. These different conceptualisations add to the critical perspectives from which to approach the question of ‘who is the community in community radio?’ (Bailur, 2012; Gaynor and O’Brien, 2011; Mhlanga, 2009). My study will contribute to a working definition of both community and community radio in the literature. With the exception of a select few works (Kanayama, 2007; Keough, 2010; Sujoko, 2011), most studies present community stations as audio phenomena. By offering insight into understandings of community embodied in a community radio station, both the “community within” (Gaynor and O’Brien, 2011:31) and the community served, my research extends debates which consider community radio as a space/place.

Chapter Three

Young People and Community Radio

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to better understand young people's relationship with community radio. After relaying literature on social inclusion in relation to youth media participation, and young people's exploration of self on the airwaves, I argue that discussions of youth voice on the airwaves must move *beyond* voice in a more literal sense (Soep, 2006). I argue that a performance lens (Butler, 1993; 1997; Goffman, 1959; 1967; 1981) can account for some of the failings of more rigid notions of voice, which do not consider that young people may experiment with voice (Soep, 2006). I also draw on the sonic geographies literature (e.g. Boland, 2010; Matless, 2005; Revill, 2000) to argue that a sonic geographical approach to the study of young people and community radio has potential to offer insight into the politics of voice on the airwaves, particularly whose voices are considered to belong (Boland, 2010), and whose are sonically excluded.

3.2 Social Inclusion and Young People's Media Participation

When the phrases 'young people' and 'media' are used within the same sentence, it is usually in the context of concern about the current generation (Chávez and Soep, 2005). Whilst other forms of media, such as social media and television (see Carrick-Davies, 2012; Plunkett, 2012), are associated with negative portrayals of young people in some contemporary popular and academic debate, community radio has often been met with positive appraisals. Community radio has been heralded for its ability to empower young people (Marchi 2009; Podkalicka and Staley 2009; Wagg, 2004) and to position young people within dominant societal discourses, from which they were previously excluded (Baker, 2007). There are four key debates in the literature on community radio and young people that relate to social inclusion.

First, literature has explored how participation in community radio can enable young people to "locate themselves more fully in the social and cultural fabric" of their geographic locale and neighbouring areas (Baker, 2007:587). Underpinned by the view that popular music is culturally central to young people, Baker (2007) writes that the production of a weekly community radio show, Guerrilla Radio, by a group

of young Australians allowed the marginalised radio crew to build productive networks. Seen in this way, for young people, community radio is a means to negotiate marginalisation. Bloustien (2007) finds that young people can discover new forms networking, collaboration and trust through using convergent media forms. Drawing on research from an international project, *Playing for Life*, Bloustien (2007) argues that participation in such media practices makes possible a greater sense of inclusion in social and familial networks, whilst offering opportunities to create new experiential communities centred on music, the arts, and cultural activities. A further upshot is that young people are producing and developing new communities and founding new ways of belonging (Bloustien, 2007). This supports Halleck's (2002) argument that participation in community media can function as a source of empowerment for young people to represent themselves.

Secondly, writing is concerned with the specificities of the learning environment engendered by youth media participation. Chávez and Soep (2005:409) introduce the concept of "pedagogy of collegiality" to describe the process through which young people work alongside peers and adults with a shared purpose. Chávez and Soep (2005) devote attention to how adults in this partnership spur young producers to develop and grow. It is in this vein that the authors believe that youth media functions as a tool for expanding democratic participation (see also Soep and Chávez, 2010). If such partnerships are successfully conducted - for instance, connecting young people to their peers, adults, and community members, young people have the ability to create their own representations of their culture (Kranich and Patterson 2008). As Kranich and Patterson (2008) argue, constructive relationships between young people and adults, resulting from participation in media projects, can generate authentic opportunities for greater leadership roles for young people, community-wide.

Thirdly, a related body of work has concentrated on the skills that young people gain through youth media participation. Writing on *Youthworx*, Hopkins (2011) tells how the media organisation offers young people who have withdrawn from formal education skill-building, through multi-media training. The project aims to assist estranged young people into more socially productive pathways, making "personal, pro-social connections with the world around them" (Hopkins, 2011:196). This work

exemplifies how, through gaining valuable media skills, young people become empowered as active citizens and both competent and eager to contribute to decision-making. Podkalicka (2011) goes further to highlight ways in which Youthworx is important as an access point for young people - not only to creative digital media-based experiences and the related development of skills - but also to increased geographical mobility and involvement within the city. Podkalicka (2011) believes that Youthworx offers a means for young people to begin exploring the city beyond the constraints of their local suburbs. This imagining of social mobility is related to a more general understanding of social inclusion, through which young people realise greater opportunities within the city.

Fourth, a small body of literature concerns youth radio as a means to (re)connect young people with education and employment. Writing on the case of Youthworx Media, Podkalicka and Staley (2009) tell how this organisation uses media and non-institutionalised learning to engage marginalised young people, in a process of participation that aims to reconnect them to education and society. They report increased stocks of social and cultural capital through acquisition of media skills, improved social or familial relationships and augmented self-confidence. Such findings mirror Wallace's (2008) writing on a Massachusetts college radio station, MWUA; as students control college radio, many of MWUA's practices fit a community radio model. Wallace (2008) tells how, aside from their own entertainment, young people use the station to acquire on-air experience and to build their Curriculum Vitae. For some, MWUA is a stepping stone towards another destination. This dovetails with scholarship (Bloustien *et al.*, 2008) which finds that, through engagement in media creation, young people may resultantly re-enter education or find employment.

The key messages across these various literatures are that community radio is a platform where young people can negotiate marginalisation, through founding new ways of belonging. Further, media projects can generate authentic opportunities for greater leadership roles for young people, community-wide. In addition to this, community radio provides an opportunity for skill-building, thereby functioning as a bridge to education and employment. There are, however, some gaps. For instance, as Ewart (2014) notes, with a focus on young people working and volunteering at

these radio stations, few researchers have examined the engagement of audiences with regards to social inclusion and radio participation (for exceptions see Perse and Butler, 2005; Ross, 2004). Certainly, there is a need for more holistic work to consider the engagement of the volunteer body and listeners.

3.3 Young People's Exploration of Self on the Airwaves

In considering young people's exploration of self on the airwaves, a question posed by Glevarec (2005:335, emphasis in original) is an apt place to start: "*what kind of 'social object' is radio for young people?*". In answering this question, the author devotes attention to the social meaning of free radio shows⁹ for young people in France. Within these free radio shows, listeners call in, pose a problem, and are provided with advice. Alongside this, the shows feature games, live link-ups with sporting events, and music. As Glevarec (2005:335) points out, free radio shows explicitly target a teenage audience:

In a context where the passage from childhood to adulthood is becoming de-institutionalized, young people's radio and its 'free radio' shows are taking on responsibility for issues relevant to this age-group, as well as to social situations involving the confrontation of adolescents with the social sphere, with other people, parents, sexual partners, institutions and their representatives, the social order.

This quotation illustrates how radio can become a mediator for young people, introducing them to situations typically associated with adults. Glevarec (2005:335) notes that free radio shows expose children to "adult secrets". In other words, young people's radio "shapes the frontiers within childhood and between childhood and adulthood" (Glevarec, 2005:335). Thus, for young people in a liminal space, radio is a negotiator of socialisation in the transition to adulthood and the public sphere. In France, verbally explicit sexual material is prevalent on the radio, and Glevarec (2005:334) contrasts this to more "uptight" British radio. In a footnote, the author queries why there is no 'free radio' of this kind in Britain¹⁰. For Glevarec (2005), free radio in France enables young people to reflect on their childhood years, and understand this in relation to the social realities of adulthood. For instance, focusing

⁹ Free radio shows are phone-in talk programmes for young people, broadcast live in the evening (between 9pm to midnight).

¹⁰ Although phone-in programmes are prevalent on British radio, they remain regulated by Ofcom.

on “young people’s problems”, including sex and relationships, problems of teenage identity, and drug use (Glevarec, 2005:334). Radio in France has moved beyond a medium for young people to express themselves, towards a platform for socialising young people to recognise what is reasonable behaviour in life (Glevarec, 2005). It satisfies a desire to know about adult issues and rules of behaviour, thereby functioning as mediator of identity formation. Related to this, Kang and Quine (2007) found talkback radio¹¹ in Australia to be an effective platform for sex education. Young people in their study used the platform to express concerns about normalcy to their peers, and to query how they compare to others. Kang and Quine (2007) found that young people demonstrated self-consciousness on air regarding their sexual identities, for instance sexual arousal, same-sex attraction, and genital anatomy. These studies highlight the relevance of youth radio in the lives and development of young people.

Shedding further light on the social function of radio for young people, Algan (2005) discusses the role of Turkish local radio in the construction of a youth community in Sanliurfa. Through media ethnography, Algan (2005) critically examines young people’s attempts to overcome traditional restrictions and social norms through talk radio. In doing so, she challenges western-dominated scholarship, which hitherto has ignored talk radio’s role in community formation. Algan (2005) finds that some young people in Sanliurfa pursue romantic relationships via song and message exchanges on the radio. Many young people believe that declaring their love publicly over the radio enhances its legitimacy. Listeners come to hear familiar voices, and listen to discussions by young people who share the same culture and traditions about how they resist the social restraints erected for them by family and the wider society. Significantly, Algan (2005) finds that, in Sanliurfa, radio functions as an alternative space for young people who have limited public spaces to enact their ‘youth’ identities, meet and share stories and to pursue romantic relationships. In research into ‘teenager’s’ use of radio in the UK, Weller (2006b:309) likewise found that radio phone-ins were effective in highlighting “teenage-centred” issues. UK-based examples concerned different subject matters to those found in Algan’s (2005)

¹¹ In Australia, free radio is known as “talkback radio”. In talkback radio, the presenter talks about topical issues and encourages listeners to phone in to give their opinions.

study; including, a lack of facilities and services for young people; future employment opportunities; pocket money; and the local youth parliament.

Other research is concerned with the connection made between presenters and listeners. Discussing young people's links with radio, Glevarec and Choquet (2003:34) argue that the connection made between the listening audience, radio presenters and fellow listeners who phone in is indicative of an "in-between" status of radio for young people. As Glevarec and Choquet (2003:34) assert, presenters of youth radio occupy a role: "between two social spaces, being both institutional and friendly, presenter and pal, presenter and switchboard operator". Also of interest is the authors' observation that, at youth radio stations, young people refer to each other by first names, nicknames and pet names. In contrast, stations with an older audience use family names or the presenter's civil identity. Glevarec and Choquet (2003) conclude that youth radio presenters are not defined by their social identity, rather by terms originating from the social worlds of family and friends. All of this suggests that the presenter's role and social identity is shaped in accordance with more personal, filial and domestic worlds.

3.4 Youth Voice on the Airwaves

The notion of voice has been important in research relating to the emancipation of marginalised individuals and groups, approaching voice as a means to assert power for those who lack it (Cairns, 2009). 'Voice' has become increasingly fashionable, although it is recognised as a slippery (Arnot and Reay, 2007) and often fetishised (Soep and Chávez, 2010) concept. The literature on youth voice is predominantly concerned with educational institutions, such as schools. Youth voice in this instance comes under the rubric of 'pupil' or 'student' voice, and is concerned with the extent to which young people have a say in issues affecting these institutions (see Bragg, 2007a; 2007b; Mitra, 2003; 2004; 2009). There has been remarkably little academic attention given to youth voice in relation to community radio, despite the obvious association that community radio is an aural/verbal medium.

The extant literature is predominantly concerned with community radio as giving voice to disenfranchised or disadvantaged community members; for instance, those who are economically, linguistically, or politically marginalised (e.g. Dahal and

Aram, 2013; Podkalicka and Staley, 2009; Tsarwe, 2014). Certain commentators suggest that, in producing a radio show, young people gain agency in the production of their own audio, thereby affording them a voice they are often deprived of in school and family settings (e.g. Wagg, 2004). Using the case of CKUT Campus-Community Radio, Wagg (2004) finds that marginalised young people are enfranchised through involvement in media production, particularly through using media production as an outlet for their voices. In this respect, Wagg (2004) argues that the act of sharing their texts is empowering for young people, irrespective of the size, or even presence, of a listening audience. That is, it is “the legitimacy of discursive space” that is the most enfranchising for young people (Wagg, 2004:268). Central to this is the idea that the airwaves “affirms a worthy sense of self” (Wagg, 2004:275) through the vocalisation of words, ideas, thoughts, and opinions.

Further, most existing literature considers voice in its literal sense, as projected through the airwaves. Weller (2006b:304) suggests that radio station phone-ins create “participatory spaces”, which allow previously muted young people to express their opinions to a listening audience. She provides a sharp lens on the effectiveness of radio phone-ins in adding eminence to young people’s voices, through assigning space for issues important to them. This view is mirrored by Kranich and Patterson’s (2008:27) assertion that “youth media fills an important step in truly amplifying youth voice by connecting the many voices that have never had the opportunity to connect with compassionate teenagers”. Consistent with this, Glevarec and Choquet (2003) maintain that young people find a space on the airwaves to engage in meaningful interactions in which they communicate their own issues, and acquire knowledge of others’ experiences. The central argument here is that radio functions as a facilitator in projecting and receiving youth voices.

So far, ‘youth voice’ on the airwaves has been presented as an idealised vision. One of the most cogent criticisms levelled at youth voice concerns its claims to authenticity. Discussing children’s voice, Komulainen (2007:13) argues: “what is ‘true’ and ‘real’ about voices remains an unresolved puzzle”. Told in this way, youth voice is becoming increasingly detached from its representation as the ideal product of media communication. For Komulainen (2007:13), despite being a powerful rhetorical device, the child’s voice is socially constructed through the very

“socialness” of human interaction, discourses and practice. In an analysis of voice in educational discourse, Juffermans and Van der Aa (2013:112) argue, “the production of voice is always situated, socially determined, and institutionally organized”. Similarly, Komulainen (2007) makes a persuasive point that voice is not constant across an individual’s lifespan; rather, it is fluid and mutable, changing over time and space. Further fleshing out this point, James (2007) considers how projects that profess to give voice to young people can gloss over the diversity of their individual lifeworlds, presenting them as a homogenous group. It should be apparent then that community radio must account for the variety and multiplicity of young people’s voices.

Bemoaning the fetishisation of youth voice by media producers and theorists as individual, authentic, and untainted expression, Soep and Chávez (2010) argue that their text is not a celebration of youth voice. Youth Radio, the radio station at the centre of their analysis, does not simply provide young people with recording devices and ‘give’ them voice. Instead, it encourages young people to connect with their senses and experiences of their communities and social worlds, and to interrogate and examine other points of view. Thus, scholars should not position youth voice as the outcome, yet instead consider it as a starting point that advances a complex set of questions (Cairns, 2009; Chan, 2006; Soep and Chávez, 2010). Such questions might include: whose voices are being heard? How have these voices been negotiated? It is in this vein that Soep (2006) argues that there is a need to go *beyond* voice in youth media production. Offering a critical contribution, Soep (2006) acknowledges that the notion of youth voice as connoting free expression is an oversimplification. Rather, young people have the potential to adjust, amplify and experiment with a selection of genuine and illusive voices; for instance, finishing off someone else’s sentence, and mimicking the speech of an individual or group. For Soep (2006:199), use of reported speech by youth media producers results in “crowded talk”, and is underpinned by constant self and peer evaluation. Thus, contradictory voices and interests can exist within youth media projects. Ames’ (2003) research is noteworthy in this sense. Ames (2003) analyses the representation of local voices within a regional radio station. The author illustrates that certain youth voices within the locale are projected, whilst others are muted. Ames (2003)

thus complicates the idea that youth voice is all-empowering, and signifies a welcome departure from uncritical treatments of voice.

Considering Soep's (2006) discussion of young people's ability to experiment with voice, this thesis positions performance as a lens through which to consider youth voice on the airwaves. The geographical literature has predominantly been characterised by two alternative discussions of performance, those of Goffman (1959; 1967; 1981) and Butler (1993; 1997). Performance, for Goffman (1959), is characterised by a series of dramaturgical metaphors, including the world as stage; stage management; setting; front and back regions; guises; and stage props, amongst others. For Goffman (1959), interaction is an engagement between the individual and the audience, to whom individuals perform, and who interpret the individual's actions. Goffman (1959) considers the ways in which individuals, in ordinary work situations, present themselves and their activity to others. In particular, Goffman (1959) is interested in the ways in which the individual controls the impression formed by the audience. Individuals sometimes act "in a thoroughly calculating manner", projecting a version of themselves in order to communicate a certain impression to others, to provoke a desired response (Goffman, 1959:17). This dramaturgical approach is concerned with strategic impression management and primed improvisation in everyday life, through which individuals typically communicate their intentions, circumstances and relationships.

For Goffman (1959:109;114) the term "front region" describes the place in which the performance is delivered, and "back region" or "backstage" describes where the performer drops his/her front and offers a more 'authentic' act. The back region is not typically accessible to audience members. As Hogan (2010) recognises, Goffman's (1959) understanding of presentation of self is becoming increasingly popular as a means for explaining activities in online participation. While Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach focuses on bounded situations, for Hogan (2010:377) social media employs "exhibitions". The author provides examples such as status updates; the sharing of photography; and chatting online. Hogan (2010:378) positions the virtual "curator" as managing and redistributing digital content, recognising that this role is generally absent from everyday life. Hogan (2010:384) concludes that the metaphor of "exhibition", alongside Goffman's (1959) stage play,

can reveal new insights into the “potential and perils” of self-presentation in the digital age.

Goffman (1959) discusses performance in relation to the competence, and more so, incompetence of radio presenters’ performances. Goffman (1959) recognises that, in radio, the back region is defined by all places out of range of ‘live’ microphones. Front stage, radio presenters are careful to “put their best foot forward”; their on-air performances are always wary and self-conscious (Goffman, 1981:198). Further, radio presenters work to produce speech that is fluent and spontaneous. Faults reflect speech production problems, and speech production is not homogenous (Goffman, 1981). Goffman (1981:223) argues that radio presenters are focussed on the seamless delivery of scripts and are intended to be a “perfect speech machine”. Indeed, although ordinary talk is full of technical faults that go unnoticed, broadcasters are schooled to realise cultural stereotypes about speech production, namely, that ordinarily it will be “without influences, slips, boners, and gaffes, i.e. unfaultable” (Goffman, 1981:240). Goffman (1981) maintains that when performance obligations are being satisfied, the announcer is projecting an image of himself or herself as a competent professional.

A small body of work has begun to draw on Goffman (1967) in relation to radio, although notably mainly commercial radio. Stiernstedt (2014) discusses the political economy of the radio personality. The author recognises that much media talk by presenters centres on the imaginary transition between frontstage and backstage, and is a medley of presenters as their true selves, and their media personalities. Stiernstedt (2014) draws on Goffman (1967) to argue that the communication between presenters and DJs is organised and structured and playfully threatens to unveil the truth behind the performed persona. Rampton (2009) draws on notions of performance in relation to radio-microphone recordings of spontaneous interaction amongst adolescents. Rampton (2009) recognises instances of Goffman’s (1967) idea of ‘interaction ritual’, when an individual offers a positive self-image of him/herself to others, the individual feels a need to maintain that image. Contradiction in how an individual projects him/herself in society risks embarrassment. Individuals therefore remain guarded, to ensure that they do not show themselves to others in an unfavourable light (Goffman, 1967). Rampton

(2009) positions interaction ritual as a valuable analytic resource for radio research. However, with the exceptions of Stiernstedt's (2014) and Rampton's (2009) work, notions of performance and performativity have been excluded from discussions of radio, and more precisely community radio.

Butler's work (in particular, 1993; 1997) can also add value to discussions of voice on the airwaves. Butler (1993) recasts performativity as linguistic and somatic. In this reading, performative acts are forms of authoritative speech; most performative acts are statements that perform a certain action and exercise a binding power (Butler, 1993). Yet, particularly interesting, is Butler's (1997) later work on how assaultive speech can produce victimising effects. Butler (1997) shows that the speech act is performed (as theatrical, presented to an audience and subject to interpretation), and linguistic (inducing a set of effects through its implied relation to linguistic conventions). That is, speech is a bodily act with specific linguistic consequences. Butler (1997) argues that certain instances of hate speech interpret the receiver as muted by the effects of injurious speech. This raises concerns about which words wound and which representations offend (Butler, 1997). Certain words and forms of address not only operate as threats to an individual's well-being, but there is a strong sense in which the body is threatened through modes of address. For Butler (1997:9), "the violence of language consists in its effort to capture the ineffable and, hence, to destroy it, to seize hold of that which must remain elusive for language to operate as a living thing". The notion that speech wounds, relies on the inseparable and incongruous relation between body and speech. That is, the force of the speech act is related to the body whose force is deflected and conveyed through speech. Butler (1997) acknowledges that efforts to establish the wounding power of certain words depends on who is interpreting what the words mean and what they perform.

A further argument posed by Butler (1997) concerns censorship as the restriction of speech. Butler (1997) distinguishes between two types of censorship. In the conventional view, censorship follows the utterance of offensive speech: speech has already become offensive, and then some recourse of regulatory agency is made. Butler (1997) presents the second view as censorship that precedes the text, and thus is in some sense responsible for its production. In the latter view, the speaking

subject makes his or her decision regarding speech content and delivery “in the context of an already circumscribed field of linguistic possibilities” (Butler, 1997:129). Thus, for Butler (1997), censorship is a productive form of power; it is not only privative, but formative as well.

I position work on performance from Goffman (1959; 1967; 1981) and Butler (1993; 1997) as useful in addressing some of the problems I have identified above in relation to work on youth voice in radio. This work is helpful in offering a more nuanced understanding of the ideas of ‘authentic’ voice and of the multiplicity, and sometimes conflictual, nature of youth voice.

3.5 A Sonic Geographical Approach

Sound is critical to every aspect of radio programming, from the subtle intonation of a voice to the inclusion of ambient noise of an outdoor broadcast, to the aural representation of diversity as championed through the needs and interests of listeners and their everyday lives (Johnson, 2015). Sound is an often-ignored element of our conceptualisation of the urban fabric, denoting place and demarcating space (Atkinson, 2007). Following Matless (2005:747), a sonic geographical perspective is valuable as it:

Alerts us to the contested values, the precarious balances, the battles for beauty and peace and excitement, which make up a place. Sounds echo into a social debate over what a place has been, is and might be.

Matless’ (2005) interpretation rests on the assumption that sound provides valuable insight into the history and potential of places. For, as Waterman (2000) argues, although acoustic ecology is concerned with mapping the soundscape, it also has an active role in shaping it. Revill (2000) writes that the idiosyncratic characteristics of sound provide music with a specific position in the organisation of social, economic and political spaces. Arguing that the English musical renaissance mapped out in sound, moral geographies for the nation formed from landscape and nature, elite history, and folk tradition, Revill (2000) unearths the ways in which the sonic properties of music are pivotal in the production of cultural geographies. Though a number of studies across the social sciences have examined the spatiality of musical practices at different geographic scales and in a variety of contexts, sound has a

submissive role in these discussions (Revill, 2000). For Revill (2000), this is incomprehensible, as music cannot exist independent from a wider geography of sound. This conclusion also exists in the earlier words of Leyshon *et al.* (1995:425), who assert that the place of music must not be reduced to its location; rather, it must be allowed “purchase on the rich aesthetic, cultural, economic and political geographies of musical language”. It can be seen, then, that music’s role in the organisation of social, economic and political spaces must have the geographical properties of sound as a point of departure.

Much work on sonic geographies has focussed on rural locations. Matless (2005) considers the sonic geography of the Norfolk Broads, largely considered a ‘nature region’, where the presence and absence of sound is a key concern. The thrust of this paper is that, in the disputed evaluation of a regional landscape, the aesthetic, ecological and social are enfolded through sonic geography. The author considers sound conduct, noise erasure and regional human singing, amongst other themes. Within the latter argument, Matless (2005:761) confers how local people are “unselfconscious sounding fauna”, conveying the region, for example, through children’s song. Radio is mentioned within Matless’ (2005:756) paper in a fleeting reference to “sinking light radio”. The author concludes that adopting a sonic geographical perspective facilitates comprehension of how sound, music and place structure each other through cultural judgments. Matless (2005) signals that, as his paper considers an area defined as a region, other studies should consider the sonic geographies of a range of alternative spaces, including: the city, county, countryside, village and more.

Responding to Matless’ (2005) call for development of the theoretical device of sonic geography, Boland (2010) considers the degree to which the distinctive Scouse (Liverpool) accent affects the construction of local identity. In unpacking what constitutes the Scouse identity, Boland (2010) lays emphasis on place, phonology and race. In doing so, he develops the underused concept of sonic geography to examine the extent to which sound affects the construction of a local identity. Boland (2010) employs Matless’ (2005) term ‘sonic exclusion’ to explore the role a distinctive dialect plays in determining who is/who is not classified as a Scouser. The author argues that a more comprehensive conceptualisation of ‘Scouser’ must move

beyond the territorial definition, to include a vocal consideration, as accent/dialect is the major social and cultural signifier of a Scouser. Of importance is Boland's (2010) conclusion that sound is central to the construction of identity. He comments that those who hold the suitable dialect are considered to belong, whereas those with a vocal considered 'out of place' are sonically excluded. Thus, Boland (2010) demonstrates sonic geography's value as a conceptual device in understanding the construction of local identity, and calls other authors to do the same.

Few studies devote sufficient attention to radio from a sonic geographical perspective. Peters (2012:1241), discussing pirate radio, considers how radio DJs on Radio Caroline¹² "harnessed" the depth and dynamism of the sea, to create unique audio experiences for listeners on dry land. Though not using the lens of sonic geographies explicitly, Peters (2012:1241) is concerned with the management and manipulations of materiality and affect, particularly of the rough seas, which helped to form new "cocomposed relations" on the airwaves. Through strategic acts to 'play up' the power of the sea, Radio Caroline listeners became "seduced by...this motionful, dynamic, and uncertain hydroworld" (Peters, 2012:1249). Also devoting attention to sonic properties is Arquette's (2004) discussion of the ways in which different radio stations incorporate diverse modes of presentation. For instance, Radio 3 demonstrates "presenters, in respectful tones and subdued inflections" conveying their knowledge of musical artefacts to the listeners (Arquette, 2004:165). Meanwhile, Jazz FM's "brand of aural image is centred on the often full-bodied and breathy voice of the presenter" (Arquette, 2004:165). Contrastingly, Capital and Virgin DJs work collectively, "talking and cracking jokes amongst themselves in an attempt to dispel the image of radio as a unilateral disembodied voice" (Arquette, 2004:165). The author calls listeners to play a part in forming their acoustic communities, rather than considering radio an ambient landscape.

Certainly, there is demand for heightened scholarly attention to geographies of speech. Brickell (2013:1), for example, has recently argued that geographers have failed to devote sustained attention to speech as a practice that "provokes meanings in, and of, spaces". This is analogous to Livingstone's (2007) argument that spaces

¹² Radio Caroline is a British radio station founded in 1964 to circumvent record companies' control of popular music broadcasting in the United Kingdom and the BBC's radio broadcasting monopoly (see Chapman, 1990).

of speech have been disregarded. Echoing this is Kanngieser's (2012) call for a geography of voice and a politics of speaking and listening, composing a sonic geography of voice, including study of tone and volume, amongst other qualities. The necessity for such a focus is particularly so when considering Matless' (2005) argument that styles of voice belong to a landscape.

3.6 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature which champions community radio as giving a voice to disenfranchised young people. However, recognising that young people can experiment with a range of genuine and performed voices, I argued that there is a need to go *beyond* voice in youth media production (Soep 2006). It is in this regard that I take forward a performance lens (Butler, 1993; 1997; Goffman, 1959; 1967; 1981) in accounting for some of the shortcomings of more rigid notions of voice, which fail to recognise that young people may experiment with voice (Soep, 2006). Further, I argued that a sonic geographical perspective is of value for creating an auditory landscape, with and for young people. Matless (2005) notes that there is an imperative for other studies to consider sonic geographies of the city, county, countryside, village, for example. In studying KCC Live's role in connecting communities through Knowsley, I am addressing this call, thus contributing to the embryonic subfield of sonic geographies.

Chapter Four

Navigating Adulthood

4.1 Introduction

KCC Live aims to act as a bridge into education and training for young people in the NEET category in Knowsley. Recognising this, in this chapter I start by reviewing conceptualisations of NEET within UK policy and academic debate. From this, I critique different conceptualisations of youth transitions. Acknowledging that an individualised approach places the success/failure of aspirations in the hands of the individual young person, I consider ways to better conceptualise young people's imaginings of their futures. I explore how, for young people, the transition to adulthood is seen as a route to social inclusion (Sharland, 2006), yet owing to the vulnerability of this transition, it can also result in social exclusion (Allatt, 1997). Further, this thesis is concerned to establish the ways in which KCC Live enhances social capital, within particular communities, and across social divides and groups within Knowsley, for both listeners and volunteers. Thus, I trace the conceptual origins and dimensions of social capital through to debates concerning young people and the acquisition of social capital. I make evident the shift from young people as passive recipients of culture, to active agents in the negotiation of their own lives (Morrow, 1999; Weller and Bruegel, 2009).

4.2 NEET Young People

In the UK, there has been a marked increase in the number of young people (aged 16 to 24) who are disconnected from both the labour market and the education and training system (Maguire, 2015). The high levels of NEET young people in the UK have often been attributed to the impact of the 2008 financial crisis (Maguire, 2015). The term NEET emerged in the late 1990s, following amendments to unemployment benefit entitlement regulations that had been in place since 1988; these changes meant that young people under 18 were removed from the unemployment statistics (Maguire and Thompson, 2007). More recently, the term has also been applied to unemployed young people over the age of 18. The term is also now used to capture disengagement and social exclusion in addition to rates of unemployment amongst young people (Maguire, 2015). NEET young people have been a policy concern for

the UK Government since 1997 (Thompson, 2011), and the need to decrease youth unemployment through effective policy interventions is high on government agendas (Maguire, 2015).

Much literature has been focussed on reviewing NEET as a label. Yates and Payne (2006) suggest that, though NEET is not necessarily a negative status, those under this rubric are often perceived as lacking aspiration and employment-related skills. Such young people are therefore at risk of becoming marginalised (see Lawy *et al.*, 2009; Macdonald and Marsh, 2005). Examining the empirical basis of the conception of NEET, Thompson (2011) argues that individualised approaches based on personal qualities of NEET young people are inadequate to frame policy. Thompson (2011) concludes that stronger versions of social exclusion must be used in constructing solutions that appreciate the basis of NEET issues in wider social inequalities. More recently, Maguire (2015:123) questioned the “relevance and validity” of ‘NEET’ as an identifier of youth disengagement, and suggested that continued usage of this term must be reviewed, due to gaps in our understanding of the size, characteristics and geographical distribution of young people in the NEET group in England. According to Maguire (2015:127), unlike the stereotype of NEET young people as poor educational performers with a disaffection with education, many have average levels of attainment and live at home with the support of their families, and therefore become “invisible” within the post-16 ‘destination’ data.

Other research has been concerned with finding ways to engage or re-engage NEET young people (Finlay *et al.*, 2010), and particularly on improving NEET young people’s work-readiness (e.g. Simmons and Thompson, 2011). For instance, in a study by The Work Foundation, Lee *et al.* (2012) found that long-term unemployed young people value work experience in eventually gaining paid employment. Young people in this study recognised that employers required evidence that they possessed skills in order to work. Other strategies for re-engaging NEET young people include: maintaining contact with individuals after they have left education; building their employability skills; career advice; the creation of learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships or traineeships; and volunteering and intermediate labour markets (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2015). Yet, how far do such strategies create sustainable outcomes with progression pathways, and how far do they serve to “temporarily

divert” NEET young people (Hutchinson *et al.*, 2005:5)? As Hutchinson *et al.* (2015) maintain, answers to these questions are required if any difference is to be made to the lives of young people in the NEET category.

Doing research with young people classified as NEET means that literature on youth transitions, future aspirations, social exclusion, and social capital are important, because these are all implicated in research and policy that attempts to reduce the numbers of young people in the NEET category.

4.3 Youth Transitions

Being NEET is often positioned as an outcome of the “fast-track” transition to adulthood (Macdonald, 2011:430). The key markers of this transition have been considered to involve: completion of full-time education; entry into the labour market; leaving the parental home; establishing an independent household; entry into marriage or cohabitation, and parenthood (see Evans and Furlong, 1997; Morrow and Richards, 1996a). In this reading, youth is conceptualised in relation to a linear transition between childhood and adulthood, marked by key events or rites of passage (Evans, 2008). This definition positions youth as a phase through which we pass in order to become adult, and adulthood is positioned as “the age and stage of arrival, accomplishment and achievement” (Skelton, 2002: 107). Yet, for young people classified as NEET, such as those at KCC Live, who have not secured entry to the labour market, this model would imply that their transition to adulthood is incomplete. As I explore herein, this idea of failed transitions is problematic as it reinforces negative representations of young people (Skelton, 2002). It is important to find ways to conceptualise this ‘transition’, without excluding young people who do not (as is the idealised vision) move neatly between the above stages.

There has been a growing critique of the linear nature of this transitions model (Valentine and Skelton, 2007). Skelton (2002:100) critiques it for providing exclusionary understandings of processes, which young people are said to “pass through”. Skelton (2002) argues that if the concept of transition is to have any real explanatory power, it must account for the diversity of youth experience and be broadened to include young people who do not fit with the conventional understandings of transition, for instance young lesbians and gay young men.

Further, the transitions approach can be critiqued for assuming that adulthood is the norm, against which we measure and evaluate young people's lives and experiences (Skelton, 2002). Alongside this, sits the problematising in children's geographies of the ways in which children and young people are positioned as "adults in the making rather than children in the state of being" (Holloway and Valentine, 2000:5). Valentine and Skelton (2007), in a study of D/deaf young people's school-to-work, housing, and domestic transitions, also critique the transitions model for creating assumptions about normal development. Distinct from the stages of the normative transitions model, for many D/deaf young people, their most significant transitions to independence is defined in terms of learning British Sign Language, which enables them to enter Deaf culture (Valentine and Skelton, 2007), not, for instance leaving the parental home.

Jeffrey (2010) identifies three problems with a transitions approach. First, the idea of transitions is built on the notion that young people will achieve adulthood; in some parts of the world the scale of social crisis means that 'youth' is a permanent condition. Second, it is not clear how far transitions literatures have moved beyond some of the normative teleological assumptions of life stage models. Third, the concept of transitions is underpinned by the assumption that people move from relative dependence to a condition of autonomous selfhood. However, in many parts of the world, adulthood is imagined in terms of interdependence rather than autonomy (see Punch, 2002), and people are considered to become less, rather than more, independent as they mature. Thus, taken together, it is clear that the concept of transition needs to better accommodate difference if it is to remain a valid model with which to capture the complexities of young people's lived experiences.

A second strand of research in youth transition theory is concerned with drawing a theoretical link between imagined futures and agency in the present. In a qualitative longitudinal project concerned with transitions to adulthood for visually impaired young people, Worth (2009) develops a conceptual framework that restores the importance of time in young people's lives. This framework draws on understandings of 'becoming' from Allport's (1955) work on the psychology of personality, and Grosz's (1999) work on conceptions of time as a lived experience. The framework sheds light on how young people look towards their futures with

various degrees of (un)certainty. Worth (2009:1050) argues that conceptualisations of youth transitions must be forward-focussed as opposed to “stuck within a linear or even static understanding that focuses on the past”. Worth (2009:1050) therefore proposes a theorisation of youth as “becoming”, which she presents as more accommodating of multiple transitions, outcomes, and perceptions.

However, Worth’s (2009) work has been critiqued for its over-emphasis on future. Exploring young people’s current and future livelihoods in AIDS-affected southern Africa, Ansell *et al.* (2014) argue that future-orientation offers only a partial perspective, neglecting understanding of the interaction between future, present, and past. For young people in Ansell *et al.*’s (2014) study, there is no clear dichotomy between activities directed towards the future; rather, present and future were continuous and ongoing. Ansell *et al.* (2014) argue that it is useful to consider transitions as a two-way process, negotiating past and futures in creating the present through traversing boundaries, space, and time. That is, young people as ‘being and becoming’ forge livelihoods in the present, in relation to present and future, and their actions carry implications for their own futures and those of wider society. The authors’ research contributes to the theorisation of youth transitions, extending the argument made by geographers, such as Worth (2009), that transitions should be understood as a process of becoming.

Other work criticising the idea of a linear transition has advanced the theory of individualisation (e.g. Beck, 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Individualisation theories postulate that life is no longer clearly shaped by class divisions or traditions, and mapped out with defined stages, and that individuals now have greater agentic potential to choose between different lifestyles, subcultures, and identities (Beck, 1992). While individualisation may be a useful thesis for explaining the complexity of young people’s lived transitions, in arguing that each individual is free to choose their own life path, it denies many structural factors which impede the opportunities of many young people (Tolonen, 2008). For instance, the social variables of class, gender, and race, have been positioned by other authors as affecting transitions and the possible outcomes of different adulthoods (e.g. Morrow and Richards, 1996a). Thus, young people are not entirely free to choose their own life paths (Evans, 2008).

Valentine (2003) draws upon Beck's (1992) theoretical work on individualisation and the life-course to provide a framework for reviewing the processes through which young people transition from childhood to adulthood. Valentine (2003) emphasises the need to explore the importance of the different spaces implicit in young people's transitions, and the interconnections between them. Further, Valentine (2003) highlights how the distinction between childhood and adulthood is not clear-cut, nor are transitions a one-off or one-way process. For instance, a young person may start work and then lose their job, leave home, move into rented accommodation for a while and then move back home (see also Holdsworth, 2007; Mitchell, 2006), or they may simultaneously be 'child-like' and 'adult-like' (see also Horton and Kraftl, 2005), for example, living at home and being financially dependent on their parents, while also becoming a parent themselves. Thus, Valentine (2003) argues that transitions from childhood to adulthood are complex and fluid, and that young people are not a universal category.

Bryant and Ellard (2015) draw on individualisation and choice biographies to understand the narratives of disenfranchised young Australians experiencing homelessness, incarceration and addiction. Young people who narrated a future expressed strong desires to be 'normal', articulating traditional indicators, for instance: a job, home and family. These narratives were, however, specific to the minimal opportunity structures available to them. Significantly, many young people could not articulate a future beyond their present circumstances. The levels of uncertainty surrounding their lives shaped their future thinking. Skelton (2002:103) critiques an individualised approach, for not replacing, but "tweaking", the idea of a normal transition, and in turn placing the failure of failed transitions on the individual young person, as opposed to social and economic relations and structures. Bryant and Ellard (2015:485) find that while there was no "choice-making", young people in their study did possess agency; that is, they hoped for "something better", for instance a more secure and happier lifestyle.

These critiques of transition help us to problematise NEET as a category that may position some young people at KCC Live as 'failed'.

4.3.1 *Towards Young People's Possible Selves*

Young people living in low socio-economic areas (as is Knowsley), are often characterised as having low aspirations (see Senior and Chenhall, 2012). The extent to which young people's aspirations are "shaped by place" (Kintrea *et al.*, 2015:666) is important when considering that low aspirations has been linked to a failure to achieve social mobility (Bright, 2011). Political leaders now place the responsibility on the individual to 'aspire' to prevailing visions of adulthood (Jeffrey, 2010; Pimlott-Wilson, 2015). This transfers the responsibility from the Government to the individual should young people fail to achieve their dreams. Exploring the hopes and expectations of young people living in the north west of England, Pimlott-Wilson (2015) considers the implications of Government narratives that emphasise individual responsibility and paid work for young people as they look towards their futures. She considers the affective and emotional impact of young people's anxiety over their individualised responsibility for their future attainment. Pimlott-Wilson (2015) finds that, as young people assess the possible options available to them in the future, their experiences (both past and present), and their chances of achieving a future aligned with dominant neoliberal codes, influence their anticipated future emotional well-being.

Whilst the term 'aspirations' is widely used in both Government agendas and academia, it has also been widely critiqued. Brown (2011:7) argues that interventions to 'raise' young people's aspirations act on an emotional/affective level, creating "wow" moments that effect their perceptions of what is possible. However, he argues that aspirations seldom engage with the full range of emotions that young people experience in relation to their imagined adult lives. For Brown (2011), the prioritisation of progression to higher education and professional careers as the most acceptable aspirations to possess, overlooks the range of other ambitions young people have for their adult lives. The disconnection between actual aspirations of young people and the ways in which they are represented in policy debates serves not only to render those interventions ineffective, but also to exaggerate the distance between the lived experience of young people and the futures they are encouraged to anticipate (Brown, 2011). Heggli *et al.* (2013), too, argue that, in many studies, the aspirations of young people appear removed from their lived experiences. Though

employing the concept of aspirations to study young people's agendas for their lives, Rose and Baird (2013) also recognise limitations with this conceptual tool. First, there have been disparate descriptions of aspirations within the literature. Second, most existing literature on young people's aspirations focuses solely on educational achievements and, to a lesser extent, career pathways.

Removed from the limitations of aspirations, Hardgrove *et al.* (2015) draw on Markus and Nurius' (1986) concept of 'possible selves'. Markus and Nurius developed the term to explore the link between imagined, possible outcomes and motivation in the present. Possible selves encompass "visions of desired and undesired end states" (Markus and Nurius, 1986:159). All individuals have possible selves and can easily reflect upon them. Possible selves are important because they function as incentives for future behaviour, and provide an interpretive context to view the current self (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Exploring narrative accounts of young men's transitions into the workforce in Luton and Swindon, UK, Hardgrove *et al.* (2015) asked young men about their present circumstances, opportunities, and future directions. They found that possible selves which possess a motivational capacity, are usually accompanied by institutional and/or relational support, and by known routes to the young person's desired ends. This allows young people to direct their actions to achieve these goals. Although some young men had "viable pathways to imagined futures", others had "vague or vacant possible selves" (Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015:167; 168). That is, they did not articulate specific fields in which they could see themselves working. Hardgrove *et al.* (2015:164) argue that, when young people are asked about aspirations, it is difficult to determine whether their responses are based on expectations, or "hopes and dreams" that may or may not encourage them to pursue trajectories towards future possibilities. In taking forward the concept of possible selves in this thesis, I join Hardgrove *et al.* (2015) in seeing this conceptual tool as useful for a theorisation of the link between imagined possibilities in the future, and motivation to act in the present.

4.4 Young People and Social Exclusion

KCC Live aims to address social exclusion of young people in Knowsley. As has been made clear in the previous section, young people's transitions from school to adulthood and the labour market are not linear; they are highly fluid and complex journeys. Such journeys can result in young people, typically from the most disadvantaged areas, such as Knowsley, becoming "locked in a revolving door of unemployment and low-paid insecure jobs" (Miller *et al.*, 2015:469). Thus, although the transition to adulthood should be the route to social inclusion (Sharland, 2006), it has exclusionary potential (Allatt, 1997), owing to the precariousness of this transition.

Social exclusion is a multifaceted concept, which has been defined in a number of ways, yet typically encompasses economic, social and political aspects of life (Chakravarty and Ambrosio, 2006; Hargie *et al.*, 2010). Fergusson (2004) considers how a number of discourses of social exclusion have informed policies concerning young people's participation in education, employment and training. The author argues that the categories of exclusion/inclusion and marginalisation/participation grow increasingly less adequate as parameters for understanding changing patterns of post 16 participation and non-participation. This has major implications for how researchers conceptualise social exclusion, and for associated policy developments (Fergusson, 2004). The predominant conceptualisation of social exclusion within the literature has a negative undercurrent. For instance, Fergusson (2004) presents social exclusion as the inability of a person to take part in everyday economic and social activities. The same negative undertone is found in Walker and Walker's (1997:22) discussion of social exclusion in Britain during the 1980s and 1990s as:

The process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political, or cultural systems which determined the social integration of a person in society. Social exclusion may, therefore, be seen as the denial (or non-realization) of the civil, political, and social rights of citizenship

Signalled here is the dominant understanding of social exclusion as undesirable, leading to disadvantages in people's material and relational resources, participation, and quality of life (Keung, 2010). Certainly, social exclusion has been loaded with numerous economic, social, political, and cultural dimensions (Silver, 1994).

Away from attempting to pinpoint a top-down definition of social exclusion, a small body of work has been interested in young people's own understandings of social exclusion (Susinos, 2007). Hargie *et al.* (2010) explore constructions of social exclusion among young people, aged 16-24, from deprived areas of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Assuming a comparative perspective, the authors find marked differences between young people and adult groups regarding the construction of exclusion. The authors argue that although the term is fluid, two driving factors form a basis for young people feeling a sense of inclusion: earning money and social networks. Implicit in this is that a young person earning money and belonging to a social network experiences inclusion. Also considering young people's experiences of social exclusion, Nairn *et al.* (2013) explore the complicated dynamic of inclusion and exclusion within a local community in New Zealand. Although conflicts with adults over the use of public space were a significant part of these young people's experiences, Nairn *et al.* (2013) found that many young people also felt included in the wider life of their communities in important ways (see also Valentine *et al.*'s 2002 discussion of the inclusionary and exclusionary implications of Information Community Technologies, and Wridt's 2004 discussion of 'block politics' for young people in New York city). Thus, this work is insightful in revealing that exclusionary and inclusionary practices structure young people's lived experiences of places.

Other work has adopted inclusionary methodologies to allow excluded young people greater latitude to express their voices and represent their lives (Vanderbeck and Dunkley, 2004). For instance, Cahill (2007a) discusses the potential of participatory action research for challenging the normative production of knowledge. Researching with young urban women from Lower East Side neighbourhood, New York City, The author developed a youth-centred approach to training the participants in research skills. Cahill (2007a) notes that the development of research skills may be in itself personally transformative, as the young women critically interrogate their everyday lives and collectively reflect on their experiences. Susinos (2007:117), studying people at risk of social exclusion, employs biographical and narrative techniques which have "an emancipating interest". The author maintains that this "tell me in your own words" approach allow us to learn the discourses of the young people that participated in the research, and to discover the milestones that have shaped their excluded identities (Susinos, 2007:117). Hopkins (2004), in a discussion

of the inclusions and exclusions of young muslim men in Scotland, employed focus groups, believing that they can redistribute power relations. Further, Hopkins (2004) offered the opportunity for the young men to review and confirm parts of their transcripts, showed some participants the main findings of the research, and gave them the opportunity to discuss and evaluate these preliminary findings.

Understanding social exclusion as a multifaceted concept, bound up with inclusionary practices, is thus important in order to fully comprehend young people's diverse experiences of social exclusion. I also take forward the value of inclusionary methodologies, which seek to place young people's accounts at the heart of the research project.

4.5 Understanding Social Capital

Social networks play an important role in providing information about employment opportunities and ways of gaining jobs (McDowell, 2002), as such, the acquisition of social capital is considered as one way to re-engage young people in the NEET category (Miller *et al.*, 2015). The term 'social capital' is widely used in the social sciences (Adkins, 2005), and the body of work examining the concept is expanding rapidly (Lovell, 2009). An often-touted critique is that the term social capital lacks precision, due to its increasing use in a variety of contexts (Lovell, 2009; Schaefer-McDaniel, 2004). This has implications for the study of social capital; for, if social capital is difficult to define, it becomes difficult to measure (Foley and Edwards, 1999; Morrow, 1999). Herein, social capital is explored with a focus on the competing, and in some ways overlapping, contributions made by three key social theorists; Pierre Bourdieu; James Coleman; and Robert Putnam.

For Bourdieu (1986:249), social capital is "the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance of importance". That is, it is a resource connected with group memberships and social networks, which provides individuals with "credit", a term which Bourdieu (1986) uses loosely. For Bourdieu (1986), social capital is one of four forms of capital, alongside economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. Bourdieu (1986:241) defines capital as "accumulated labour". Although Bourdieu (1986) positions social capital as distinct from economic capital,

and operating in a different way, he also suggests that the two forms of capital are inseparable. Bourdieu (1986) positions social capital as individualistic, and social connections are considered a means of cultivating individual superiority and personal economic gain. Key elements of Bourdieu's (1986) social capital theory are sociability, and the actors' skills and desires to sustain networks. The volume of social capital possessed by an agent depends on the size of the network of connections s/he can mobilise, and on the volume of the capital possessed by each of the individuals to whom s/he is connected (Bourdieu, 1986). The more connections a person makes, the larger the volume of capital that person can acquire. Group membership and involvement in social networks can thus be utilised to improve the social position of actors.

Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital is rooted in his theoretical ideas on class. Class distinctions are constructed and reproduced by inter-connections between different aspects of economic, political and cultural life (Bourdieu, 1986). One of the theoretical cornerstones of Bourdieu's (1977; 1990; 2000) thesis is habitus. For Bourdieu (1977:72), habitus is "the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations". Writing later, Bourdieu (2000) tells that habitus is a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour that people acquire through acting in society. In habitus, past and present intersect and unite. That is, habitus places weight on past experiences through the unconscious socialisation of different social groups, to make individuals aspire to possibilities that they deem feasible and within reach (Bourdieu, 1990). The individual is trapped within the limits of the "system of categories" attributed to his/her upbringing and training (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:126). Habitus reflects the different positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle-class or working-class environment. Individuals know how to "read" the future that "fits them", that is the future that is made for them, and which they are made for (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:130). Although habitus is durable, it is not eternal (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Yet, there is a relative irreversibility to the process, as all conditioning experiences are perceived through categories constructed by prior experiences.

Though with significant variations, Coleman (1988), like Bourdieu (1986), focuses on the benefits accruing to individuals or families by virtue of their ties with others. Coleman (1988) examines the effect of social capital within the family and the larger community. For Coleman (1988), the family plays a central role in the transmission of social capital. In this reading, the more that social capital is used, the more it grows. Coleman (1990) broadens the concept of social capital to include behaviour among entities, including firms and other hierarchical organisations. Coleman (1990:302) defines social capital as a “variety of entities” which have two characteristics in common. First, they consist of some aspect of a social structure. Second, they facilitate certain actions of individuals within the structure. For Coleman (1990), social capital can only be accumulated through the existence of a social structure, for instance an organisation, which facilitates interaction between individuals. Here, then, the organisation is central to the definition of social capital. Coleman’s (1990) understanding of social capital thus positions it as stock held by the marginalised, as well as the elite. Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman’s (1988; 1990) work agrees that financial capital is conducive in the flow of goods and services to individuals and groups, and that social capital is intangible in character.

For Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988; 1990), community ties are important for the benefits that they produce for individuals, in the form of reliable expectations. However, in a conceptual shift, led by Putnam (1993), social capital became an attribute of the community itself. Putnam (1993; 2000; 2001) popularises a notion of social capital that ties it to the production of collective goods, such as civic engagement, or a spirit of cooperation available to a community or nation at large (see Foley and Edwards, 1999). For Putnam (1993:167), social capital is “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions”. Putnam (1993) adopts the concept of social capital in a discussion of civic traditions in modern Italy, to theorise the complexities of trust and participation. Putnam (1993) focuses on small voluntary associations, and positions face-to-face relations as important in generating trust and a potential for community participation. In his later text, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam (2000) documents the decline of participation in America in politics, civic groups, religious organisations, trade unions and professional organisations, as well as in informal socialising. He uses the example of bowling, once considered a social

activity organised in leagues, which has been reduced to Americans bowling alone. Putnam (2000) suggests that people in America are relying less on the reciprocal networks that once made up their community, and instead focussing on function-based social capital, including the networks surrounding someone's workplace. DeFilippis (2001) argues that Putnam's (2000) notion of social capital is flawed as it fails to understand issues of power in the production of communities, and is essentially divorced from economic capital. He maintains that community development practice, based on this conception of social capital, is likewise flawed and that social capital's privileged position in community economic development is erroneous. DeFilippis (2001) argues for a return to Bourdieu's (1986) earlier conception of social capital. Following DeFilippis (2001), social capital must be recoupled with economic capital in order to regain meaning and utility.

While earlier discussions treated social capital as a unitary concept (Onyx and Bullen, 2001), more recent work has suggested the existence of three different types of social capital: bonding; bridging and linking. Bonding and bridging social capital are attributed largely to Gittel and Vidal (1998) and Putnam (2000). Bonding social capital occurs when residents within communities become acquainted with one another, whereas bridging social capital occurs when individuals of one group connect with other communities, crossing demographic divides such as ethnicity, background and age (Leonard and Onyx, 2003). Pigg and Crank (2004) usefully distinguish between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is associated with "dense, multiplex networks, long term reciprocity, shared norms, thick trust, and less instrumentality" (Pigg and Crank, 2004:68). On the contrary, bridging social capital is associated with "large, loose networks, relatively strict reciprocity, more frequent norm violation, a thinner or different sort of trust, and more instrumentality" (Pigg and Crank, 2004:67-68). In short, bonding social capital operates within particular communities and bridging social capital operates across social divides and groups. The third type of social capital, linking social capital, was proposed by Woolcock (2001). Linking social capital is characterised by connections between those with differing levels of power or social status, for instance the political elite and the general public. Terrion (2006) draws on Woolcock (2001) to define linking social capital as used by individuals to create alliances with individuals in positions of power, in order to leverage resources, ideas and

information from formal institutions and beyond the community. Further, Terrion (2006) highlights the importance of the bonding/bridging/linking triad of social capital in building stronger, more resilient families.

Although bonding social capital is often positioned as an antecedent to bridging social capital, for instance because those who are at ease with their own group identity are more tolerant of those belonging to different social groups (McGhee, 2003; Putnam, 2000), the distinction between bonding and bridging capital is crucial. White and Green (2011) argue that relationships formed by bonding social capital are somewhat limiting and may not encourage individuals to think beyond their geographically-bounded community. Kearns and Parkinson (2001:2105), too, refute the value of bonding social capital that helps people “get by”, rather than “get on”. This is made clear by Putnam (2000:19) who tells that “bonding social capital constitutes a kind of sociological superglue, whereas bridging social capital provides a sociological WD 40¹³”. The distinction between bonding and bridging capital can be understood through a discussion of tie strength.

4.5.1 Tie strength

When two individuals are connected by a set of social relations, a tie is formed (Hafner-Burton and Montgomery, 2006). The tie strength varies with the frequency, duration, intensity, and reciprocal quality of that relation. Granovetter (1973) suggests that strong ties are frequent contacts that typically have emotional, friendly, inferences and may include mutual favours. In contrast, weak ties, or “bridges” (Granovetter, 1973:1364), are infrequent contacts that are often without emotional content. On that assumption, strong ties have the greater benefit for individuals. However, Granovetter (1973) positions weak ties as a powerful feature of human relationships, useful for the acquisition of information and for societal integration. As Onyx and Bullen (2001) note, bridging social capital is characterised by weak ties.

¹³ WD-40 is the trademark name of a penetrating oil and water-displacing spray.

Revisiting the discussion of tie strength, Granovetter (1983:201) argues that acquaintances (weak ties) are “less likely to be socially involved with one another”, than friends (strong ties). Individuals with few weak ties will be limited to the local news and opinions of their close friends, and will receive less information from distant parts of the social system. This may result in a disadvantaged position in the labour market; for instance, not knowing about the latest job opportunities (Granovetter, 1983). More recently, Kramarz and Skans (2014) found that strong social ties, in this instance parental networks, affect the labour market entry of young graduates from different levels of schooling. The authors find that strong social ties are particularly important for low-educated young people, whom frequently find their first stable job through parental networks, whereas the impact of weak ties operates distinct from the level of education.

The literature on social capital tends to emphasise the positive features of social ties, thereby excluding their less desirable consequences. An exception is Portes and Landolt’s (2000:529) discussion of the “promise and pitfalls” of social capital’s role in development. Portes and Landolt (2000) argue that social ties do not always produce wholly positive outcomes. Owing to the unequal distribution of wealth and resources in society, “actors may have trustworthy and solidary social ties and still have access to limited or poor quality resources” (Portes and Landolt, 2000:532). The authors note that social capital can rarely be obtained without investment in material resources and the possession of cultural knowledge, which makes possible the establishment of associations with valued others. Following Portes and Landolt (2000), we can see that social ties can have negative effects, including exclusion of outsiders. That is, the same strong ties that enable group members to obtain privileged access to resources, can bar others from securing the same resources.

4.6 Young People and Social Capital

What is common amongst the founding conceptualisations of social capital (Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam), is that children and young people are positioned as passive recipients of the benefits of parental social capital. This has led to a neglect of young people’s own experiences (Holland *et al.*, 2007; Weller and Bruegel, 2009). Bourdieu (1986) constructs children largely as passive objects of

socialisation, whereby social and cultural capital are passed on through generations. A key argument levelled at this conceptualisation is that it ignores the potential of children and young people as active agents in the construction and exploitation of their own social capital. For Morrow (2001), one of the crucial provocations of Putnam's (1993; 2000) thesis is that he did not intend the concept of social capital to include young people, who are excluded from community participation by their very nature as 'children'. Putnam (2000:26) states "perhaps the young generation today is no less engaged than their predecessors, but engaged in new ways". However, as Weller (2006c) notes, Putnam (2000) fails to acknowledge what these new ways are. Thus, while Putnam (2000) can be credited for recognising children and young people in conversation with social capital, he emphasises the importance of parental social capital in a child's development and educational achievements, with little recognition of the influence of children's own networks and their ability to generate and mobilise social capital.

This is clear, too, in Coleman's (1988) work, where the term social capital is employed to assign the compound social mechanisms that parents acquire to improve their children's success. Coleman (1988) describes the role of family and community social capital in promoting high school completion among young people, yet fails to consider young people's own agency. Writing later, Coleman (1990) acknowledges that social capital is important for children. However, Coleman's (1990:318) focus on social capital to allow parents "to establish norms and reinforce each other's sanctioning of the children", constructs children as both passive and as future beneficiaries of their parents' social capital. By neglecting children's own social capital, Coleman (1990) fails to understand fully the relational nature of social capital within and across families (Weller and Bruegel, 2009). In this reading, social capital in the lives of children is a by-product of their parents' relationships with others (see Leonard, 2005). Further, social capital is presented as a resource that children and young people can utilise and benefit from in their future lives as adults, as opposed to their lives in the present.

In recent years, social capital theory has become progressively more accepted among scholars studying young people (Bassani, 2007). For instance, Holland *et al.* (2007) use social capital as a lens through which to explore transitions, networks and communities in the lives of children and young people. This study focuses on the experiences of young people aged 11-30 from diverse class, ethnic and faith backgrounds, living in a variety of national and transnational contexts. Holland *et al.* (2007) find that young people use social capital as a resource to negotiate transitions in their lives and in the construction of the self. However, they find inconsistent value in bonding social capital; for some young people, bonding social capital provides a solid base from which to bridge out to new networks whilst, for others, bonding social capital is constraining. Raffo and Reeves (2000) conducted research with young people, aged 15-24, from Manchester, UK. They found that young people have choice and agency in their daily actions and these choices help to develop the social relations an individual has over time. Belonging to a strong system of social capital can provide opportunities for authentic and informal learning that can result in empowerment to deal confidently with the post-industrial city. Raffo and Reeves (2000) therefore position young people as capable of exploiting resources for the benefit of social inclusion. In these readings, young people are active agents in the production of social capital.

Other research has made strides to make social capital relevant to the lives of young people. Voting is often regarded as the ultimate form of civic engagement, which implicitly excludes young teenagers through their status as non-voters (Weller, 2006c). Weller (2006c) recognises that teenagers' alternative forms of participation are rarely valued as legitimate acts of civic engagement. The upshot of this is that many studies neglect teenagers' abilities to generate and utilise social capital. A number of participants in Weller's (2006c) study were involved in actively shaping their local areas. Such alternative forms of participation include campaigning for skate park facilities, which contribute to community life and social capital formation. Thus, Weller (2006c:572) concludes that, far from Putnam's (2000) 'Bowling Alone', "Skateboarding Together" is a more apt starting point for examining young people's relationship with social capital. Following Bassani (2007), acknowledgement of this underrepresented perspective is acutely important, especially when considering that government and other policy-makers have been

eager develop social capital as a way of combating problems associated with young people's well-being.

4.7 Media and Social Capital

A further debate within the social capital literature surrounds the relationship between media and social capital. This is largely following from Putnam's (1995; 2000) attribution of the erosion of civic engagement in the US to television, through television's role in overriding social and leisure activities. Supporting Putnam's (1995; 2000) thesis, Olken's (2009) work on the impact of television and radio on social capital in Indonesia found a link between increased time spent watching television and listening to radio and lower levels of social participation and self-reported trust. However, in a reply to Putnam (1995), Norris (1996) suggests that the relationship between television and civic engagement is more complicated than implied. Norris (1996) argues that, although the quantity of television-viewing supports Putnam's (1995) thesis, watching programs such as those covering news and current affairs is not damaging to societal health and, actually, can be beneficial. Norris (1996) concludes that the claim that television is the cause of social capital erosion is deeply implausible (see also Beaudoin and Thorson, 2004, who reach the same conclusion). More recently, Keough (2012), in a discussion of Newfoundlanders in Fort McMurray, Alberta, argues that radio, television, and print media are important for the accumulation and maintenance of social capital, because they serve as mechanisms for gathering information and cultural content, for instance news, stories, and music. Further, these mediums are valuable as they enable Newfoundlanders in diaspora to keep in touch with events and people on the island.

I argue that Putnam (1995; 2000) and the successors named above fail to consider *participation in* television and radio projects, and solely focus on the passive act of viewing. My research remedies this neglect in considering participation in radio production and social capital accrual. It is noteworthy that other studies have considered how participatory instances of Internet use can affect the formation and maintenance of social capital. For instance, Shah *et al.* (2002) found that the interactive nature of social networking websites facilitates civic engagement and social capital accrual. Further, discussing the efficiency of the Internet for maintaining existing social ties and for creating new ties, Pénard and Poussing

(2010) find that Internet use has a positive impact on volunteer activities and trust, in online efforts to maintain social capital. However, they note that online efforts to create new ties are weakly related to Internet users' existing accrual of social capital. Clearly, there is more work to be done in considering media participation and social capital accumulation.

4.8 Concluding Remarks

The themes discussed in this chapter (youth transitions; social exclusion; and social capital), are closely connected to the concept of NEET, and are all implicated in research and policy that attempts to reduce the numbers of 'NEET' young people. This chapter has suggested that a focus on aspirations is problematic in considering how young people imagine their futures, placing the 'failure' of unachieved aspirations on the individual young person. Limitations of an aspirations approach can be remedied by adopting a 'possible selves' vantage point. There is increasing recognition within children's geographies and beyond (e.g. Holland *et al.*, 2007; Leonard, 2005; Morrow, 1999; 2001) that young people are active agents in the construction and negotiation of their own social capital. My study builds upon such empirical work in support of this proposition. I do so by exploring the ways in which young people build social capital through engagement with KCC Live, thereby combating social exclusion. Having summarised key criticisms levelled at Putnam's (2000) notion of social capital, this thesis takes forward Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualisation of social capital as an individual pursuit. Whilst critical of Putnam's (2000) stance on social capital, I join Holland *et al.* (2007) in finding value in drawing upon notions of bonding (within community) and bridging (between communities) social capital.

Chapter Five

Methodology and Research Design

5.1 Introduction

Though it is recognised that theories, methods and research ethics are interconnected (Morrow, 2008), for narrative purposes, this chapter is divided into sections. Such a separation is artificial and it bears emphasising that, in practice, these were very much intertwined. I conducted this research using a mixed methods approach, employed through a participatory design. Mixed methods have been heralded for their ability to answer more complex research questions (Brannen, 2008), and to advance separate research methods by increasing validity, thereby providing a more comprehensive picture of results (see Denscombe, 2008). I have drawn on a range of qualitative and quantitative methods: 18 months of observant participation at KCC Live; interviews and focus groups with volunteers; interviews with management at KCC Live and Knowsley Community College; a listener survey; listener diaries; and follow-up listener diary interviews. I chose the above methods as they enabled engagement with the broad range of communities involved in KCC Live, including the listening audience, as well as the volunteer body and staff. In addition, these methods were well suited to the ethnographic nature of the research, allowing for in-depth exploration of the research topic. In this chapter, I reflexively detail how the methods evolved within the field, owing to the participatory design of the project. I problematise the alleged emancipatory potential of participatory research in detailing the co-production of audio artefacts. I argue that the meaning of ‘participatory’ in participatory research should be determined in communication with study participants. Only then can research be considered truly participatory.

5.2 Youth-led Participatory Research

Since the 1990s, research with children and young people has witnessed significant changes that have stood to challenge traditional research methods (Weller, 2006b), and have endeavoured to dismantle conceptions of children as mindless and deviant (see Pain, 2003). The literature has witnessed a surge in children-centred, and less so young people-centred, research methods. Such methods endeavour to remedy power inequities by supporting participants to choose their own methods of communication

(Valentine, 1999; Weller, 2006b). This is in line with the emphasis upon young people's agency in children's geographies (e.g. Holloway and Valentine, 2000). Pain and Kindon (2007:2807) argue that, owing to the "inherently spatial" nature of participation, geographers have major contributions to make to participatory theory. Participatory geographies have increasingly gained credibility, heralded as creating "a more vibrant research agenda" (Cahill, 2007b:4), and opening up new theoretical possibilities, particularly regarding working with young people (Fox, 2013). As Pain and Francis (2003) note, at their best, participatory research methods work with participants to produce change. For, when people are involved in research they have greater opportunity to influence decisions that concern their lives (Swantz, 1996). At its most basic, participatory research involves those conventionally 'researched' in the different phases of study: for instance, in the construction of data (Gallagher, 2008); presentation of research findings and dissemination (Pain, 2004); and the pursuit of follow-up action (Cahill *et al.*, 2007). Though ostensibly related to ethnographic research, participatory methods are positioned as less invasive than traditional ethnographies, as participants assume an active role in the research process. For while ethnography involves "telling the story of how people...create the ongoing character of particular social places and practice" (Katz, 1997:414), participatory research allows the people in the study to do the 'telling'.

It has been argued that participatory methodologies provide opportunities for young people to present their experiences and knowledge that is less likely to be mired by researcher concerns (Dentith *et al.*, 2009). Participatory research attempts to minimise the "us and them" dichotomy between academic researcher and participants (Pain, 2004:656), or rather between "expert and other" (Mohan, 1999:44), accepting that participants are "the real source of knowledge" (Ho, 2013a:6). However, owing to the collaborative nature of the participatory process, power dynamics can be difficult to negotiate (Cooke, 2001). DeLemos (2006) recognises the problems associated with renouncing total control of the research. The author highlights the shifting power scales from research *on* communities to research *with* and *for* communities. By researching *with* KCC Live volunteers, I endeavoured to break down the hierarchies of knowledge and democratise the research process. As Cahill (2007b:16) puts it, I attempted to move beyond the "privileged perspectives of the ivory tower".

I purposively recruited twelve volunteers at KCC Live, six students from Knowsley Community College, and six members of the broader community. Although I made effort to include mixed gender participants, community radio is male-dominated (Mitchell, 2004); as such, an equal mix of male and female participants would have been an unrealistic representation. For this reason, my key sample consisted of eight men and four women. Although I engaged in more structured research with these individuals, other volunteers were included in my study via ethnographic research. The total number of volunteers that participated in my study is 21 (13 men and 8 women). In the spirit of polyvocality, the voices of all of the young people appear in this thesis (see Appendix 1 for information on the young people). The ‘young people’ (as mentioned within the Introduction, using KCC Live’s own conceptualisation), were aged between 17 and 38 years old. As I was conducting fieldwork for 18 months, the young people naturally aged during this time. Within the empirical chapters, I present the age of the young person at the time when I engaged in that particular interview/conversation/observation.

Within my research, young people at KCC Live became knowledgeable about social research methods, and in this way can be considered “learner researchers” (Byrne *et al.*, 2009:71). The young people gained knowledge and experience which may aid them in their transition to Higher Education or employment. In a process of mutual learning (Ho, 2013b), I was a co-learner in their everyday lifeworlds (Minkler *et al.*, 2002). Specifically, the young people taught me skills in audio recording, editing and production, required to produce audio artefacts (discussed in more detail in 5.7). It is fruitful here to return to Chávez and Soep’s (2005) exploration of the collaboration among young people and adult participants. The authors introduce the concept of ‘pedagogy of collegiality’ to describe how young people and adults are mutually dependent on one another’s abilities, viewpoints, and combined efforts to engender original, multitextual, professional-quality work. The point I make here is that being taught and learning new skills and knowledge does not equate to being non-agentic; rather, it is an everyday practice.

By involving young people in the research process I desired that they “cease being data mules in the carriage of other people’s academic careers” (Smyth and McInerney, 2013:17-18), and instead are realised as competent actors in their own lifeworlds. Despite young people assuming a more active role in participatory research, the process can still be configured as adult-controlled (Morrow, 2008; Sime, 2008). Mohan (1999:51) expresses this concern: “despite replacing a monologue with polyphony there are still the questions of who writes up, who publishes the material and whose career benefits?”. Mohan’s (1999) account demonstrates the extent to which researchers *use* participants throughout the research process, typically abandoning them after the data gathering stage. There are different levels of participatory engagement within participatory research (Sutton, 2009). I do not present this project as fully participatory as young people were not involved in setting up the project, designing the initial research questions, and writing this thesis.

Related to this latter point is this issue of authorship. As young people at KCC Live did not contribute to the writing of this thesis (this was considered a burdensome and time-consuming request), I have not named them as authors. However, in acknowledging the valuable contributions of the young people, I include their voices in each of the remaining chapters of this thesis. As the reader will notice, I include lengthy excerpts where possible to acknowledge the depth of the insights offered. Any publications arising from this work will be authored by myself but again, where possible, showcasing the voices of the young people. The two audio artefacts accompanying this thesis are co-authored by the young people and I, and young people at KCC Live have full access to these artefacts and can broadcast them on air or share them on social media as they wish. In sum then, this research project was framed by “pockets of participation” (Franks, 2011:15), at different stages throughout the research. Such pockets of participation included different activities for the young people to “*opt into*” (Leyshon, 2002:182, emphasis in original), as I make clear throughout this chapter.

5.3 Observant Participation

I undertook observant participation at KCC Live for 18 months, and overtly observed the multi-layered everyday lifeworlds (see Habermas, 1987) of the station volunteers and staff. My decision to use the term ‘observant participation’ over ‘participant observation’ is due to how much weight I gave to each role, that is ‘participant’ and ‘observer’. Monti (1992) notes that, in any fieldwork, there is a battle between the role of observer and participant, and though there is no written rule, the role of observer should take precedence. However, whilst I observed, I intentionally positioned myself as very much more of a participant. I agree with Moeran (2007) that observant participation should be the ideal to which all researchers aspire when conducting fieldwork.

To ensure my participation was equal to that of other volunteers, I completed broadcast training, both internally within KCC Live and I undertook additional training with the National Broadcasting School at Liverpool-based commercial station Radio City (see Appendix 2). Referring to Dunbar-Hester’s (2008:212) study of ‘Geek Group’, a group of individuals who build radio hardware, the researcher notes that it was a “hindrance” that she was “not more versed in the skills of the group”, believing that if she possessed such skills she could have contributed to projects more fully. By ensuring technical ability, I was making possible my active participation in the station; this quickly led to me co-presenting a weekly show on KCC Live, and eventually presenting my own four-hour weekly show. This was beneficial in enabling first-hand communication with the listening community. I thus join Moeran (2007) in positioning observant participation as marking an important rite of passage in fieldwork, affecting the richness of data I was able to gather. The shift from participant observation to observant participation is concerned with the ability to see beyond the social front that participants present to strangers in their everyday lives (Moeran, 2007); that is, to know that there is a difference between their frontstage and backstage behaviour (Goffman, 1959), and to have ready access to both those front and back stages. As Moeran (2007) points out, the ability to move backstage is dependent partly on the personality of the researcher (I explore this in section 5.10.1).

I joined KCC Live in March 2012, and initially attended the station one day per week for two months. This initial scoping period was important as a process of acculturation (see Leyshon, 2002), enabling me to establish rapport with staff and volunteers, and familiarise myself with the protocols, values and behaviours of KCC Live. After this period, I attended the station more frequently, on average four days per week, between the hours of 8am and 8pm, for around 16 months. Throughout this time, I divided - often with some difficulty - my presence between the studio, green room and staff office. However, my observant participation was not restricted to the station. I also took part in events both founded and supported by KCC Live, including fundraising activities, such as supermarket bag packing events and a twelve-hour bowling event. In addition to this, I attended training sessions, charity events and community media events. I accepted invitations to attend Liverpool International Music Festival with a fellow volunteer with a press pass, and Parklife Festival with the Station Manager.

I recorded thoughts, feelings and casual interactions through written anecdotes in a personal research diary (Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002). In the early days of my fieldwork, I sat in anticipation for major events to arise, for something to jump out at me and record immediately onto my blank page. On certain days or weeks, nothing 'big' seemed to occur. I soon realised that this in itself was significant. Laurier and Philo (2006:353) make a related observation about the significance of silence in fieldwork: "is the encounter at the heart of fieldwork ultimately unspeakable? Impasses, silences and aporias: these words bring to mind cul-de sacs, unbridgeable chasms". I learnt that what I was observing was naturally occurring and that the ordinariness (Seigworth, 2000) and banal, everyday geographies (Horton and Kraftl, 2005), was precisely what I should be documenting through ethnographic accounts. Following Horton (2014:733, emphasis in original), I paid close attention to the taken-for-granted everyday practices of young people at KCC Live, reflecting upon "things that are actually *done* with, and in relation to, popular cultural *stuff*".

My diary contained highly subjective accounts that I reflected upon periodically. Constable (2013:117) notes his experiences of "the favourite nuggets" of data that he replays in his head, considering these "gift-materials" entrusted to him by participants. Akin to Constable (2013), I experienced pride and excitement in writing

down accounts. As well as observations, I also included methodological reflections on the research process (see North, 2006). I chose to handwrite rather than type a diary for two reasons. First, I associated typing with academic writing. Therefore, I feared that when using a computer I would deliberate about my notes too much, allowing for a process of immediate editing, as opposed to writing what I saw and how I felt at that exact moment. Second, I did not feel comfortable typing on a Word document at KCC Live as my computer was open access and I worried that the young people would see. However, due to the prank-conducting nature of the station (all in good humour), for instance, volunteers hiding people's possessions, such as mobile phones and favourite mugs, I became cautious about leaving my diary lying around. Therefore, whilst Ho (2013b) advocates use of a personal diary as a mechanism to cope with uncomfortable matters, I kept my diary content light-hearted. I noted more serious issues in brief, and then wrote them out fully in a separate diary, which I kept at home. Combining my observations with narratives from repeated interviews and scheduled focus groups provided me with a comprehensive insight into the value of, and attachment to, KCC Live for volunteers and station management.

5.4 In-depth Interviews

Qualitative semi-structured interviewing is an established and respected method for social and geographical research (Mason, 2002). Considering in-depth interviews as personal and intimate encounters (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006), I used them as a window to the stories of participants (Rabionet, 2011). In particular, such interviews were useful for eliciting information regarding the attitudes, acuties and perceptions towards the station. I separate out the young people and stakeholder interviews below.

I conducted more than 90 semi-structured in-depth interviews with volunteers at KCC Live. The majority of young people were interviewed individually, but there was one occasion when I interviewed two young people together after an on-air incident. I recorded the interviews using my mobile phone, as this device is familiar with young people (whereas a digital voice recorder may not be), and I therefore felt that its use was less obtrusive. The spaces and places in which research encounters occur is important, particularly in children's geographies where certain spaces can be

skewed towards adult power and authority (Jones, 2008). I conducted interviews within soundproofed studios at KCC Live and empty classrooms at Knowsley Community College. These locations were familiar to volunteers and places they told me they felt comfortable, thus putting participants at ease (see Longhurst, 2003). By conducting the first interviews after I had been a member of the station for around four months, it is reasonable to claim that my position as a ‘familiar face’ to the young people enabled a more relaxed interview environment.

Interviews typically lasted between one and one and a half hours, or around 30 minutes for follow-up interviews. Preliminary interviews focused on collating autobiographical data to provide contextual information about each volunteer (see also O’Toole, 2003). I also asked questions to discover what KCC Live means to the interviewees (see Appendix 3). The interviews loosely followed the proposed questions, allowing participants to bring to the fore issues that were important to them. Follow-up interviews pursued points raised in previous interviews or related to seeking clarification of my observations. I conducted the follow-up interviews around two months after the initial interviews, and I conducted between two and seven follow-up interviews with each young person. The number of follow-up interviews varied, for instance, depending on how frequent a volunteer’s presence was at the station, whether they remained at KCC Live throughout my research, and how contactable they were if they left the station. This repeated informal ethnographic interview technique enabled me to conduct further interviews intermittently throughout the fieldwork, whenever I saw fit or, as was sometimes the case, when a young person requested to be interviewed. The reason for requesting to be interviewed, I was told, was the cathartic benefits of the interview process, allowing young people to vent repressed emotions, or to reflect on recent successes and achievements.

I conducted six semi-structured in-depth interviews with key stakeholders at KCC Live, including: station management and management from Knowsley Community College, where KCC Live is based (see Appendix 4 for participant information). I opted for a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. I used purposive sampling to recruit major players within KCC Live and the college, and I used a snowballing technique to recruit less visible interviewees (see Clapham *et al.*, 2014),

specifically former members of college management. Most interviews were conducted within empty classrooms at Knowsley Community College. Regarding former management, who considered it uncomfortable to encroach on college territory under new management, I organised interviews at a local café. Interviews typically lasted between one and one and a half hours.

These interviews functioned as a pocket of participation (Franks, 2011), as young people were involved in designing and refining interview questions for current station management (see Appendix 5), and the founders of KCC Live (see Appendix 6). This took the form of mental mapping sessions whereby volunteers came up with a series of questions that they thought would be suitable to ask, with the research objectives in mind. Before each stakeholder interview began, I explained the outline of the research project and the participants' right to withdraw. Following Longhurst (2003), I asked questions in a friendly conversational tone, promoting a two-way exchange, as opposed to a stringent question and answer structure. All staff members were interviewed individually, with the exception of a joint feedback interview at the end of the research project, where I delivered recommendations to two members of KCC Live management and recorded their responses.

5.5 [Participatory] Focus Groups

Focus groups, characterised by interaction (Smithson, 2000), are valued for eliciting the views and experiences of young people (Morgan *et al.*, 2002). In my research, the purpose of focus groups was to foster group discussions surrounding issues that had surfaced during individual interviews and my observations. This is important as “we are none of us self-contained, isolated, static entities; we are part of complex and overlapping social, familial and collegiate networks” (Kitzinger, 1994:117). Though discussions of the appropriate number of focus group members abound, I am in agreement with Krueger (1995) that six to eight participants is an effective size (see also Horner, 2000). I held two focus group sessions with volunteers; both focus groups contained seven participants. The focus groups were conducted within empty classrooms at Knowsley Community College. Each focus group lasted approximately one hour. I obtained written consent from all participants prior to conducting the focus groups. Further to this, at the start of the focus group sessions, I read a statement aloud explaining the format and nature of the sessions. I created an

enjoyable atmosphere for participants by providing refreshments (food is seen as a popular incentive, Vromen and Collin, 2010), and emphasising the informality of the sessions.

Owing to the multiple participants in contrast to the sole researcher, focus groups can be characterised by a power imbalance (Smithson, 2000). I initially planned my role to be facilitator and to probe for explanation yet, during the first focus group, I noticed that certain young people were keen to adopt a key role in leading the discussions. I did not see this as problematic. See the following excerpt from the focus group session:

Robbie: You can still have community though because, okay maybe it is mainly older generations but when they live in a close [a residential street], and it's, I think it's sometimes people's reluctance to go and knock on a door and say "hello", I think that if you knocked on, yeah, if you knocked on most people's doors and said "hiya I'm so and so from down the street" they'd be like "oh hiya how are you?"

Bruce: Do you think the media has anything to do with that? Making us scared of strangers?

Robbie: You see, when you said you used to play out, I think that like, stuff like with Jamie Bulger¹⁴, made people not want to let their kids out. Like when I was little, my parents would use to say "just go and play, just don't go over the line"

(Robbie, 26 and Bruce, 25, focus group)

Having noted young people's desire to take the lead in asking questions, I implemented a participatory design into the second focus group through adopting a peer-led dimension, allowing the young people to ask the questions.

I trained the young people, through informal role-play examples, in asking questions to elicit rich data and in effective listening skills. However, I wish to mention that many of the young people already possessed skills in posing questions and listening, owing to their experience of interviewing music artists and bands. Therefore, whilst some authors (e.g. Kilpatrick *et al.*, 2007; Lushy and Munro, 2014) find that peer researchers fail to probe for further information or to clarify issues, young people at KCC Live were particularly effective at this. One area of training that young people

¹⁴ James Patrick Bulger (known in the media as Jamie Bulger) was a two-year-old boy who disappeared from the New Strand Shopping Centre in Bootle, while accompanying his mother. It was found that Bulger had been abducted, tortured and murdered by two ten-year-old boys.

found useful was non-verbal cues (such as smiling and nodding to acknowledge what is being said). Since young people's interviews with artists and bands often occurred via recorded telephone discussions, many young people were not conscious of the visual cues they were conveying or receiving. Thus, the young people became "learner researchers" (Byrne, *et al.*, 2009:71) through this process.

A peer-led dimension to focus groups can remove the power differential between the researcher and the researched (Murray, 2006). Below, I provide an excerpt from the second focus group session to demonstrate an instance of the success of this participatory approach:

Harry: That's where the Liverpool - Manchester rivalry comes from, like we have the docks, and that's where we built all our money, and then Manchester built the Manchester shipping canal to steal some of our trade

Robbie: Do you not think also though that we've lost this sense of community too because funding's been cut for everything?

Harry: I think community's actually getting a little bit stronger because of that, like do you remember when the libraries started shutting and people, people rallied. People rallied because like that's when communities get together when they actually started to think wait a minute, we actually live here, this affects us, and it not only affects me but it affects my neighbour, and that's when community happens I think, like lately community has felt a lot stronger and I actually believe that

(Harry, 24, and Robbie, 26, participatory focus group)

I term this a participatory focus group as, dissimilarly to the peer-led focus groups that Murray (2006) discusses, I remained present. This was under the request of participants who asked that I monitored the session in case they went 'off track'. I was a silent observer and only interjected to ensure an equilibrium of power within the group, or when asked to by the young people. I believe that my presence in this situation had no more of an impact than it did during my observant participations, and in line with Murray (2006), I found that the young people's conversations during the focus group were of the same nature as those that I typically observed. Again, I recorded the focus group sessions using my mobile phone, aiming for an unobtrusive presence.

5.5.1 Map- Labelling Exercise

I asked young people at KCC Live if they would like to take part in a map-labelling exercise of a Merseyrail map. Five young people opted into this, and the exercise was then undertaken within a focus group setting. A popular Liverpool social media account ‘Scouse Bird Problems’ previously posted a labelled Merseyrail network ‘map of the local area’. I used the same map and asked the young people to help me to label it. Although certain studies have used map drawing with young people (e.g. Literat, 2013; Ravn and Duff, 2015), I position map-labelling as a less onerous activity. This was particularly suited to my project as I was curious about young people’s thoughts on locations that were geographically mapped. My intention with this activity was to gauge young people’s conceptualisations of neighbouring towns and districts. As the young people were not concentrating their efforts on drawing, I found they engaged in lively debates. Within this task, I used “word association” (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014:1170), whereby I read out the names of different areas on the map, in turn, and asked the volunteers to discuss amongst themselves words that they associated with these places. I then asked the young people to work together to decide one key word that they associated with this place, which I then used to label the map. Though I have included this map within my findings (see Chapter Seven), I was most interested in the discussions that unfolded during the exercise.

5.6 Listener Survey

Professional audience measurement as conducted by public service and commercial radio broadcasters, such as RAJAR, is not suitable for community radio (Hallett, 2012). There is the issue of high costs that are not appropriate for a voluntary and non-profit sector. Also at issue is whether such approaches are somewhat “granular”, with a propensity towards inaccuracy when measuring smaller services (Hallett, 2012:377). The young people and I therefore co-produced a bespoke listener survey (see Appendix 7). The survey design was participatory in the sense that the young people actively suggested questions to be included, and they revised drafts of the survey before a final version was created. Chris reflects on the skills he gained through his role as a co-researcher in the construction of this survey:

I learnt like how to make up proper questions, to sort of get the right answers. So you can't just ask anything, you have to word them right. That will help me if I get a job at The Council and that

(Chris, 18, interview)

Similarly, Wright and Mahiri (2012) tell how, through youth-led participatory action research, young people in their study were supported in the attainment of academic literacy skills.

The young people and I decided to produce the survey digitally. SelectSurvey.NET, web-based survey software offered by the University of Liverpool, was used to create and administer the survey. We released the survey online on 21st October 2013 and left it active for 12 months before closing it, pending analysis. The young people and I worked to produce a short 'Live Read' script:

Do you have something to say about KCC Live? We're hosting a listener survey and we want your thoughts about the station. If you want to take part, visit the KCC Live Facebook page 'KCC Live Official' or on Twitter '@KCCLive'. If you have something to say about KCC Live then we want to hear it!

This was read out on KCC Live at different times during the day, several times a day and five days a week initially, encouraging response to the survey. We created a user-friendly link that was shared on KCC Live's Facebook and Twitter accounts. As Hallett (2012) tells, if kept reasonably short, it is realistic to expect high completion rates. The final Internet-based survey consisted of 29 items, a number deemed large enough to acquire the necessary information, yet not too large to be off-putting to potential respondents. The survey included quantitative Likert-type scale items, close-ended and open-ended response formats. From trialling the survey, I learnt that it would take approximately 10 minutes for respondents to complete. The total number of responses was 317. There was no minimum or maximum age threshold for participating; rather, the survey was aimed broadly at radio listeners. It should be borne in mind that those who contribute to online surveys are a self-selecting group, and thus may not be illustrative of KCC Live's listenership.

Importantly, too, respondents were limited to those who had access to a computer/the Internet. Nulty (2008) argues that online surveys will likely receive a much lower response rate than paper-based surveys. Acknowledging that an online survey alone was not enough to garner the desired response rates, the volunteers and I conducted

street surveying. In order to obtain the most representative sample, we conducted surveying on weekdays, as well as on weekends. The total number of responses to the paper-based surveys was 143. The young people identified key locations within KCC Live's broadcast remit to deploy the survey: Huyton; Prescot; Kirkby; and Stockbridge Village. We opted to survey outside supermarkets and shopping centres, at community events, and we approached people working in local businesses. We surveyed a range of respondents based on age and gender, and we asked those we approached if they were radio listeners before proceeding. Below, Kurt reflects on the skills he gained through in-person surveying:

It was good like, when we were asking people the questions and I was just stood there, and you like showed me how to approach people. Because to begin with I was like "no, I don't want to do it, what if they say no?" type thing, but then I saw you do it, and I'm like it's not the end of the world if they say no, they're probably just err busy and stuff. Even though I speak on the radio to loads of people, I didn't have the like confidence to approach people, but after that training with you I do now, like I will ask someone the time if my phone's run out and stuff

(Kurt, 17, interview)

Kurt recalls an occasion when a group of volunteers and I were distributing listener surveys in Huyton town centre. Although Kurt had been eager to participate, he was reluctant to approach people. With my coaching, Kurt overcame this, and he mentions that he is now able to approach strangers to ask them for the time.

I input the data gained through in-person surveying into the online survey to keep the data in one place. Within research into Future Radio, a UK community radio station, Hallett (2012), suggests that around 300 is an appropriate sample to provide a measurable indication of the listenership and reach. The total sample of our survey consisted of 460 people who either self-selected to complete the survey (i.e. online), or who were approached opportunistically. Impressively, however, online figures revealed that 2174 people had accessed the survey. The fact that less than one in six people who accessed the survey online chose to complete it may be a reflection that, despite my best efforts, the survey appeared too onerous. Recognising the difficulty in gaining survey responses, I offered the incentive of a £25 high-street gift voucher (Love2shop) as part of a prize draw. More than half (242) of the total respondents opted to leave their e-mail address to be in with a chance of winning the voucher.

This demonstrates that an incentive to participate is a useful, yet not defining, aspect of respondent recruitment.

Although the survey was of use for my research, the results predominantly acted as a gesture to KCC Live. The survey provided KCC Live with information regarding the profile of listeners, including socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender and postcode. The survey also provided information regarding listener wants and needs, and their radio consumption habits; for instance, what shows they listen to, how long they listen for and where they listen, as well as overall levels of awareness of/engagement with KCC Live. Information gained is useful in ensuring output is relevant to the station's target audience. Further, it is of use for KCC Live in attaining sponsors who may have been reluctant to engage with the station without this data. Additionally, the data are of benefit to KCC Live as they can incorporate aspects into funding applications, consolidating the station's credentials (Hallett, 2012). As an example, I have recently produced a report for KCC Live containing the survey data for a funding bid.

5.6.1 Follow-up survey interviews

Professional audience surveys typically prioritise quantitative measures of audience size, whilst qualitative elements pertaining to audience satisfaction are overlooked (Hallett, 2012). As part of the listener survey, respondents were asked to leave their e-mail address if they would like to take part in further stages of the project. 55 respondents expressed interest in taking part in follow-up research. I sent an e-mail to these respondents. Included in this e-mail was a Participant Information Sheet (see Appendix 8), outlining the reason for my contact and next steps, were they to express interest in being involved. Seven people replied to this e-mail, who were relatively varied in age, gender and demographics: two students at Knowsley Community College (one man and one woman); a female student at a local private school; a father of a KCC Live volunteer; a male university student; a young mum living in Cornwall; and a male young person in the NEET category (see Appendix 9).

I provided all participants with a consent form to read and sign. The follow-up interviews were advantageous as they enabled me to flesh out the survey data. The semi-structured format of these interviews allowed flexibility to pursue points of interest raised by the interviewees (Longhurst, 2003). Interviews were conducted at locations selected by the listeners, typically in cafés. For one of the listeners, Michelle, who lives in Cornwall, I conducted a recorded interview via telephone and engaged in more informal conversations privately on Facebook Messenger. The aim of the interviews was to find out why people listen to KCC Live; what the strengths of the station are; and how it could improve its output. However, at a deeper level the questions aimed to determine: who is KCC Live's listening community? What is their connection and loyalty to the station? Does KCC Live's output feature as a central point in their lives or is it audio wallpaper? Do they/How do they interact with KCC Live? How, if at all, does the station change their view of their community? The follow-up interviews enhanced the credibility of the survey findings; although the sample is much smaller, the data I gathered was much richer.

5.6.2 Listener diaries

At the conclusion of the follow-up interviews, I asked the seven listeners if they would like to take part in a further phase of the project. I described this as a listener diary exercise, whereby diarists would document their listening habits, to be used as research data. All participants agreed to take part, although the two participants from Knowsley Community College later dropped out, having lost their diaries. I therefore had five completed listener diaries to use as data. I purchased good-quality 'day per page' diaries so that participants could use the diary after the research project if they wished. Whilst Kenten (2010) allowed one page of A4 paper per day in her research, I felt that an A4 page would have appeared daunting, and would have been less portable. I therefore provided A5 diaries, but informed participants that, if they wished, they could use pages at the end of the diary to follow on from longer entries. Only one participant opted to use this extra space. One diarist, Eddie (21), chose to type his entries rather than using the diary provided (more on this below).

Solicited diaries have been used in previous research to access everyday experiences (Morrison, 2012; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2013). The usefulness of diaries as a methodological tool is attributed to their ability to facilitate access to emotional

spaces and situations, typically beyond the researcher's reach (Morrison, 2012). While Crang (2003:501) positions solicited diaries as useful for eliciting the "felt, touched and embodied constitution of knowledge", I advocate the usefulness of diaries in my research to the production of knowledge that is 'felt, *heard* and embodied'. Beneficially, the solicited diary is a portable method (Bijoux and Myers, 2006), and therefore can engage with the variety of spaces afforded by the portability of radio. Participants often noted completing their diary on the move, for instance as a passenger in the car and on public transport, as well as in the spaces of home or school/college/university/work. Each participant approached writing the diary in a different way, some wrote lengthy paragraphs, whilst others used bullet points. Eddie, as mentioned above, opted to type his diary entries. I noticed that Eddie's entries were essay-like and formed a critique of the station and music broadcast. Eddie later informed me, during the follow-up diary interview, that in addition to using the diary as part of my research project, he had also been using the content as coursework for his Music university degree. It is therefore important to appreciate that Eddie was completing the diary with an academic audience in mind.

I provided a guidance sheet (see Appendix 10), which I attached inside the front cover of each diary to assist with the completion of entries (Harvey, 2011). However, it was common for participants to use the diary to discuss unrelated topics or to write 'to do' lists for the day ahead. See below as an example:

Activity/to do list

- If weather holds paint shed roof eve
- Tidy up spare rooms & attic
- Cook tea
- Prep for a meeting I'm going to tonight
- Watch DVD I bought Ellen recently

(John, 50, listener diary, listening at home, 25/02/14)

Therefore, whilst some authors position content guidelines as co-constructing the content of diaries (see Kenten, 2010), the inclusion of 'to do' lists and unrelated content, such as that above, indicates that the guidance sheet I produced was not overly prescriptive. I agreed with participants at the beginning of this research phase that, if it would help them, I would e-mail or text them gentle reminders to complete the diary. One of my participants in the follow-up interview pinpointed this as being helpful. There is debate surrounding the ideal timescale allocated to diary

completion. Whilst some researchers advocate a short number of days (Myers, 2010), others advocate weeks (Jacelon and Imperio, 2005), and a month or more (Meth, 2003). I allowed the listeners to dictate how long they desired to keep the diary for, emphasising that this could be for as long or as short a period as they wished, whilst setting an upper limit of one year, due to demands of PhD completion. Respondents kept their diaries for between one and five months, therefore providing me with longitudinal insight into their listening habits. Completion of the listener diary was intermittent for some listeners, whilst habitual for others. Just as in Morrison's (2012) study, I used follow-up interviews to gain deeper insight and context into the content of the diaries, and to fill in any omissions. These interviews were diary-led, and diary entries served as a "memory prompt" during the interviews (Harvey, 2011:666), to reflect on listening to certain shows.

5.7 Audio Artefacts

...radio is like a modern railroad system. Its freight trains may get everywhere but they serve no purpose unless the freight gets collected at the other end

(Siepmann and Reisberg, 1948:649)

This historic observation from communications scholars Siepmann and Reisberg (1948) has resonance with the dissemination of findings in this study via audio content. The youth-led participatory research involved the co-production of an audio documentary and three-part radio series, broadcast on KCC Live. It is in this respect that young people's voices in my research moved beyond dialogue with the researcher, and entered into a public realm (see also Baker, 2015 on the production of community portraits). Typically, dissemination practices consist of publishing articles in academic journals and writing books that sit unread by the wider public in university libraries (Richardson, 2000). As Richardson (2000:924) asserts:

It seems foolish at best, and narcissistic and wholly absorbed at worst, to spend months or years doing research that ends up not being read and not making a difference to anything but the author's career.

This considered, co-production of the audio artefacts ensured that the research was disseminated in "culturally appropriate ways" (Smith, 1999b:15). This does not prohibit writing for publication (Smith, 1999b); rather, I found this collaborative approach to be both ethical and respectful to KCC Live.

Much has been written about the use of visual research methods as useful tools for participatory research with young people, for instance photography and video (e.g. Blazek and Hraňová, 2012; Waite and Conn, 2011; Young and Barratt, 2001). Geography is an intrinsically visual discipline (Rose, 1993), perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, little mention has been made of audio methods (an exception is the audio diary which has been relatively well utilised e.g. Gibson *et al.*, 2013; Monrouxe, 2009). The production of the audio texts was both empowering and democratising, enabling volunteers to shape the parameters of the research and contribute to analysis and dissemination. Furthermore, the audio artefacts yielded what a youth worker in McLaughlin's (1993:59) study termed "visible victories", or rather audible victories, for the young people, through being engaged in meaningful projects. Further, heeding Harris *et al.* (2010), I considered the co-production of audio artefacts to be a logical step, as it draws on the young people's everyday ways of acting and is suited to their own ways of communicating.

The documentary, titled 'Community to me is...', is a compilation of the young people's conceptualisations of community. The three-part series, titled 'What we found', discusses the results of the research. Regarding the latter, the young people and I broadcast one show per month over a period of three months. Part 1 focused on the findings in relation to youth voice; Part 2 on the findings in relation to community; and Part 3 concerned findings regarding skills and development. The decision to co-produce the radio series, as opposed to a second documentary (as was initially the plan), was part of a desire to satisfy Ofcom commitments to engage young people in discussion around topical issues. KCC Live management decided that the best way to satisfy these commitments was to host 'special' monthly shows on air. As part of this, presenters would invite an 'expert' in to discuss their opinions on topics. Thus, to satisfy this demand, the young people refer to me as 'expert' or 'specialist' within the 'What we found' radio series yet, as explored earlier, this is not reflective of how I positioned myself throughout the research. Additionally, although in the 'What we found' radio series, the young people and I intended to solely discuss the results of the research project, we were conscious that people listening may have felt excluded from discussions that were overly focussed on KCC Live. As such, the young people also drew on experiences within their wider lives when discussing the findings.

The documentary and radio series contained the same participatory elements in the co-selection of audio; discussions surrounding what precisely the young people would like to include; and how the shows should be edited into a final package. Audio was recorded and edited using Adobe Audition. Once edited, the documentary was around 30 minutes in length, and the three-part radio series amassed a total of six hours of audio, prior to being edited into a neat (almost) three-hour package. I emphasised to the young people to be honest about any clips they would like to be removed. Discussing the co-production of an audio documentary, Noske-Turner (2012) reflects that editing, the phase that she had predicted as being crucial for participation in meaning-making, was met with the most ambivalence by participants. She found that participants expressed security that her motivations aligned with theirs. Thus, if the collaboration has been genuine throughout the process, there is likely to be less emphasis on editorial input from participants in the final stages (Noske-Turner, 2012). I also found this to be true of my research.

Through the production of the audio artefacts, I privileged verbal expression in order to facilitate the presentation of ‘youth voice’, something which Fleetwood (2005) describes as a distinct yet much wanted outcome. This is crucial, as enabling young people to communicate and be listened to is indispensable for improving their lives (see Grover, 2004). Considering that I desired to facilitate the true presentation of youth voice, I was wary of making any editing decisions independently. Further, it is important to mention that in 2010 I was a contestant on *Take Me Out*, a reality television dating show. After the show was broadcast, I was disappointed with the way in which the show had been edited, and consequently the way I had been represented. Aware of the potentially manipulative and exploitive editing process, accurately representing the young people was something that I aimed for. I was surprised that the very rare occasions that young people requested the deletion of an audio clip was because they had made a slip of the tongue or stuttered over speech, and were embarrassed by this being broadcast. In other words, editing was only requested for issues surrounding delivery, as opposed to content. I found that my desire for the young people to have autonomy over their representations was greater than theirs, as I now go on to detail.

5.7.1 Methodologically sound?

Herein I respond to the call (Darbyshire *et al.*, 2005; Skelton, 2008) for greater reflexivity of the success and failures of research approaches. In preparing for the audio documentary and radio series, conjuring up key themes, and thinking about songs and particular lyrics to be included, the young people were eager to participate. They were also very forthcoming in volunteering their time to be interviewed, and assisting me with use of the recording equipment. However, when it came to editing the audio clips, the young people seemed reluctant. Chris said: “it’s probably best if you do the editing, it’s your documentary” (Author’s field diary, 01/08/14). Bruce told me “I don’t want to cut anything out because it’s your work” (Author’s field diary, 03/08/14). I was convinced that the young people thought participatory research was some sort of farce to help researchers divide their time between the office and the field. In contradistinction to work which has positioned participatory research as emancipatory, and the cure-all to unequal power relations (e.g. Merriam and Simpson, 2000), my research offers insight that, at least for some young people, co-producing research can be a burdensome and undesirable task. It is worth reiterating that I was predominantly working alongside young people classified as NEET, many of whom have disengaged with formal learning; therefore participating in a university project may not have been distinctly appealing to them. In addition to this, KCC Live is to a certain extent an ‘over-researched community’, as geographers at the University of Liverpool have conducted a previous participatory research project at the station. Further, during my fieldwork, volunteers and management were conducting their own research at/into KCC Live for their college and university courses. These research projects included use of similar methods, such as interviewing and producing audio recordings. In this sense, it is reasonable to assume that young people at KCC Live may have been experiencing what certain authors (Clark, 2008; Mandel, 2003) describe as ‘research fatigue’.

After recognising this reluctance to edit, I regrouped the young people and again explained the nature of participatory research. I told them “this is just as much your documentary as it is mine” (Author’s field diary, 04/08/14). I reminded them of their right to withdraw from the project at any time; the young people were adamant that they wished to continue as co-researchers. We agreed to meet the following week

and I was pleased that the young people appeared to have a clearer sense of what participatory research is. This excerpt from my field diary explains what happened when we next met:

Today I met with the young people again in order to edit the documentary. I hoped that their renewed understanding would lead to a more smoothly running session. Unfortunately, this wasn't the case. Bruce pointed me towards the chair in the studio, when I offered him the chair he said "no, I'll just stand and tell you what to do". Bruce showed me how to edit the audio clip and then left the studio. When I went to look for him, I found him sat in Studio 2 editing his own show. I asked him if he would like to come into the studio to help in the editing process and he said "I'm sure you've got the hang of it"

(Author's field diary, 04/08/14)

At this point, I realised that I had been looking at participatory research through rose-tinted glasses. It was not a straightforward case of everybody working together, dividing the production of the documentary into equal portions, and everyone spending the same amount of time on their section. I explore this further through the following field diary excerpt:

I felt like I had hit a hurdle as I had desired the documentary to be a participatory product, but this didn't seem to be working. When I asked Chris, he told me that this felt like "group work that you did at school"...I began to consider whether participatory research was uncool, or whether I was uncool as a researcher. I spoke to the young people about what would work best with them. They all clearly emphasised that they would like a part in shaping the documentary. The young people came up with a new structure for the participatory work. They suggested that I could make progress with editing the documentary and then they would call me in for a 'snoop'

(Author's field diary 11/08/14)

A snoop is a type of meeting in radio where presenters receive feedback on their work, listening back to clips of audio. The young people chose to work in this style as it is familiar to them. The means of using a 'snoop' to critique the documentary content reversed typical power relations, putting the young people in the superior position. In industry, usually the station manager conducts these snoops. I welcomed this approach, particularly considering the resistance of the young people to be involved in more seemingly juvenile approaches to co-production.

Desirably, this approach shifted the typical hierarchies that position the researcher as expert and the co-researchers as informants (see Pain and Francis, 2003). Appreciation of the reversed power relations can be seen through the excerpt from Calvin below:

It was good to tell you which bits sounded good and which bits didn't, because then I developed like me leadership skills, so like I was the boss, I was like "that sounds shit", nah I'm kidding, but it was good to be in charge of you because like you're a bit older

(Calvin, 20, interview)

Discussing the snoop format Calvin proclaims: "I was the boss", telling that he developed leadership skills through 'being in charge' of someone who is older. Thinking reflexively, I realise that I had a vision and hoped to make my research participatory but, ironically, in the process I had failed to allow the young people to shape the meaning of 'participatory' in participatory research. In sum, I learnt that the meaning of participatory in 'participatory' research should be determined in communication with the people in one's study. Only then can research be considered truly participatory.

5.8 Data Analysis

To a certain extent, a pocket of participation (Franks, 2011) can be seen in the data analysis of this project (see also Kramer *et al.*, 2011; Lushy and Munro, 2014). To explain, data analysis was ongoing, not a one-off task at the end of the data collection. Participatory activities such as the co-production of the 'Community to Me is...' audio documentary, and focus group discussions, enabled me to obtain young people's reflections on my findings at different stages of the project. I used these methods to illuminate the fit between the data I gathered and my interpretation of this data. The codes were largely generated/informed by the audio documentary and discussions I had with young people, which guided the analysis. Further to this, co-production of the three-part radio series 'What we Found' gave young people opportunities to clarify key findings, discuss the message, and to communicate this with the listening audience.

I adopted the task of transcribing and coding as I considered this a time-intensive burden to young people (see also Byrne *et al.*, 2009). Further, my research is funded (through an ESRC studentship); therefore, following Lushy and Munro (2014), I considered it an unethical demand to expect un-salaried young people to have equal involvement in the project. I transcribed, verbatim, qualitative data from interviews and focus groups with young people, interviews with stakeholders, listener diaries and follow-up interviews, and recordings from the audio artefacts. I reread the transcripts whilst listening back to recordings to guarantee accuracy in transcription. After this, I began the coding process. Certain authors (Weitzman, 2000) speak of the worth of using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software, such as NVivo, stating that it can help in theory-building. Though not disputing the benefits of such software, I am in agreement with Fossey *et al.* (2002) that it should not be used as a substitute for a researcher's own careful analysis. Although I used a Word document to store my transcribed data, I analysed the data by hand, as I felt that this facilitated greater closeness. I considered this "human as analyst" (Robson, 2011:463) stance important due to the ethnographic nature of my study. In line with Mauthner and Doucet (2003), reflexivity is important at the interpretation stage of the research. For, as Taylor and Bogdan (1998) argue, researchers draw on their first-hand experience with the research setting and participants to make sense of their data. To borrow from Hatch (2002:148), I see data analysis as "a systematic search for meaning". Following Ely *et al.* (1991), this search for meaning is influenced by the respective disciplines, mentors, and past readings of the researcher.

After reading through my data set multiple times, I separated the data into smaller, significant parts. Essentially, this required me to sort the data thematically. I labelled each of these smaller parts with a code. I then compared each new segment of data with the previous codes that had emerged. This ensured that similar data were labelled with the same code. I dismissed any preconceived data categories and loosened the initial focus of the study in an effort to "generate as many codes as possible" (Emerson *et al.*, 1995:152). I wrote memos about parts of the text which intrigued me, or that I considered particularly important. I enjoyed the approach of coding by hand. MacLure (2008:174) likewise speaks of the pleasure derived from manual analysis, particularly "poring over the data, annotating, describing, linking, bringing theory to bear, recalling what others have written, and seeing things from

different angles”. Writing memos has been long considered an essential phase in generating theory (see Glaser, 1978). Crucially, this enabled me to ask questions about what had emerged through the data. Resultantly, I changed and made linkages between some codes, dropped and added others. Following from this, I undertook a process of abstracting, whereby I condensed the codes into deeper conceptual constructs. I continued this until all coded sections were saturated. Category names ranged from technical terms from within the literature, for instance ‘social capital’ to, as Strauss and Corbin (1990) endorse, the spoken words of the research participants themselves, such as ‘radio voice’.

Believing that much of what is heard is lost in transcription, the verbatim words of young people have been included in this thesis to illustrate the varied and nuanced realities of youth voice. I have included any grammatical inaccuracies and I have tried, as best as possible, to capture the accents (predominantly Scouse¹⁵) of the respondents. I have presented these in a spelling form that gives the reader an idea of the pronunciation in order to retain closeness with the original spoken words. This adheres to what Blauner (1987:48) describes as the “preservationist” approach, whereby I am reproducing the sounds as they appear on the recording, thereby staying faithful to participants. Following Corden and Sainsbury (2005), this also aids the trustworthiness of results.

Concerning the survey data, I exported results into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with individual user responses on each row. Each respondent was given a unique identifier; this was numerical and ensured that respondents were non-identifiable within my dataset. I then cleaned the raw data, amending or removing data that were incorrect or duplicated. I assigned numbered codes (value labels) to variables, except for those already in quantitative format; for instance, the number of people in a household. Data from open-ended questions within the survey were recorded verbatim, instead of converting these to a number code (see Acton *et al.*, 2009). I then imported the data into IBM SPSS Statistics 22 package to analyse. Karanja *et al.* (2013) call for researchers to be open about missing data and to discuss remedial techniques. Where respondents missed or elected not to answer certain questions, I

¹⁵ Although negative stereotypes have come to be associated with the terms ‘Scouse’ and ‘Scouser’, for instance criminality, guns, drugs, and the image of ‘scallies’ and ‘chavs’ (see Boland, 2008), I use these terms throughout this thesis in keeping with the young people’s self-identifications.

used a missing values code, choosing a number to represent the missing data point. Before analysis, I conducted validation of the dataset using consistency checks, to check for invalid and inconsistent codes (see Acton *et al.*, 2009). Deeming that all questions could be answered with summaries of the characteristics, I used Descriptives. Descriptive statistics usefully allow for understanding of the relationships between dependent and independent variables; they summarise the data using frequencies and percentages (Wetcher-Hendricks, 2011). I used Univariate analysis to summarise the characteristics of just one variable (Blaikie, 2003); for instance, how many people listen to KCC Live. When I required two variables to answer questions; for instance, what age groups listen to KCC Live, I used the cross-tab function in SPSS. This enabled me to look *within* the population who listen to KCC Live. This Bivariate analysis enabled me to explore the patterns or relationships between two variables. Within the relevant empirical chapter, I have used statistical representations of distributions in the form of tables and stacked bar graphs.

5.9 Ethical Considerations

I obtained approval from the University of Liverpool ethics committee prior to conducting fieldwork at KCC Live. I also ensured that my research was consistent with ethical guidelines as outlined in the ESRC 2010 Research Ethics Framework (see updated version, ESRC, 2015). However, as Horton (2008) recalls in his research diary, there is more to doing research than the parts that are covered and described by guidelines of ‘good practice’. Participatory methods are heralded as more ethically acceptable than traditional methods (Thomas and O’Kane, 1998; Manzo and Brightbill, 2007; Gallagher, 2008). Employing a participatory methodology is not, however, a universal remedy for ethical concerns. Use of a participatory methodology requires research conduct to be respectful and view those immersed in the lived experiences as subjective experts (Fleming and Boeck, 2012).

Importantly, as Morrow and Richards (1996b) note, it is impossible for researchers to foresee what ethical dilemmas will arise throughout the research process; as such, considering ethics as situational and responsive is essential. Research with children and young people raises the same methodological and ethical questions that all researchers face, for instance: issues of appropriate and honest ways of collecting,

analysing and interpreting data and of disseminating findings, as well as issues of protecting research participants (Morrow, 2008). However, there are additional concerns related to the perception of young people as “a powerless group in society” (Morrow, 2008:16). Though I do not perceive young people as powerless, in adherence to legal requirements, I ensured I had a DBS check and clearance prior to entering the field. I also undertook Knowsley Community College’s safeguarding training and new staff induction, including health and safety training. However, as Horton (2001:159) tells, being “police cleared” is only the start of ethical considerations with children, and I add young people. While ethical considerations are oft considered limiting, I joined Halse and Honey (2005) in considering ethical considerations as facilitating good research practice during my data collection and analysis.

Owing to my immersion in the KCC Live community and the relationships I built with volunteers over an extended period of time (see also Murphy and Dingwall, 2007), it was important for me to ‘remind’ volunteers of my role as a researcher. It is worth recalling that my research project was staggered with different activities (e.g. interviews, follow-up interviews, focus groups, listener survey, and the co-production of audio artefacts). I found this useful for reminding young people of my role, both formally (through acts that required participants, for instance, to read information sheets and to sign consent forms), and informally through acts that were associated with research and thus implied my role as a researcher. Also useful, was a poster produced by station management of ‘key members’ at KCC Live. On this poster was my photograph and a description of me as a ‘PhD researcher’. The poster was placed prominently on a wall of the station, and remained there throughout my research. This was helpful as a reminder to young people of my role at the station. Further, my role as a researcher was reaffirmed through a presenter biography on the KCC Live website. However, I did not consider these more passive acts, which required the young people to see this information, to be enough. Other, more active, strategies I employed included emphasising my role as a researcher through conversations. For instance, I informed young people of academic conferences I was attending and publications I was writing, which stood as reminders of my role. For me, these actions were paramount in maintaining ethical rigour. This ensured that, when I received data from young people, particularly during more informal

interactions, they were telling me this information as a researcher, not as a fellow volunteer or friend.

5.9.1 Informed consent and right to withdraw

A key challenge in conducting research with young people is negotiating access at multiple levels with adults who control the spaces (Sime, 2008). School-based research with children requires that access is facilitated by adult gatekeepers, highlighting ethical implications regarding the principle of informed consent (Morrow, 2008). Within my study, permission was granted by adult gatekeepers, including the Principal of Knowsley Community College and management at KCC Live. A further level of access, however, can take place through young people's parents. Importantly, at the time of this study, no volunteers at KCC Live were under the age of 16, therefore it was not necessary to seek consent from parents or legal guardians.

I handed staff and volunteers Participant Information Sheets detailing the nature of the research and what involvement would mean for them. I left additional copies on a desk within KCC Live for people to read at their leisure. I provided separate Participant Information Sheets for staff and young people (see Appendix 11 and Appendix 12, respectively). Throughout the fieldwork process, I continually emphasised the voluntary nature of participation and ensured that young people understood their right to withdraw at any point. I positioned consent as being continually reviewed throughout the research process (see also Morrow, 2008; Rose, 2012). I therefore opted for a "process consent" stance (Heath *et al.*, 2007:409), as opposed to a one-off written preamble prior to commencing research. Thus, although written consent was required from participants at the outset for initial interviews and focus groups, and the co-production of the audio artefacts, for follow-up interviews and more conversational interactions, following Hall (2009), I considered verbal and renegotiated consent appropriate.

5.9.2 Remuneration

The issue of remuneration raises a further ethical dilemma, particularly when young people are engaged as co-researchers (Murray, 2006). Morgan *et al.* (2002) make a valuable point in asserting that, just like adults, young people have economic lives and, as such, they should be compensated for their participation. Sime (2008), too, argues that young people should be valued for their participation in research in the same manner as adults. Though I agree that young people's participations should be rewarded, I support Gibson's (2007) view that use of a cash reward is problematic. This is particularly so as KCC Live is a voluntary organisation; as such, young people do not receive payment for their contributions to the station. Further, the prospect of a reward may make participants feel obliged to complete the study and affect their right to withdraw at any point (Sime, 2008). In continuing the voluntary ethic of participation at KCC Live, I did not provide volunteers with remuneration. However, I did emphasise to young people the skills they would gain as co-researchers. I also usefully made myself available for any projects they required my assistance in; for instance, I was interviewed as part of young people's college and university projects (also with no remuneration). Further, I never requested volunteers to come to the station to participate in research-related activities, rather I made use of the time they were readily available.

5.9.3 Confidentiality

All young people within this study have been referred to by a pseudonym for the interviews, focus groups, and observational data. I have not, however, anonymised KCC Live itself. The research is believed to be beneficial for helping the station apply for future funding; if anonymised in academic output, any data KCC Live wishes to use to support funding bids would lead to the disclosure of identity. I provided volunteers and listeners with the option to be anonymised and all said yes, as they believed this would enhance their honest contributions to the project, without fear of reprisal. All station management and college management wished to use their genuine names; I therefore permitted them to review their interview transcripts and gave them the opportunity to request the deletion of content. All interviewees approved transcripts with no changes.

I allowed volunteers and listeners to choose their own pseudonyms. Whilst the listeners chose usual names, many KCC Live volunteers chose pseudonyms after pop stars, DJs, and presenters. After a group discussion prompted one volunteer to suggest this option, other volunteers were enthused by this idea and proceeded to select aliases from their celebrity idols. Interestingly, many young people questioned “are we allowed?” and “would I be allowed to call myself that?” (Author’s field diary, 23/07/13), perhaps illustrative of their views of academic output as serious and mundane. Within Moorefield-Lang’s (2010) research with middle school students, a number of participants chose to name themselves after cartoon characters. Akin to Moorefield-Lang (2010), I welcomed the approach of allowing young people to choose their pseudonyms as I believe that it enhanced the participatory nature of the study, also affording the young people greater agency. It is important to note, however, that within the audio documentary and three-part radio series, the genuine names of participants have been used. The reason being that, when paired with their distinctly recognisable voices, using their pseudonyms within audio content would disclose their identity for the wider data collected.

5.10 Reflexivity and Positionality

Too often researchers concentrate on methods and approaches to conducting research, to the extent that the researcher’s values are obscured by such “proceduralness” (Savin-Baden, 2004:367). Recognising this, I turn to a discussion of my positionality as regards my personal biography (see Doucet, 1998). I reflect on my positionality, not to navel-gaze (Latour, 1988); rather, I believe that reflexivity is important in qualitative research where the “self-as-instrument” (Rew *et al.*, 1993:300) is used in data gathering and analysis.

5.10.1 Researcher personality

Lack of focus on the researcher’s personality is an egregious oversight, as personality is capable of shaping both the research process and the outcome (Moser, 2008). This is particularly so when considering that “personalities respond to other personalities in different ways” (Hoogendoorn and Visser, 2012:264). Following Moser (2008), I believe that my social and emotional qualities enabled close relationships to be developed between the young people and I. I have an extrovert personality. I am bubbly; talkative; personable; youthful; confessedly emotional; and

I enjoy making new friends. I am in further agreement with Sultana (2007) that who I am, and the way I interact with participants, is essential in developing relationships premised on trust. The following field diary excerpt expresses this well:

Today MJ confided in me about a boy she had started dating, she told me that I was the first person to know...I wondered what it was about my personality which allowed her to confide in me. I know I am amiable and a good listener. Or perhaps she has heard me discussing my love life before and knew it would be a welcomed topic

(Author's field diary, 10/11/13)

By confiding in me, MJ could see that, although I am a researcher, I carry with me "human spirits of understanding and concern" (Shaw, 2005:845). As Stanley and Wise (1993:157) point out: "researchers remain human beings complete with all the usual assembly of feelings, failings and moods". However, there is a tendency in the literature to de-humanise, and disembodify (see Throsby and Evans, 2013), researchers, reducing them to their academic qualities and qualifications.

A rare exception to the cold descriptions of positionality is a piece by Widdowfield (2000). Widdowfield (2000) argues that emotions may influence the researcher's interpretation of a situation, yet this does not prevent rigorous analysis. Here I provide an example of this from my fieldwork:

Today my intuitive nature told me that Modest Mouse was feeling upset. I probed him about this and he opened up to me, telling me how he was struggling with his low paid part-time job. Modest Mouse was surprised that I noticed he was upset and said that he had put on a good act, even to family and station management

(Author's field diary, 20/03/14)

The above excerpt reveals how my instinctive character enabled me to notice when a participant was feeling down; in turn, the participant told me a personal story that was rich data. Though Stacey (1988:23) tells that "the lives, loves, and tragedies that fieldwork informants share with a researcher are ultimately data, grist for the ethnographic mill", I must emphasise that I did not show care in order to obtain good data; rather, being caring is an intrinsic part of my personality. By emotionally investing in the young people, I developed a close rapport with participants in my role as researcher, fellow volunteer, and friend.

The young people's perception of my personality and character can be discerned through the following 'presenter biography', which they wrote about me and published on the KCC Live (2015a) website:

Cat Wilkinson is a Human Geography PhD student, although given her poor sense of direction and inability to read a map, you'd never guess this. Cat loves a good cup of tea and has on average 20 cups per day, professing to be a tea expert. However her most knowledgeable topics are The X Factor and Britain's Got Talent [reality television talent shows]! She has a self-confessed crush on Simon Cowell¹⁶ and often bores Rob [a KCC Live volunteer] with the latest TV gossip! A great strength of Cat's is rapping, she can regularly be heard rapping the weather forecast on air, and she is often referred to by other presenters as "the female Jay Z"¹⁷.

Above, the young people who wrote the biography can be seen to be downplaying my PhD-related skills; what they ascribe to my "inability to read a map", and exaggerating my young people/presenter skills: "she can regularly be heard rapping the weather forecast on air". The young people found out about my rapping ability when we collaborated to produce a rendition of Band Aid 20's 'Do They Know It's Christmas?'¹⁸, where I assumed the role of rap artist Dizzee Rascal. The significance of their comprehension of me as, for instance, "the female Jay Z", is particularly so when considering Byrne *et al.*'s (2009:68) assertion that meaningful relationships necessitate a de-emphasising of "researcher only" knowledge. For, as Hadfield-Hill and Horton (2014:148) tell, "we are never just researchers, just doing research", in the same way as our participants are not just participants in research.

5.10.2 Researcher appearance

Community radio stations are male-dominated environments and women are underrepresented within this sector (Mitchell, 2004). Therefore, just as my presence as a woman at KCC Live was significant for the volunteers, equally, my access to the airwaves as a woman presenter was significant for the listeners. The gender of the researcher is important, as gendered understandings of who we are have consequences for the ways we are treated (Warnke, 2008). The significance of my gender came to the fore when a male volunteer remarked to me whilst attending a community media event "everyone is obviously looking at you and thinking, wow,

¹⁶ Simon Cowell is an English television talent judge and music and television producer.

¹⁷ Shawn Corey Carter, known by his stage name Jay Z, is an American rapper, record producer, and entrepreneur.

¹⁸ You can listen to our rendition here: <https://soundcloud.com/kcclive/kcc-live-aid-do-they-know-its>.

she's a girl and she knows about radio" (Author's field diary, 5/10/13). Regrettably, most researchers do not go far beyond simply acknowledging whether they are male or female (e.g. Bucerius, 2013; Salle and Harris, 2011). Third wave feminism (the feminist movement stemming from the 1990s, informed by post-colonial and post-modern thinking) has critiqued the supposition that women share a universal gender identity and set of experiences (Valentine *et al.*, 2014). In line with this, I argue that I am not only female, but that I am overtly feminine. I dye my hair: blonde, brunette, red; I wear hair extensions; I have fake nails applied in the salon; my daily makeup consists of brightly coloured lipstick and heavy mascara; I carry my makeup bag with me daily; I wear fake tan and false eyelashes on occasions; the clothes I wear are feminine. See Plate 5.1:



Plate 5.1 Researcher Appearance (Author's own, 2015).

During my fieldwork, there were instances where my appearance was commented on by young people who told me that I "don't look like a PhD student" (Author's field diary, 06/05/13), or that I wore "more fashionable clothes" than they imagined (Author's field diary, 23/05/13). Pertinent here is Butler's (1990; 1993) research on

the importance of everyday, recurring stylisations of the body to the performance of gender. The work alerts us to the ways in which the body is crafted through the performative act of dressing. Though clothing is an aspect influencing positionality that is seldom acknowledged (Longhurst *et al.*, 2008), Entwistle (2000:10) recognises that the way we dress is “more than a shell”, it is a personal facet of the experience and presentation of one’s self. This is something I feel strongly about, and was reinforced to me during my studies for my first degree in Fashion.

Throughout my time at KCC Live, participants remarked how I “don’t have a face for radio” (Author’s field diary, 23/09/14). Spanger (2012) notes how the attractiveness, or lack thereof, of the researcher affects the interaction between researcher and participants. In her ethnographic research with Thai migrant sex workers, Spanger (2012) tells how she wore no showy makeup or heeled shoes, to not be perceived as a threat to her participants. McCurdy and Uldam (2013) also note in their research that they dressed in casual clothes, and therefore blended in with participants. The majority of female volunteers at KCC Live self-identify as Scouse, donning big hair; fake tan; and false eyelashes, I therefore found myself sharing similarities with the young women:

Today Fearne exclaimed “babe, I like your lipstick”. I wonder how many other researchers have been called “babe” in their time?! I sat with Fearne and Nikki for over an hour, exchanging compliments, showing them photographs of my previous hairstyles and colours. Nikki recommended a good hair salon which I could go to for a famous Scouse curly blow. We definitely bonded today

(Author’s field diary, 20/05/13)

As Muggleton (2000:90) points out in his discussion of subcultures, “those who merely ‘adopt’ an unconventional appearance without possessing the necessary ‘inner’ qualities are regarded...as ‘plastic’, not ‘real’...a subcultural ‘Other’”, against which research participants substantiate themselves. Further, imitating the physical appearance of research participants to achieve acceptance can damage researcher credibility (Leyshon, 2002). However, I did not imitate participants’ appearances; rather, we collectively took pleasure in following certain traditions of the Scouse identity. Though I am not from Liverpool originally, the young people occasionally referred to me as an “honorary Scouser”, a term given to celebrities who made Liverpool their home (see Boland, 2010). I noticed that I began getting

spray tans regularly rather than just for special occasions, and I even had a weave (my hair extensions sewn in). Although these were not conscious actions to ‘be more Scouse’, they were acts that I carried out which I directly attribute to acquiring Scouse friends at KCC Live. Interestingly, since having lessened my presence at KCC Live, I apply less heavy makeup, I get spray tans less frequently, and seldom get false nails applied.

5.10.3 Sonic positioning

I was born in Devon, living in Sidmouth, a small residential town. I lived there until I was eighteen, after which my family moved to Rutland, East Midlands. Consequently, I possess a southern accent and hold a different dialect to the majority of KCC Live volunteers. For the most part, the young people at KCC Live possess the urban Liverpool regional ‘Scouse’ accent.

Appreciating that a community has a set of “sound markers” (Arkette, 2004:162), which reinforce its identity, I initially had concerns that not possessing this “Liverpool English” (Honeybone and Watson, 2006, no pagination) would prohibit me from building a genuine cultural rapport with volunteers and the listening community. In unpacking the different dimensions of what constitutes Scouse identity, Boland (2010) concludes that sound is a significant, if not defining, aspect of identity construction. I feared this lack of cultural proximity would prohibit me from negotiating legitimacy in the field. Russell (2004:15) summarises the different connotations emerging from distinct radio presenter accents:

For instance, a Scottish accent in a radio voice would often be associated with a fiery temper; a Yorkshire accent denoted ‘fiscal probity’; a northeastern, or ‘Geordie’, accent exuded ‘friendliness and helpfulness,’ while a Liverpool, or Scouse, accent was associated with humour, and in particular, ‘quick-fire repartee’.

Thus, two things troubled me. First, I did not have the distinctive use of vowels that identify a speaker as being from Liverpool, and I was lacking in a “nasal/adenoidal twang” (Atkinson, 2011:167) and “passionate saliva” (Du Noyer, 2002:7). Second, I feared that I did not possess the “culture, language, humour and identity” (Pooley, 2006:171) and “backchat and jokes” (Murden, 2006:423) of Scousers.

The term ‘Stylised Scouseness’ was proposed by Tessler (2006) to describe how certain Liverpoolian entertainers and broadcasters manipulated the ‘Scouse’ accent and vernacular cultural stereotypes to effect commercial success. After a few months of conducting fieldwork at KCC Live, my position as an outsider shifted towards that of an insider. I did not mimic the accent and present myself as Scouse, as this would make me a ‘plastic Scouser’, which is frowned upon by genuine Scousers. This is particularly so when considering that “a Liverpool voice is so obviously of Liverpool” (Du Noyer, 2002:6). I did, however, to a certain degree embrace Tessler’s (2006) idea of ‘Stylised Scouseness’, in that I found myself selecting, adapting and re-presenting the vernacular linguistic social and cultural traits. For instance, I incorporated ‘boss’, ‘swerve it’, and other local slang into my diction. I am not suggesting that I *became* Scouse throughout the research process, rather that I subconsciously found myself inverting certain Southern traits. The words of Porter (1997:4) ring true here: “different parents, different surroundings, different stimuli will produce different selves”. My feelings are similar to those recorded by Fuller (1999:221; 224), in his discussion of learning to cope with the “politics of integration” and the resultant “multi-positioned (and repositioned) identity”.

5.10.4 [*Messy*] research friendships

Research of any variety pulls the researcher into relationships; these relationships shape the setting in which emotions are expressed or suppressed (Bondi, 2005). In conducting ethnographic fieldwork, researchers must deal with relationships that are individual, emotional, corporeal and intellectual (Mason, 2002). Concerning researcher proximity, I did not desire the young people to perceive me as the “omnipotent expert” (England, 1994:81). To this end, I positioned myself as ‘researcher as friend’, an extension of what Fuller (1999:221) terms “researcher as person”. Some examples of this include how: I accepted the young people’s ‘friend requests’ on Facebook; I passed on my mobile phone number; I invited volunteers to call me ‘Cat’ as opposed to ‘Catherine’; and I enjoyed activities with the young people outside of KCC Live, including cinema excursions, shopping sprees and celebratory meals. As such, like Holt (2004) and Gallagher (2008), I did not exert my power as an ‘adult researcher’. It is important to mention my age in relation to the young people. As Skelton (2008) tells, in research with children, researchers can be considered both ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, as they have all once been children

(insider), but now as adults, they are outsiders. However, when I commenced research at KCC Live, I was in my early twenties and thus a ‘young person’, in this sense age was not a key marker of difference.

I appreciated that the relationships I built with participants could become troubled, and that friendship itself is a slippery concept (Monk *et al.*, 2003). Blackman (2007:711) illustrates this point in stating: “powerful feelings of emotions from love to hate grip both the researcher and the researched”. Reflecting on his difficulties in establishing clear boundaries in his ethnographic study on homeless young families, Blackman (2007:703) tells how he could not be the participants’ friend because he “could not be like them”, and did not feel he was able to offer them advice, but that they “shared ‘friendship moments’”. Blackman’s (2007) work links back nicely onto ideas generated by Cotterill (1992:599), who discusses the blur between “research friendship and friendship”. I find it problematic that academic writing believes that you can only be a ‘researcher’ or a ‘friend’, but not both. I believed that I could be a genuine friend to the young people and, as such, I sought to create a relationship based on mutual respect. Of course, it must be emphasised that this friendship was in line with the young people’s awareness that I was collecting data. As previously mentioned, I repeatedly reminded the young people of my presence as a researcher through conversations relating to my research, including the conferences I was presenting at, and publications I was writing. Thus, whilst the young people told me things which they were aware would end up in this thesis, and resultant publications, I told the young people things that I was aware would end up used as on-air content. We each had our own duties at the station, but this did not deny our friendships.

After I left KCC Live each evening, particularly in the early stages of fieldwork when I was more of a ‘novelty’ to the young people, I was inundated with phone calls and text messages. Although, often, I was too busy to attend to these, I always responded - as I did with all of my friends - primarily because I considered the young people at KCC Live to be my friends, but also because I felt it was ethical and respectful to do so. Relatedly, Hall (2009:268) tells how the anxiety over “using” people within the field is a regular dilemma of ethnography, resulting in feelings of guilt. Given the friendships I made with volunteers and staff, it was important for me to have an “understood exit strategy that is known by all involved” (Gormally and Coburn, 2014:882). Hadfield-Hill and Horton (2014:145) ask:

If close qualitative research creates the potential for research participants to be saddened when research ends, is our responsibility as researchers to modulate and modify research practices to preclude such sadness, or is a certain degree of sadness and disappointment acceptable?

I am inclined to sit in line with the latter. Throughout my time at KCC Live, I witnessed many volunteers join the station and then leave, and this did trigger moments of sadness. KCC Live is characterised as a place where young people move on, it is not intended as a ‘forever’ place. I clearly communicated to volunteers and staff that, once my fieldwork was complete, I would still attend KCC Live to present my show for my remaining time in Liverpool (at the time of writing I therefore still attend KCC Live for a few hours one day per week¹⁹). This has given me the opportunity to loosen ties, without cutting them completely. Notably, our friendships spilled outside of the station, and I still regularly meet up with young people and staff for cups of tea and chats.

Before leaving the topic of friendship, I want to mention the related issue of ‘going native’. In opposition to ‘going academic’ which endorses objectivity and detachment, ‘going native’ is characterised by loss of legitimacy, veracity, distance, formality and subsequently reputation (Fuller, 1999). As Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:111) posit, the resultant “over-rapport” nurtures an incapability to scrutinise the standpoints and actions of participants with a critical eye, as such a taken-for-granted ‘assumption’ mode may come into play. In other words, if a researcher becomes too immersed in the research setting they may become blind to happenings which someone detached would consider important. By ‘going native’, a researcher can compromise the work and standards of appropriate conduct in the field (Monti, 1992). However, I characterise my stance in this research project as “part of the action” (Fuller, 1999:221), as opposed to ‘going native’, and believe that my immersed positioning was fundamental to the rich data I gathered. In other words, I join authors in promoting the possibility of wearing more than one hat in the field (e.g. Ritchie, 2009; Ryan *et al.*, 2011); that is my more formal researcher’s hat and my Jay Z-like ‘cap’.

¹⁹ I will move on from KCC Live at the beginning of October 2015, to start my new post at Durham University.

5.11 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have argued that a qualitative and quantitative mixed-method research design facilitated the collection of in-depth data with a variety of participants (Brannen, 2008), including the volunteer body, station management, and the listening audience. This also increased the validity of the research (Denscombe, 2008). Further, the involvement of young people as co-researchers in the study facilitated a process of mutual learning, whereby young people became knowledgeable about social research methods and, as such, can be perceived as “learner researchers” (Byrne, *et al.*, 2009:71). I argue that the rich data that I present in the following empirical chapters is the product of three key things. First, the combination of the methods I employed through an immersed stance of observant participation, which allowed for repeated (in)formal discussions with young people, station management and listeners. Second, my wearing of multiple hats (Ritchie, 2009; Ryan *et al.*, 2011), as a researcher, volunteer and a friend, which was important in enabling engagement with the broad range of communities involved in KCC Live. Third, my positionality (predominantly a combination of that I am, too, a young person, and my personality), which enabled me to ‘fit in’ at KCC Live. With this chapter, and a publication arising from it (Wilkinson, 2015), I advocate for a space to be carved out for further discussions of researcher personality and appearance.

Chapter Six

Youth Voices

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss findings related to youth voices. According to KCC Live's (2007:24) application for a community radio licence, the station aims to encourage the "positive self-image of a young audience", and provide "minority voice representation". In the application to Ofcom, KCC Live predominantly uses the term 'minority voice' in reference to young people characterised as NEET in Knowsley. Although presenting examples of KCC Live's empowering potential, this chapter argues that community radio is not a cure-all solution for disenfranchised and silenced young people, as young people at KCC Live work within a restricted idea of speech. I argue that, owing to various institutional constraints, by station management; college management; and the regulatory body Ofcom, young people consider the airwaves to be a supervised, as opposed to emancipatory, arena. However, in attempting to combat the restricting nature of the airwaves, young people find new ways to communicate. I frame these discussions with Goffman's (1959; 1981) work on theatrical performance, and radio talk. In presenting examples of young people's 'creative audiobiographies', carefully cultivated 'fake interactions' and crafted debates, I argue that, by connoting the real and the actual, romanticised notions of youth voice preclude performance and creativity. This is an important neglect, underestimating the value of constructing a creative self, and of young people re-writing the present and imagining their futures through storytelling.

6.2 Accent and Identity

KCC Live possesses what Schafer (1994:10) refers to as a "soundmark"; that is, a distinctive community sound which is regarded highly by people in that community. As Schafer (1994) tells, soundmarks foster a unique community acoustic life. KCC Live's soundmark pertains to the accents of the presenters, the majority of whom possess the distinctive Liverpool 'Scouse' accent. During a joint interview, Madonna and Robbie reflect on the ways in which their Scouse accents are received in different parts of Liverpool, and the media more generally:

Madonna: I always think that if I hear a Scouse accent on radio or on the TV, I always think it sounds very unprofessional...I don't know if that's like the stigma that's been attached to it by like the general population....Obviously a lot of the time when you like watch TV or listen to the radio a lot of the time people have got quite neutral, Queen's English, London, you know, sort of accents

Robbie: See with that I think like, it works here [at KCC Live] because it's local and all that, but I think if you were in - normally if you hear someone with a Scouse or inverted commas 'common accent', what they're saying you might - you don't necessarily believe it so much

Madonna: See I think that's to do with the way media has focussed on pushing posh people, posh accents

Robbie: See I don't think I've got a really thick Scouse accent, but I have. I sound so Scouse when I hear me voice, but people don't - when I'm in Huyton [a town in Knowsley] and that, people think I sound quite posh for a Scouser! But I don't when I hear me voice, it's like I sound common as muck! There's Scousers, plazzies, woollybacks²⁰ and other non-Scousers on air, so there's varying degrees of poshness and commonness [laughs]

Madonna: I think accents-wise, that's something I'm really conscious of...So where I'm from - I live in Wavertree [an area in Liverpool], and with the people I hang around with, I'm considered really Scouse. But then when I come here [to Huyton] I'm considered posh, not that that's anything against here

(Madonna, 17, Robbie, 26, joint interview)

Through this exchange, Robbie tells how the Scouse accent "works" at KCC Live, because of its commitment to a local audience. Implicit in Robbie's words is the separation he makes between 'us' and 'them'. Through using the terms "plazzies" and "woollybacks", Robbie draws attention to "the other" (Boland, 2010:6). Ironically, as Boland (2010) points out, though people in Knowsley often self-identify as 'Scouse', to a certain extent they are 'plastic Scousers', because they live in an area of Merseyside other than Liverpool. This is something that Ritchie²¹ (26) admits within the 'What we Found' radio series: "I mean, if you wanted to be technical about it, Huyton isn't Liverpool". Above, Madonna hints at how she feels self-conscious of her "posh" Scouse accent on air, because it is not in keeping with

²⁰ Whereas 'Scouser' is a phrase used to refer to a person who is from Liverpool, 'plazzy' or 'plastic' Scouser is used to refer to those who live 'over the water', for instance in Wirral. Woollyback or 'wool' is used to refer to anyone who lives in any of the surrounding towns around Liverpool, for instance St Helens.

²¹ As a reminder to the reader, when quoting data from the audio artefacts, the real names of young people are included, as using pseudonyms within audio content would disclose young people's identities for the wider data collected.

the variation of the accent in the area. In acknowledging that there are different degrees of “poshness and commonness”, Robbie demonstrates understanding of society as socially divided through socioeconomic status (see also children in Sutton’s 2009 study). Just as in Sutton’s (2009) study, it is clear that this affects his sense of self in relation to others. In sum, those young people who possess the Scouse accent acknowledge that there are varying degrees of ‘Scouseness’, and to this extent different degrees of belonging.

Listeners, too, acknowledged that the accents of KCC Live presenters came in varying degrees of ‘Scouseness’ and ‘non-Scouseness’, some of which they could relate to better than others. Eddie expresses this in the following passage:

If someone has a really thick Scouse accent I tend not to listen, just turn it down, you know. I think people need to be articulate, irrespective of their regional accent. It works with Tom and Louise [KCC Live presenters], because Louise has a very straightforward English accent, err and Tom’s isn’t too strong. Whereas if you listen to Steve, I think he’s a Southend [London] lad, he comes across as really professional by comparison. If they are aspiring DJs they’ve got to have a voice that is appealing. I don’t think that regional accents do it. I mean, it’s great for community radio because people want to hear people speak the same language, but because there’s no - because for me there’s that disconnect, it doesn’t work

(Eddie, 18, listener diary interview)

Eddie, who importantly does not possess a Scouse accent, tells that he feels disconnected from strong Scouse accents. This finding has important implications when considering Matless’ (2005:758) notion of “sonic exclusion”. Boland (2010:2) employs Matless’ (2005) concept of sonic exclusion to determine the extent to which a distinguishing vernacular determines “who is in” and “who is out” as a Scouser. Boland (2010:17) suggests, regarding Liverpool, that those in possession of a Scouse accent and accompanying dialect are considered to belong, while those whose accents are considered out of place are “sonically excluded”. In this vein, Eddie’s reported feelings of ‘disconnectedness’ could be a result of his own sonic exclusion, through his possession of a non-Scouse accent.

Throughout my fieldwork, young people used the airwaves to explore issues surrounding identity and place-based stereotypes. This was most profoundly picked up on by listener diary respondent, Michelle. Michelle lives in Cornwall and previously listened to Atlantic FM, a local station in Cornwall, before a takeover by

radio network Heart. Michelle told me regarding the takeover: “I was a very involved listener & often mentioned [on air by radio presenters]. I was heartbroken!” (Facebook messenger conversation). Michelle first tuned into KCC Live when an ex-presenter from Atlantic FM, also a musician, sent music to the station, and she became a regular listener. Michelle made the following entry in her listener diary after a presenter (from Manchester) made a comment to his co-presenter (from Liverpool):

Gideon [presenter from Manchester] made a joke today - something about people packing their things up & when Benno [presenter from Liverpool] asked why, he said they had heard there were Scousers visiting! I suppose there is a stereotype that people from Liverpool are thieves...but I know everyone is an individual! Thought it was a bit bad of Gideon but I know it was said with tongue in cheek. Hope Liverpool isn't full of criminals anyway!

(Michelle, 24, listener diary, listening at home, 13/02/14)

Gideon's “negative place imagery” (Boland, 2008:355), transmitted to Michelle, likely comes from the association of Scousers with criminality in the media (see Boland, 2008; Melville *et al.*, 2007); particularly in the 1980s-1990s with the Liverpool Toxteth riots in 1981, and drug-related crime and gang culture in the 1990s (see Sergi, 2012). Butler (1997:121) asks: “could the uttering of the word constitute a slight, an injury, indeed, an offense, if the word did not carry the sedimented history of its own suppression?” Butler (1997:39; 13) continues that the “force” of the speech act is “related to the body” and the extent of the “wounding power” of certain words is dependent on who interprets them. It is significant here, then, that this statement came from a non-Scouse body, and as such is received cautiously by Michelle; she acknowledges that it was “a bit bad”, possibly anticipating the response from Scouse listeners. Rebecca and Robbie's articulations within the audio documentary final output and recording sessions shed light on this:

The Scouse sense of community it - we're very very passionate, and it's okay for us to slag our own off, for example, you know if someone's on the television representing Liverpool, it's okay for us to say something negative, but we don't like it if anyone outside of Liverpool does the same...if someone from say, I don't know, London or Wales or something said something negative about my city and my people, my back would go up instantly

(Rebecca, 24, ‘Community to me is...’ audio documentary)

A Scouser can take the mick out of Liverpool til they're blue in the face, but if someone from somewhere else does it, god help them!...Say if I go to Kirkby [a town in Knowsley] and I say "you'll get your car robbed around here", if someone not from Liverpool said that they'd say "ayy", you know, we'd turn and say "ayy, we're not like that around 'ere"...it would be seen as actually taking the piss, so to speak, you know whereas because it's Scousers you're laughing at yourself

(Robbie, 26, audio documentary recording session)

As can be seen then, through speech, KCC Live has the potential to create imagery of the community in the listeners' minds. Primarily, members of the immediate geographic community receive these descriptions (Knowsley), who will likely be familiar with their content. However, due to online broadcasting, those outside of this proximate community can receive these images (Gumucio-Dagron, 2013), and as such, they may be variously received.

Throughout my research, it became interesting to observe how KCC Live accommodated non-Scouse accents on the airwaves. MJ's story provides an entry point to this discussion. When first joining KCC Live, MJ told me how her regional Lancashire (Chorley) accent created a point of difference. In her own recollection:

I mean when I first came...I was put down to work straight away, my first task was to do news bulletins and err that got me erm involved and I felt like part of a team when I first started...At first I thought I was doing the news bulletins because of my voice [laughs], everyone always says I've got a posh Radio 4²² lady's voice

(MJ, 21, interview)

Above, MJ tells how her self-described "posh" non-Scouse accent led her to be allocated the role of newsreader. However, in a follow-up interview a few months later, MJ told me how her accent led to her exclusion from participating in the recording of vocals for the station:

I used to think it was good to have a posh voice here, but now I've realised that it actually like erm limits me in some senses. Like, for instance, err I don't get asked to do vocals for the station as much as the Scouse girls. Management usually want them because erm people in this area can relate to them better, which I do understand. It just kinda sucks because I'd like to do the vocals

(MJ, 21, interview)

²² Part of the BBC, a public-service broadcaster, Radio 4 comprises of speech based news, current affairs and factual content.

As revealed through MJ's articulation, there were occasions during my fieldwork where young people, myself included, who did not possess the Scouse accent were not invited to record vocals for on-air production, because our accents did not reflect that of the listenership. In this respect, our voices were silenced beyond our control (Ames, 2003). In my field diary, I made a comparable remark to MJ, reflecting on how my Southern accent excluded me from certain on-air activities:

Today the Station Manager wanted some of the girls to record vocals for an advert for a hair salon. I was told that my voice [my Southern accent] wouldn't be desirable to Scouse females and therefore I did not take part. The Station Manager said in jest "unless you can put on a Scouse accent of course"

(Author's field diary, 18/09/13)

Conceptualised as such, it is clear that youth voice on the airwaves can prioritise certain local cultural representations. Ames (2003), in a study on regional radio, likewise found that specific youth voices within the community were projected, whilst others were silenced. Returning to the idea of sonic exclusion, this relates to Matless' (2005:747) question of "which styles of voice belong in the landscape?". For instance, Nikki, a Scouse woman, spoke of how "I constantly hear my vocals getting played out" (Author's field diary, 12/06/14), whilst MJ, above, tells how her non-Scouse accent "limits" her. As such, a politics of difference comes into play, separating "us and them" (Boland, 2010:4). In order to provide a more inclusive space, KCC Live management must monitor whose voices are heard, and whose are subjugated.

As Chambers and Callison (2003) found in their discussion of the public perception of localism, although audiences prefer local personalities, radio presenters have honed the skill of forging their localities. I am not a native inhabitant of Knowsley or Liverpool, and though I have not faked the accent in order to present myself as Scouse, after a few months of presenting on air I found myself selecting, adapting and re-presenting the vernacular linguistic social and cultural traits to the predominantly Scouse listening audience. One of my later field diary extracts illustrates this:

I've been on air for a good few months now, and I've definitely noticed a shift in my dialect towards local Liverpool tongue. I used to cringe and grimace at the thought of saying "boss music, no ads" [KCC Live's slogan], because the word "boss" wasn't in my Southern diction, but now I feel surprisingly comfortable saying that word. I've noticed that I've been picking up other Scouse phrases too and saying these on and off air. For instance "nice one", "ta" and "swerve it"

(Author's field diary, 06/01/14)

As discussed within my field diary, I incorporated local slang into my spoken lexicon. Boland (2010) notes that there are certain phrases in the Scouse diction which exclude those who do not speak in this tongue; yet, whilst I previously felt uncomfortable saying "boss", for instance, this soon became second nature to me. I also subconsciously found myself minimising and inverting certain Southern dialectal characteristics on air. For instance, as many of the young people referred to my Southern accent as "posh", I was cautious not to come across this way to the listening audience, for instance I would pronounce "bath" instead of "barth". MJ also discusses this 'shift':

I have started to notice I have started going a little bit Scouse. I remember when I went home a couple of weeks ago, my mum said - my mum started seeing my 'poshness', shall we say, start dropping to a bit more common Scouser

(MJ, 21, interview)

The instances recalled by MJ and I are in keeping with a point by Bell (1991), as regards the language of news media, that typically a speaker will shift his/her style to resemble that of the listener. Both MJ and I can be seen to experiment with "dialect stylization" (Coupland, 2001:345), in that we are deploying a specially marked representation of the Liverpool dialect, which lies outside of our own repertoire (see also Rampton, 2009). As Coupland (2001) tells, the airwaves are a typical space for stylisation.

In addition to this, during a snoop (a listening session where management critique your presenting ability), the following exchange took place between Station Manager: Chrissie; Assistant Programme Controller: Matt, and volunteer: Modest Mouse, who was listening in, regarding my on-air identity:

Chrissie: You talk about stuff that everyone can kind of relate to...so your content and your choice of stuff to talk about, it's always like right, it's not like irrelevant, and considering you're not a Scouser that's really good [Laughs]

Modest Mouse: What she's not from Liverpool?! [Sarcastic tone]

Chrissie: You can't draw too much attention to it [the fact I'm not from Liverpool] I don't think, because it's so obvious and your personality is not like that

Matt: None of your features are based around "I'm not Scouse", which I think is good. Like it's alright as a one-off thing, but it can come across as very antagonistic in doing that

Chrissie: It's pretty obvious you're not...I think because of what you're choosing to discuss all the time and what you're choosing to have on your show, it doesn't matter, that's fine, because what you're saying is relevant
(Chrissie, 30, Modest Mouse, 28, Matt, 23, Author's snoop session)

Above, Chrissie tells that the fact that I am "not a Scouser" could make me less relatable to the listening audience. Matt suggests how it could be considered hostile for me to position myself 'apart from' the Scouse listening audience. However, as Chrissie notes, through the selection of different topics for my show (for instance, when I was next due to get my fake nails applied), I positioned myself as relevant. This relates to Goffman's (1959:142) discussion of "'strategic' secrets", which are essentially what a team decides to conceal from its audience, so as not to cause them to adapt. Therefore, although I am not from Liverpool, I never explicitly mentioned this on air, and though it was obvious from my accent, I kept it secret in the sense that it remained untold.

6.3 Empowerment

Research into community radio supports the idea of the airwaves as an empowering space (Aleaz, 2010; Marchi, 2009; Myers, 2011; Wagg, 2004). Emerging from my research at KCC Live, what is particularly interesting is the different scales at which empowerment manifests itself for volunteers.

Most obviously, young people feel empowered by being able to broadcast on air, or more specifically through the opportunity to use their voice. This is clear in the following passages:

I think that young people, when they get behind a microphone, amazing things happen. I really do. Erm, often the quietest volunteer is the one that you hear on the radio and you go “oh my god who’s that?”, and they really come out of their shell. There’s been stories of kids who’ve come from schools on work experience and the Head Teacher has written to us afterwards and said “I can’t believe it, this kid never spoke a word to anybody, just didn’t speak, and she’s come back from doing a week’s work experience with you and we can’t shut her up” [laughs]. And it’s that, it’s that it really does give them voice

(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, interview)

It was good to hear volunteers, you know, and somebody would say “I heard that so and so at such and such a time and he’s terribly shy, he never - if you meet him outside he’s terribly shy”, but he’d be DJing on the radio and he’d be absolutely fantastic, and you know, seeing the other side of people’s personalities was a big thing

(Pam, 68, former Vice Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

As can be seen from the above narratives, for young people, confidence emerges in the articulation of voice, leading to personal and social transformation (Marchi, 2009). Hywel tells how young people “come out of their shell” on air, whilst Pam suggests that being on the airwaves permits even the shyest volunteer to be a great DJ. This theme came through in conversations with volunteers. Kurt, who is a keen musician and occasionally performs on stage, spoke of the influence presenting on KCC Live has had on him:

Like I’ve come in and done the radio, and the first time I done that I was crapping meself and then erm, obviously on stage I was a bit nervous, but like coming into the radio that was nerve-wracking but you get over it. Like I walk in [to the studio] now and I’m on air and it’s just dead casual

(Kurt, 17, interview)

This is congruent with Wagg’s (2004) finding that the airwaves create a worthy sense of self, resulting from the vocalisation of words, thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. In a follow-up interview, Kurt spoke of how finding his voice at KCC Live has enabled him to use his voice on stage:

I've done a gig since we last spoke, and as you'll remember from last time, I spoke constantly about confidence and how the radio gives me confidence, well I done a gig and it was brilliant. I loved it! And erm I just felt really confident on stage and it's the same sort...the same kind of feeling you get when you're on air...it's relatable if you know what I mean because you've got, you're in front of an audience. It doesn't matter what format it is, you're still in front of an audience, and you're still performing in a sense. I thought I'd have to work backstage in music because of my confidence issues but yeah, I wanna be on stage now, I know that now

(Kurt, 17, interview)

Other young people, too, spoke of how finding their voice at KCC Live enabled them to exercise this voice outside of the station. See the follow extract from Andy:

I was very shy, err when I first came here, so kinda being a presenter, err has helped me overcome the shyness and you know whereas, you know, I kind of use to back off from people, and didn't argue with them, or I'd kind of go "hang on that's not right". I kinda force myself to go for it now, and kind of, not have an argument but kind of debate with them...And you know, I wouldn't phone anyone, or make a phone call to, you know, me insurance company, I always used to be so scared, but now I just pick up the phone and go yeah, you know, I'm not bothered by it

(Andy, 24, interview)

As can be seen, Kurt is now confident enough to perform on stage and professes that this is his desired career path, whilst Andy's victory is being able to make phone calls, something he initially was too "scared" to do. In this respect, the empowering potential of KCC Live helps Kurt and Andy to find their voices both within, and beyond, the station. This has parallels with Ranson's (2000) assertion that, for young people, finding their voice results in realising their identity, and potentially exercising agency. Further, this illustrates that KCC Live is not a bounded space; rather, it is porous, enabling experiences to trickle through into the 'real world' (more on this in Chapter Eight).

Interestingly, some young people claimed to take more value from the production process than broadcasting their radio shows. The following exchange between Beard and Bruce reveals this:

Beard: I like finding little nuggets of information, like as soon as I put together the show and I put it in Myriad [broadcast radio software], that's it. Like as far as I'm concerned that's the best it will be...I listen back to it and I cringe a little bit, because the, the presenting side's awful, the music's brilliant. But, you know, I prefer like, putting together the show, rather than it, like, getting broadcast

Bruce: Do you really care if nobody listens?

Beard: I don't

Bruce: Yeah, I'm pretty much the same, I like putting it together. I like finding a playlist of songs and I think, no that doesn't work there, I'll put that there instead, no I'll move that down. I'll say that after that song, I'll speak into that track

Beard: I don't care how many people are listening...At the end of the day I say what I want to say, I get my voice out there, and if it's, if it's just me listening to it, then, you know, it doesn't matter

(Beard, 27, and Bruce, 25, participatory focus group)

Throughout this dialogue, Beard and Bruce pay homage to the enjoyment they derive from the production process. For these volunteers, simply speaking about the music they are passionate about is empowering, and they dismiss the importance of an audience in this process. This is in line with Wagg's (2004) finding that, for young people, sharing their work on the radio is enfranchising, regardless of the size or even existence of an audience.

It bears emphasising however that, although some participants did not consider the broadcasting of their shows important, others expressed delight when members of the public recognised their voices:

I was working today and a customer must've overheard me speaking, came to the till, and asked "are you on the radio?"... "The Knowsley radio station isn't it?"... I couldn't believe it! After nearly six years on KCC Live, I'd finally been recognised for my voice! I never got into radio for fame or to be recognised, and I think anybody who does get into media for those reasons perhaps love themselves more than the industry they represent. But I must say, it was a nice feeling while it lasted

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

I met a nice fifteen-year-old girl at the bus stop. I told her I did radio and before I could say where or when she said "is that you?" Ahhh! I was buzzing. It's not even about fame, I'm just happy someone is listening who I didn't ask to [laughs]

(Kate, 25, interview)

The contrast between these statements and the previous exchange between Beard and Bruce is consistent with Goffman's (1959:106) assertion that some performers are not concerned with appearances or perception, whilst others possess "purely ceremonial roles". Within these ceremonial roles, performers are predominantly

concerned with the appearance they make to the audience. Though Modest Mouse and Kate emphasise that this is not about “fame”, they project themselves as appreciative of the recognition. Modest Mouse confesses that it was a “nice feeling”, whilst Kate tells that she was “buzzing”. For Modest Mouse, the recognition somewhat compensates almost six years of dedication to the station. All told, some volunteers are further empowered through having their voices recognised; a realm beyond getting their voices heard. As Lundy (2007) argues, though on the topic of pupil voice, enabling voice is not enough to activate effective participation; it needs to be accompanied by space, influence and audience.

Away from the airwaves, the practice of actively involving volunteers in decision-making within the station was a source of empowerment. During my fieldwork, management (in discussion with volunteers) decided to re-brand KCC Live, and sought the young people’s opinions regarding the design of the new logo and colour scheme. This involved consulting with the young people, eliciting, and importantly listening to, their voices. The following excerpt from my field diary is revealing:

Today the young people were asked to help with the re-branding of the station. They were asked their opinions on different colour schemes, ideas for the logo, and other ideas for branding, for instance which hoodies they would prefer to wear to promote the station. Many young people were very engaged in the process, suggesting font types they liked and disliked, eliminating potential logo designs and including others. Certainly, this was not a tokenistic gesture of participation and young people saw this as an opportunity for involvement in decision-making, which would have a real outcome

(Author’s field diary, 09/10/13)

This has resonance with Ranson’s (2000) idea that voice provides young people with the opportunity to realise and assert their own opinions, and also to cooperate and negotiate. In this sense, KCC Live is an inclusive space where young people feel able to express their views without rebuke. It is noteworthy that station management took the young people’s suggestions on board, and the outcome of the re-branding encompassed many of their ideas. For instance, the new logo incorporated the young people’s idea of a sound wave into the design; one of the station walls was painted pink; and KCC Live had a new slogan “the station with attitude”, as was popularly voted by young people.

Beyond perceiving KCC Live as a voice for themselves, young people spoke of the station as a voice for the community. The following passage from Frank, former Principal of Knowsley Community College, suggests how giving the community a voice was part of KCC Live's philosophy:

The notion of giving a community voice as well, you know, people who perhaps wouldn't get onto erm Radio City [a local commercial radio station] to say what they wanted to say, could actually come into the college and be interviewed and talk about err, you know, projects that are going on in the community and this kind of thing, so we gave that kind of voice

(Frank, 63, interview)

Remarks gleaned from a focus group discussion with the young people support this sentiment:

Robbie: I think generally community radio stations should reflect the community that it's based in, the community that it serves, yeah. It should be about what's going on in the community and what local - and when I say local I don't mean Liverpool - I mean really local events, little tiny things that might not get any other kind of publicity, but it should all be about what's happening in Huyton and Kirkby [towns in Knowsley]

Harry: We can afford to do that, do you know what I mean? Other stations in Liverpool they've got to sell, whereas we don't have to

Robbie: We can say, well we can talk about your little garden fete which you're doing

Harry: We can say, as a community what are we interested in? That may not necessarily be mainstream or big or make us money...we can talk about the little things, and it's not like what people actually want, like what you'd want a community station to talk about, it's more like what our community station *is* talking about. We give our community a voice, so Knowsley is a community, it doesn't have a voice I don't think, do you know what I mean?...What you as a community station do is say right, here's your voice, here is your outlet, and go out there and actually get people to listen and get people to be interested in what's happening in your community

(Robbie, 26, and Harry, 24, focus group)

This exchange paints a picture of KCC Live as a space for articulating the voices of individuals in the community. Robbie tells how a "little garden fete" deserves mention on the airwaves. This indicates a shift from self-expression towards community-building. Harry's latter remark has parallels with Mhlanga's (2009) argument that community radio offers an alternative voice to local communities, also

encouraging community members to contribute towards bringing about development. This is of value for, as Ranson (2000) tells, when young people and, indeed, communities, find a voice, they are set on the correct path for discovering the agentic potential that can contest the constraints of social exclusion.

In line with this, Calvin tells how, through playing tracks requested by the listening audience, he ‘speaks’ for the listeners:

Because a few of the listeners sometimes tweet²³ me to play tracks, so you play them and then they feel as though it’s them, they’re in the studio presenting that track. Because you say “this is for such and such and they’ve asked for this because”. It does feel like some people are too shy to do radio, and I feel like if you play something for them then they will feel as though they’re connected with the station. You are like a voice for them, because if they’re too shy, they don’t wanna say nothing, you like can voice their opinion for them which I enjoy doing. It’s like I’m speaking for me community, it’s boss!

(Calvin, 19, interview)

It is clear that Calvin feels he is able to actualise the voices of the listeners through fulfilling their song requests on air. Evidence from the listener interviews and listener diary follow-up interviews supports the idea that listeners derive personal satisfaction from having their requested songs played and ‘shout outs’ read out on air. Damian (18, listener interview) told me: “it’s a good feeling having your name read out, it gives you a buzz”. Similarly, Eddie (21, listener diary interview) explained: “it makes you feel a little bit famous”. Michelle (24, listener diary interview), who, as previously mentioned, lives in Cornwall, poignantly expressed: “it’s my words, but said in a different accent, so it makes me feel part of the community”. The listeners, particularly those such as Michelle who, as a regular, is often mentioned by presenters on KCC Live, are ‘extras’ in the on-air performances. As Keough (2010) tells, in community radio listeners are viewed as potential participants. This relates to Rampton’s (2009) point that, within performance, people undertaking ordinary activities are called upon to enter the imaginary ethereal space created for them by the performer. In this sense, the inclusion of listener voices is empowering, through blurring the distinction between KCC Live and the listening community. Taken together, KCC Live provides a platform to celebrate the

²³ A post on the social media website Twitter.

individual words, as well as the collective voice, of young people in Knowsley, and beyond.

6.4 Radio Voices: Restrictions

When examining young people's involvement with media projects, the notion of youth voice is often sensationalised as connoting free expression and social critique (Soep, 2006). Soep (2006) cautions that, often, there are conflicting voices and interests existing within youth media outcomes. For some young people at KCC Live, such conflicting voices are a restriction to fully realising their own voices. To start with an example, "radio voice" was a phrase used by one volunteer, Fearne, to explain her on-air voice, which she describes as different from her everyday voice:

Fearne: The only difficulties I've faced is getting into like doing me show properly and like doing me voices and things

CW²⁴: What do you mean by your "voices"?

Fearne: When I say me voices I mean, like I couldn't just go on air and speak like this, it has to sound right, it has to sound professional and radio-ish, I don't just want to sound like me. Well I want to sound like me, but a better sort of crafted version of me. I have me voice and then I have me radio voice
(Fearne, 22, interview)

As the above exchange highlights, for some young people, speaking on air is not a simple case of stepping up to the microphone and talking. Fearne rehearses her voice to make it sound "radio-ish". In this sense, Fearne is concerned with "speech production" (Goffman, 1981:218), in that she is taking steps towards producing 'spontaneous' and fluent speech. Several other volunteers, though referring to a more sanitised voice, discussed this notion of a "crafted version" of self:

When you work on radio, you have your like on-air self and you have your self outside it. So I eff and blind a lot more in person than I would on the radio obviously [laughs]. You've got to project like a more polite version of yourself on there

(Harry, 23, focus group)

In my everyday speech I swear quite a lot, which isn't necessarily a good trait, but I have to watch - I really have to watch what I say - but it's weird I don't even really try to not swear, it's just cos you know you can't

(Robbie, 25, focus group)

²⁴ CW denotes my initials.

In training I was taught like the presenting side of things, like erm how to present, like practicing links, what kind of stuff to put in the links, how to erm get them nice and snappy and not mess up, and then obviously all Ofcom training²⁵, erm don't swear, don't say anything offensive, practically don't have an opinion on anything, things like that

(Shaz, 18, interview)

It's like your telephone voice isn't it, sometimes if I'm conscious of it I do try to self-censor what I say

(Madonna, 18, focus group)

In delineating the above quotations, Harry and Robbie perceive the elimination of bad language as a form of censorship. Shaz takes this a step further, in saying that, due to Ofcom regulations, not only is she not allowed to use swear language, but she does not feel that she can have an opinion on anything. Akin to Harry and Robbie, Madonna speaks of how she conducts self-censorship on air, comparing the projection of herself on the airwaves to a “telephone voice”, which is typically considered polite and professional. Madonna has implemented a technique of self-control to ensure that she does not go against the regulations. As Goffman (1981) tells in a discussion of radio talk, presenters desire to project the best versions of themselves; to this end, their performances are heedful and self-conscious. Further, the young people work with a pre-censored idea of speech; that is, they make decisions about what they will say in the context of “an already circumscribed field of linguistic possibilities” (Butler, 1997:129). In this reading, beyond self-control, the young people contend with censorship that *precedes* speech, and is therefore responsible for its production (Butler, 1997). Thus, further than erecting boundaries for expression, censorship is formative of the young people's speech. My findings therefore support Arnot and Reay's (2007:311) notion of “pedagogic voice”, which engages with power relations that produce and shape voices.

Management at Knowsley Community College spoke of their perceived duty to “veto” what young people had to say, and to “police” the station:

²⁵ KCC Live holds compulsory training for new volunteers that covers the basics of presenting techniques, for instance use of equipment and awareness of The Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

You might get a bigoted person who might want to muscle in and, erm, have their opinions voiced that are perhaps not of the sort of opinions you would normally like. The trouble with radio of course is, is that you've got to be seen to be fair, and you've got to be seen to be letting everybody have their say. But when you've got erm, responsibilities for students and their wellbeing and what have you, you have to be careful. So, sometimes it's a question of perhaps having to veto what some people would like to say (Pam, 68, former Vice Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

There was always a risk that, erm, you know, you put together young people, particularly sort of the teenage-type person on a public broadcast medium like that and you've got a risk of what they might say. You know, what they might say was always a bit of a risk. So it was my duty to police it in that sense

(Frank, 63, former Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

A common thread running through these excerpts is one of the supervised nature of youth voice on the airwaves. Although these examples of 'policing' may not sound unreasonable, they demonstrate the tensions surrounding the co-construction of youth voice (see Komulainen, 2007); that is, voice as a product of a variety of influences arising from the context within which it is produced. Consistent with this, in Wales' (2012:544) research, one participant's reinventions through digital storytelling were "not good enough for the school authorities". Taken together, my findings indicate a shift from celebratory accounts of authentic youth voice, to what Podkalicka and Thomas (2010:403) describe as a "socially embedded and crafted" voice.

The following excerpt from my field diary adds credence to the idea of the socially determined nature of voice on the airwaves:

I have just had my first snoop with management. I was played back links from the broadcast log [where previously aired shows are stored]. It was pointed out that sometimes I spoke for too long during links, I was told that the ideal link was around two minutes long and that I had the tendency to go over this. I was told "three minutes is too long and you should try to shorten it a little bit". As much as I know that this is best practice for radio, and for sounding professional, I question whether adhering to this formula is restrictive for myself and other young people who have something to say and are passionate about it! Does professionalism overrule progressive outcomes?!

(Author's field diary, 18/07/14)

Through my account, I communicate the tension between young people finding and realising their voice, and the implementation of expert knowledge. In this vein, Podkalicka and Thomas (2010:404) speak of how, if a place is “too professional”, it can segregate certain disenfranchised young people who may wish to “remain on the periphery of creative production”, not seeking further education or employment in the media industry. The following vignettes from Nikki and Olly illustrate this tension:

I pre-record my show and then I edit out all of the mistakes, like if I slip up pronouncing something, it has to be perfect...I try to do it by the book. Because I want a career in radio, like real bad, this is the best training ground for me. It's good to know like the broadcasting err conventions and stuff, and then I work my show around them. So it's basically the same as a show on Radio 1

(Nikki, 21, interview)

I really struggle with this whole idea of erm sticking to timings. Like, the news has to come in at the top of the hour, dead on. The ads err, they have to be played out at a certain time. They can't be late. For me it's pressure and it's daunting, like thinking I've got to talk there and for X amount of time, or I can only talk for 40 seconds in that link else my show will run over. I just like wanna do my thing. I just want to sit there in the studio, play some boss tunes and talk about random stuff. I know we should stick to timings because we're trying to be professional, but that's not for me. I just want to sit here and do my own thing

(Olly, 17, interview)

Thus, whilst aspiring BBC Radio 1 presenter Nikki appreciates the broadcasting conventions at KCC Live, as they put her in good stead for her future career, Olly values free expression. In line with Goffman (1981:198), Nikki has been “schooled” to undertake speech production on air that is free from “slips and gaffes”. This builds on insights by Soep (2006), who presents voice as structured by relations, including training and discipline. Yet Olly, who has no desire to pursue a career in radio, perceives the broadcast conventions that KCC Live adheres to as boundaries that stifle his voice. Throughout my observations, I noted that Olly attempted to combat norms, for instance running over timings; speaking into tracks; taking out songs that are playlisted²⁶, and scheduling his own music choices. These actions can be seen as strategies of resistance (see Hill and Bessant, 1999), through which Olly is asserting and redefining his presence at KCC Live, and actively negotiating his voice. Taken

²⁶ A schedule of the recordings to be played on the radio.

together, I argue that an emphasis on professionalism may impede both young people's creativity and presentation of self. This is reminiscent of Brushwood Rose's (2009) discussion of the impossibilities of women and girl's self-representation in digital storytelling. Brushwood Rose (2009:4) speaks of the "power of the unpolished voice", and speculates that a coached approach to storytelling may restrict young girl's voices. It is in this vein that I argue for attention to be paid to the fact that not all young people at KCC Live hold the same goals and that some young people, mostly those who are not seeking a career in radio, appreciate freedom on the airwaves.

Informing KCC Live management that the current 'best practice' of radio production can be limiting for some young people, I recommended that young people should be allowed to broadcast shows in which they produce and follow their own conventions. The following exchange between Hywel and Chrissie demonstrates the potential for KCC Live to implement this recommendation:

Hywel: The idea of giving an hour of just blank space to somebody is, would be a nice thing and we actually call it the Blank Space show and they don't have to do anything other than what they want for an hour. Erm, however, I also think that, erm regardless of, if this was a youth club, say this was a boxing club, regardless of whether or not you want to become an international boxer or whether you're just doing it for exercise, or to meet friends and stuff, it's the rules...So if we've got too many rules on them then definitely we should look at that. But, erm if you give them a blank canvas without an easel it might actually be much harder to come up with like, like there's a complete, such a wide brief there that it's difficult to live up to. But for those that have been there for a while and feel frustrated by it all, offering up an opportunity for people who have learnt the basics to then go, "look, if you want to do something completely weird, different, original, then let us know"

Chrissie: Yeah so maybe an option...We will teach you how to do stuff, so that you understand how it's supposed to work and what the rules are. But once you understand and demonstrate that you can stick to time and you can be regulated, then you can explore more
(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, and Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, joint feedback interview)

As can be seen above, Hywel argues the need for a 'Blank Space' show which would afford volunteers free reign to pursue their own conventions on air. However, Hywel acknowledges that awareness of rules is important in many pursuits with young people. This speaks to Rennie and Thomas' (2008) concern that, if total free

expression were allowed, young people would not gain real-world technical skills, for instance the regulatory codes of practice, and would not learn the conventions related to commercial media practice. However, following Rennie and Thomas (2008), this may be at the expense of young people negotiating decisions about how to represent themselves and their communities. In recognition of this, Chrissie adds that the idea of a Blank Space show is an option, and one that would be useful for young people to progress onto once they have learnt the rules and regulations of community radio. Following McLaughlin and Heath (1993:217), the responses of Hywel and Chrissie are telling of how youth organisations “walk a thin line” between personalisation for all young people who join, and strict adherence of rules that apply to everyone.

Throughout my fieldwork, there were occasions when young people desired to speak about a topic on air, but were “scared to even mention it” (Fearne, 22, in Author’s field diary 03/12/13) through fear of reprimand if they were to “say something wrong” (Olly, 17, in Author’s field diary 16/07/14). The following anecdotes from Harry and Olly further reveal how different spaces at KCC Live permit certain behaviours and voices:

In the office we all laugh and joke, we play fight, call each other names. Take the mick out of where we’re from, like Andy lives in Birkenhead so I call him a Wool. I wouldn’t do that on air because listeners who like aren’t from Liverpool specifically, who are like maybe from over the water [Wirral] or St. Helens [a town in Merseyside] might get offended. Also like I could be swearing me head off saying to Chris “fuck off you divvy”, and then two seconds later I’m in the studio and I don’t curse for two hours

(Harry, 22, interview)

I can remember this one time, I was in Studio 2, I was doing a show but we weren’t on air, a song was playing out. So I was having a massive rant to Karl about something, probably my job [the volunteer is in part-time employment], and I was saying “fuck this, fuck that” and then suddenly I had a horrible feeling that the mics [microphones] were up. I looked over, I was so panicked my heart like sank. Thankfully they weren’t up, if they were I’d have been in so much trouble. Now I try not to say anything remotely controversial when I’m in the studio, regardless of whether we’re on or off air. That’s what we’re advised as well [by management]. I mean it’s not worth it, the station would go under

(Olly, 17, interview)

Harry and Olly's narratives represent how young people at KCC Live have changing roles in space. There is an informal/backstage behaviour and a different behaviour for performance (Goffman, 1959). Goffman (1959) tells how backstage behaviour can comprise of: bad language; sexual remarks; playful aggressiveness; and joking, amongst other acts. In contrast, the frontstage - in the case of KCC Live, on air - forbids such behaviour. Whilst Goffman (1959:115) notes that the back region of a performance is "cut off from it by a partition and guarded passageway", the back region for KCC Live is simply when the microphones are down. Seen in this way, in the flick of a switch the young people embody a different persona; this is reminiscent of a 'quick-change' act, in which a performer changes swiftly from one costume into another.

6.4.1 *Thatcher's death*

During my fieldwork, on the 8th April 2013, Margaret Thatcher died. Many young people at KCC Live felt passionately about her death. However, they communicated that, although they desired to speak about it on air, they feared that they would put the survival of the station in jeopardy through saying something libellous (if a station breaches an Ofcom regulation they may face a heavy fine – something which KCC Live cannot afford to pay). I witnessed how, in the office where presenters wait and socialise before they go before on air, they discussed at length their opinions of Margaret Thatcher and their feelings towards her death. However, these opinions did not make it into young people's on-air discussions:

Today there was plenty of talk about the death of Margaret Thatcher, many of the young people expressed strong opinions about her. Harry referred to Thatcher as "the milk snatcher"²⁷ and spoke about the decision to end free school milk, whilst Bruce spoke about "Thatcherism" and how he believed that Margaret Thatcher's battle against inflation led to mass unemployment. When Harry and Bruce went on air, separately, neither of them mentioned Margaret Thatcher at all. When I asked them about this later they said they "daren't" (Harry), and that "it's safer not to" (Bruce)

(Author's field diary, 08/04/13)

²⁷ During the Thatcher era, the 1980 Education Act removed the obligation of local education authorities to provide school meals, except for those children entitled to free school meals. Nutritional standards were removed along with the obligation to charge a fixed price for school meals, and free school milk was abolished (Pike and Colquhoun, 2012).

This links closely to Goffman's (1959:109; 114) distinction between "front region", which is the frontstage of a performance, and "back region" or backstage. Off air at KCC Live is the back region, where the performer can drop his/her front and "step out of character" (Goffman, 1959:115). In this example, backstage provided an arena for young people to express their true opinions on Thatcher's death, whilst frontstage (on air), they projected themselves as largely apolitical. This is particularly worrying when considering concerns within children's geographies and youth studies of declining levels of political engagement and participation among young people (Henn and Foard, 2014; O'Toole, 2003). The following exchange makes clear that, for station management, young people's perceptions of being limited in their speech on such topics is not worrying, owing to the more pressing issue of a potential Ofcom fine:

Hywel: I'm glad that they were terrified. I don't think anyone should be terrified, but until we've got a producer stood in the room all the time, one wrong move, one wrong comment means that the station's ruined forever. Because it's so easy, I mean it's just so easy for professional broadcasters to say something that could land them with a fifty grand fine, and it would finish us. So it's a shame, but as long as Ofcom exists in the way that it does, in a reactive way, in a way that it deals with complaints –

Chrissie: Because everyone here is so passionate when it comes to things like Maggie Thatcher and The Sun newspaper²⁸, and things that Scousers feel very protective over. For them to be faced with that, and they've got an open mic and their friends listening, and for them to have all these opinions that they'll tell me in the room, but have got the sense to not say it on the mic, I couldn't be prouder...

Hywel: I think though, on days like that, perhaps me and you can be better at putting a Facebook post up first thing in the morning giving a couple of examples of the kind of thing you can or can't say
(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, and Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, joint feedback interview)

Hywel's statement that "one wrong comment means that the station's ruined forever" brings into sharp relief the power of the regulatory body Ofcom. Chrissie supports this notion, expressing her 'pride' that, notwithstanding their impassioned views, young people "have got the sense not to say it on the mic". In taking my recommendation forward, Hywel concludes that management will give advice to

²⁸ An article printed in The Sun newspaper after the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster, under the headline 'The Truth', prompted a longstanding boycott by readers in Liverpool.

young people via social media, for instance, on the morning of a big media event. This will provide young people with examples of statements that are ‘safe’ to say on air, and those that are not. Although this is not a solution for the silence of youth voice on the airwaves for political, and other, issues, it will encourage young people to discuss such topics on air, within the boundaries of Ofcom regulations, as opposed to neglecting them completely.

6.5 Performance and Creative Storytelling

Despite the potentially limiting power of community radio, due to Ofcom regulations and the control of station and college management, as explored in the previous section, I found strong evidence that KCC Live affords creativity to volunteers. For, as Butler (1997:140) finds, censorship is “not a dead-end for agency”, as there remains the possibility to create a new language that is not condemned by presuppositions. Presenters explore various possibilities and outcomes in the construction of different identities and narratives on air. As Hywel comments:

When you do a radio show, you really have to try and figure out what character - what are your strengths, when are you the most interesting and funny and entertaining to people. And you have to think of a way of packaging that, of putting that across. And for young people, who are often lost in amongst thousands of other young people and have been for years at school, they find a way of doing that, and it really brings them out of their shell and lets them flower

(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, interview)

Hywel’s comment that young people ‘package’ the most interesting, comedic, and entertaining aspects of their personality, relates to Goffman’s (1959) discussion of the role of outward performance in communicating impressions of self to an audience. For Goffman (1959), a performance encompasses all the activity of an individual on an occasion that functions to influence other participants. I found that young people’s performance personae were often exaggerated and caricatured, and they shaped and shared stories around this. I term these stories ‘creative audiobiographies’, whereby young people move from autobiography to combine music and whimsical self-narrative.

Perhaps the most telling example of a creative audiobiography comes from Chris, who formulated a tale of how he was longing to get back into a relationship with his ex-girlfriend. This story unfolded over several months as Chris told the listeners that he had been romantically reacquainted with his girlfriend, and eventually that he desired to end this relationship because he had fallen in love with another girl. In telling how a digital story can be understood as a space in which, through finding and creating useful objects, the storyteller endangers their association with the world, Brushwood Rose (2009:17) continues that the researcher must never ask “is this the truth, or did you make it up?” However, my observant participant position enabled me to “separate fact from fiction and gossip from information, whilst strategically using both to gain further data” (Moeran, 2007:148). Chris provided me with a vivid account of why he chose to tell this fabricated story:

To begin with it was just like a, erm, a filler, something to take up space on air. But then, like, I really got into it. I could visualise the characters, I kinda like knew what these girls looked like. I had names for them and stuff. In the end I carried on because I knew, like, the audience would find it funny and stuff...It was weird how much I got into it, I got into character too, I pretended to be upset because of things that this fake girlfriend had done, and I knew that, like, listeners could relate to that and empathise

(Chris, 18, interview)

Whilst other research positions lies and fantasies appearing in research accounts as being of no value (e.g. Veale, 2005), in line with Von Benzon (2015:336), I did not perceive such stories as “fraudulent research contributions”, I considered them rich data. One reading of this is that Chris is seeking self-hood, in a bid to negotiate his positioning in the world. Here, a point made by Alrutz (2015), in relation to drama, rings true. The author tells that in exploring and essentially ‘trying on’ possible selves, young people can relive and rewrite their experiences. An alternative reading is that Chris is attempting to negotiate the way he is perceived by the listening community. This latter reading can be understood in relation to Goffman’s (1959:203) discussion of “impression management”, whereby an individual works to stage a character to be received in a particular way, by a particular group of people. It further holds parallels with the work of Holmes (2005) who, writing on the topic of media more generally, acknowledges that presenter’s performances are a channel through which commonality is accomplished with other viewers, listeners, or readers. Chris’ tale can also be viewed through the lens of play (testing boundaries

and exploring risk, see for instance McKendrick *et al.*, 2014), or more specifically pretend play (play that includes the use of fantasy and make-believe, Russ, 2004). In this pretend play, Chris uses fantasy to weave a context, story, and characters. Moreover, the girlfriends can be viewed as imaginary companions. Thus, although pretend play is thought to be a childhood activity, this account supports Göncü and Perone's (2005:137) argument that it is a "life-span activity", present in 'youthhood' as well as childhood.

As is clear then, in line with Carlson and Dimitriadis (2003), creative engagement with popular culture, in this instance community radio, affords young people the ability to shape language, style and self into something novel. As a result, they believe that they can control their self-representations and cultural identities. The act of constructing creative audiobiographies was not unique to Chris; other young people described how they made up imaginative tales on air:

If it gets to a point where I like, don't know what to say, then I will just make it up. Sometimes that's the best part, the most fun. Because, say I invent this mad story, then I get carried away with it. I add to that story over the next hour or so, and then towards the end of the show, I have to kind of remind myself that it didn't happen [laughs], I made it up

(Andy, 23, interview)

I just tell weird anecdotes to be honest... I'm not one of them shows that kinda discusses things I'll, if I've got a funny story in my mind then I'll tell it. I do this thing at the end of my show, a bedtime story. I make up the plots, characters, props, I get other volunteers involved in the storytelling too...It's kind of weird [in the studio] because I'm by myself, so it kind of teaches you to just soliloquy for two hours. It's quite strange but, it's weird you just have to get animated even though there's no one there to bounce off or anything. I mean, I dunno, yeah just if there's something in my mind I'll say it, half the time it's not true, like something hasn't happened but I pretend that it has

(Shaz, 18, interview)

When you're telling a story you've got to elaborate a bit and say like yeah "and this happened, then this happened, and it was really funny", and then like if everyone else in the studio sort of goes along with that and laughs at it, then the audience will be likely to laugh as well, and it's getting their attention as well

(Madonna, 18, participatory focus group)

These vignettes signal a performative and playful notion of youth voice. Andy speaks of how it is "fun" to make up stories on air. This coheres with Goffman's (1959) assertion that, when individuals are consumed by their own act, they become

their own audience, and as such, they are the performer and spectator of the same performance. Interestingly, although Shaz speaks of her time in the studio as an individual experience, she discusses storytelling in an inclusionary way, through involving other volunteers. Madonna, too, tells how other volunteers join in the storytelling process. As such, the young people engage in “shared pretense” (Searle, 1979:71), in the respect that other young people are ‘in on it’; they are aware of the play-acting. Further, the young people are constructing “agentive selves” (Hull and Katz, 2006:43), as producers of their own stories. These quotations can be understood as a certain kind of performance, namely improvisational theatre (Improv) which, following Napier (2004:140), involves “getting on a stage and making stuff up as you go along”. As Göncü and Perone’s (2005) tell, Improv can be likened to children’s play because of its lack of emphasis on performance rules or structures. Here then, the young people appear to be finding their own ways of combating the restricted nature of broadcasting regulations. These experimental presentations of voice add credence to the view that more caution needs to be exercised in considering youth voice as authentic (see Cairns, 2009; Soep and Chávez, 2010). By connoting the real and the actual, romanticised notions of youth voice preclude any performative aspect. From my data, I argue that this is troublesome, underestimating the value of constructing a creative self.

I found a further incarnation of performativity within ‘fake interactions’ that presenters create, and subsequently read out, on air. When presenters ask listeners to ‘get in touch’ during their show, they often put this request on social networking websites, namely Facebook and Twitter. However, young people seldom receive response from the listening audience, due to lack of audience interaction experienced at KCC Live (explored in Chapter Seven). Aware of this, some presenters prepare fake interactions in advance of their shows, whilst others, as Andy (24, interview) tells, “ad-lib”. The young people spoke of how there was a skill to creating fake interactions:

First of all you’ve got to think about the person’s name, like this area, around here there wouldn’t be anyone called err Jemima or Hugo [laughs], so err I always use more common names like Jake, Dan and Emma

(Chris, 17, focus group)

I always have a standard few stock characters which I pull out the bag [laughs]. I recycle these for each show, so it's always "Danny from Huyton", "Scott from Prescott" and "Jess from St Helens". I'll use these characters in every show, and then I'll make up activities like "Danny is painting his house today" - I mean, who even paints their house? [Laughs]

(Andy, 24, interview)

It's all about the delivery, you've got to say it convincingly, you can't just say "Scott from Huyton messaged", you've got to say "Big up Scott from Huyton, getting in touch by Facebook today, he's off to the movies tonight". You've got to make it into a story

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

From the above, I tease out two key themes: script writing, and performance. With regards to script writing, Chris speaks of how, in the selection of names for the fictional characters he 'casts', he deliberately chooses "more common names", which he deems in keeping with the area. Andy tells that he invents somewhat comical activities for his "stock characters" to do, which he "recycles" for inclusion in each show he presents. Regarding performance, Modest Mouse tells how he convincingly delivers his interactions, to disguise them as counterfeit. These fake interactions are "stage props" in the frontstage (Goffman, 1959:32), utilised by the young people as part of their performances.

Another instance of performance occurred one evening, when I was involved in a KCC Live talk show. Andy chose news stories for other volunteers and I to discuss. One story was that researchers had found a new way to 'stamp out smoking'. Whilst a song was playing out, Madonna and Robbie spoke about which side of the argument they would take. Robbie said: "can you pretend you're really in support of it, and I'll say I'm really against it". Madonna said: "okay, okay, anything for a bit of a heated debate!" (Author's field diary, 24/04/14). The debate that ensued did get very heated, so much so that Chrissie, the Station Manager, stepped in and asked someone else to take over the microphone. Robbie then revealed to Chrissie that it was not a genuine argument; rather, they were performing. This can be seen as a "cartooning sequence" (Coupland, 2001:367), whereby voices and stances should not be taken at face value, for it is performance talk. I interviewed Madonna and Robbie in a joint interview after this incident to find out their motivations for enacting this performance:

Madonna: In that instance, when you're sort of adopting an opinion to kind of make a superficial debate, erm, you're doing it to make it more interesting for the audience...It sounds boring when you're all agreeing and it's like "yeah yeah, good point good point, move on!"...It makes listeners want to tune in and it sort of gets them riled up as well, because like, you know, the more heated the debate the more heated they get and their opinion is

Robbie: You've got to create a debate sometimes, cos a lot of the time we'll have topics and we all sort of like agree on it, like "oh that's awful, that's awful". But, beforehand we have to say "well can you disagree"...If we all agreed then listeners could just go "oh yeah, yeah that's right". But if you have someone else's opinion, and to see the other side of the argument...well it makes people think "oh yeah that actually might, they might have a point there". It's like when you watch Question Time²⁹ isn't it [laughs]

Madonna: I think from the audiences or the listeners' point of view as well, otherwise if everyone's agreeing and there's no debate, sometimes it just feels like people are talking at ya...But if there's some sort of atmosphere there and the debate, you know, it grabs people's attention. I think like I exaggerate or -

Robbie: Or make my opinion more over the top than it actually was

Madonna: Yeah definitely!

(Madonna, 18, and Robbie, 26, joint interview)

Madonna and Robbie's conversation maps nicely onto ideas generated by Goffman (1959:28), that an individual puts on his/her show "for the benefit of other people", and that Madonna and Robbie conduct themselves in a certain way to evoke a desired response from the audience. This is similar to Soep's (2006) argument that young people may control, exaggerate and try out a range of real and imagined voices. Further, it has parallels with Stiernstedt's (2014:297) point that there is a common expectation amongst radio audiences that presenters are performing, and that these performances are "scripted, edited, and to a certain extent "fake"". Heard in this way, not only is KCC Live a crucial space for the construction of young people's presentations of self, but owing to radio's imaginative force, it is also an important space of experimentation, creative storytelling and (re)presentation.

²⁹ A topical debate BBC television programme in the UK. The show typically features politicians and other public figures who answer pre-selected questions put to them by a carefully selected audience.

6.6 Concluding Remarks

With this chapter, I have provided insight into a twofold vision of youth voice on the airwaves as both restrictive and performative concurrently. First, owing to various constraints, by station management; college management; and the regulatory body Ofcom, I found that young people consider the airwaves to be a supervised, as opposed to emancipatory, arena. My discussion of how these bodies ‘police’ the airwaves extends Komulainen’s (2007) theorising of youth voice as a co-constructed entity, and also adds weight to the notion of voice as socially determined, and a product of the context within which it is produced. In this sense, my findings lend credence to Arnot and Reay’s (2007:311) notion of “pedagogic voice”, which engages with power relations that produce and shape voices. My research therefore extends Goffman’s (1981) conceptualisation of radio presenters as delivering heedful and self-conscious performances, to show how presenter’s performances are not only self-censored, but also pre-censored (Butler, 1997). This ranged from elimination of profanity through to the young people’s belief that they could not have an opinion on the airwaves, particularly concerning political issues. Second, in showcasing young people’s potential to produce carefully cultivated ‘fake interactions’ and ‘creative audiobiographies’, and to perform crafted debates, my research adds credence to the view advanced by scholars to be cautious about understandings of voice that claim authenticity (Cairns, 2009; Soep, 2006). By connoting the real and the actual, romanticised notions of youth voice preclude performance and creativity. I argue that this is troublesome, underestimating the value of constructing a creative self, and of young people re-writing the present and imagining their futures through storytelling. The key contribution of this chapter, therefore, is that it provides empirical evidence which goes *beyond* previous simplistic conceptualisations of voice (see Soep’s 2006 call) in youth media production.

Chapter Seven

Communities

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I am concerned with different understandings of community in relation to KCC Live, for volunteers, staff, and listeners. I therefore answer the question: who is the community in community radio? (Bailur, 2012; Gaynor and O'Brien, 2011; Mhlanga, 2009). I frame my discussion with Bourdieu's (1986:248) understanding of social capital as "the aggregate of actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance of importance". Within the more general theme of community, three subthemes emerged from my data, as follows: 7.2 The Community 'Within'; 7.3 The Listening Community; and 7.4. Social Networks and Virtual Community. As will become clear in the discussion, these subthemes are not separate entities; rather they are very much interrelated. I have separated these out here to explore them in sufficient depth. I argue that the community KCC Live serves extends far beyond the demographic and geographic community of 10-24 year-olds in Knowsley, as outlined in the KCC Live (2007) broadcast licence application. Notwithstanding this, being locally relevant remains important. The co-produced audio documentary, 'Community to me is...', explores some of the themes presented within. The reader is encouraged to listen to the audio documentary alongside reading this chapter³⁰.

7.2 The Community 'Within'

For many young people, KCC Live functions as much as a youth club³¹ as it does a community radio station. Many volunteers come into KCC Live when they are not recording or broadcasting their shows, and on those days, they socialise with other volunteers and management. This notion of volunteers who "just bung up together" (MJ, 22, interview) reveals a "community within" (Gaynor and O'Brien, 2011:31). The following excerpts exemplify this idea:

³⁰ As a reminder to the reader, you can access the 'Community to me is...' audio documentary here: <https://soundcloud.com/kcclive/community-to-me-is>

³¹ Youth clubs provide activities for young people, such as video games and table tennis, designed to keep them 'off the street' and therefore 'out of trouble'; they are positioned as one of the main instruments of informal learning for young people (see Kiilakoski and Kivijärvi, 2015).

Harry: Jake, who also works on his university station, said when he came here he was shocked how when he came here we all actually did talk and socialise. He says quite often when he goes into that station [university station], quite often, there's no one else there. Goes in, does his show, leaves.

Bruce: That's what I had when I was at uni

MJ: Same with mine, yeah

Harry: Whereas with this station, like you will have people who come in before their show, and then stay for a couple of hours after, just having a chat, laughing, that is I think quite unique to this station. I think even if you talk to anyone, anyone who works in commercial radio, this [the seven people in the focus group] will literally be all the presenters, and you won't talk to them outside of these walls, so you'll come in, "our staff meeting says we've got to do this", and then you'll bugger off. So to actually have a community, sort of sense of "I actually want to stay and talk to these people" is quite nice for a work place

(Harry, 24, Bruce, 25, and MJ, 22, participatory focus group)

It's the people here really, I mean it's, I don't really wanna go into broadcasting anymore, so the main reason I come is because, well I enjoy it because it's fun and I like the people here. I get on with everyone and I know most people

(Shaz, 18, interview)

A common thread running through these excerpts is one of positive and prosocial peer relations, that is positive relationships, which promote friendship, developed in an informal space. Bruce speaks of how volunteers "hang around" after they have finished working on their shows. Meanwhile, Shaz confesses that she no longer wishes to pursue a broadcasting career, yet maintains her attendance at KCC Live due to the friendships she has formed. The importance of such associations is clear when considering Polson *et al.*'s (2013) argument that an individual's civic and political engagement can be increased through regular social interaction with others, in an environment that endorses collaboration. Clearly, KCC Live is an important space of social interaction for young people.

Developing on the above, an interesting point to emerge is young people's fluctuating levels of involvement with KCC Live, depending on commitments to other communities of which they are members. Consider the following excerpts:

The only change is probably the dissertation in uni and everything is picking up, like the pressure, so I feel a little bit like, chaotic at the minute...I'm still doing my stuff here at KCC Live...Some weeks, because of having a like meeting with my tutor, or an extra session has been organised at uni, I've felt like some days I can't come in and do stuff, because it's been clashing recently, so I can't really wait to get it all over with so I can come back and spend even more time working on me radio stuff. It's kind of being pushed aside a little bit, but yeah only like for temporary measures

(Nikki, 21, interview)

I come in now one day a week, and the thing is like, I think I used to come in a few days a week...I just come in less cos of college and stuff

(Kurt, 17, interview)

I'm based on a zero hours contract, so I could get called that day to come in and cancel all the time that I was supposed to be in here [KCC Live]...Erm, recently I've been working so I've not been here much at all...I spend at least one pretty full day here a week, often two, sometimes three

(Bruce, 24, interview)

I haven't officially left [KCC Live] but between uni and work, I don't really have the time to commit to it at the moment, but I want to get more involved as soon as I get the chance

(Fearne, 21, interview)

As implied above, Nikki, Kurt, Bruce and Fearne simultaneously perceive themselves as part of the KCC Live community and other communities, in these instances: university, college, and work. As Human and Provan (2000) argue, because each distinct network brings individuals a unique set of benefits, individuals may belong to many networks; this may result in conflict when a certain network is given precedence over another. Jack explores this idea of being members of multiple communities:

No one likes to be on their own, I think it's good to have like a good collection of people around you, saying if you're going through a hard time in your life...you can have people that you can rely on. You can be part of like three different communities and then you know there's going to be somebody there to help you if you have trouble and that

(Jack, 20, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

Above, Jack adds credence to the phenomenon of "multiple belongings" (Mannarini and Fedi, 2009:212), telling that it is possible to be part of a number of different communities, saying that this opens up various support networks.

As seen above, the young people manage their commitment to different communities accordingly, minimising and maximising their presence at KCC Live. However, for Chris, a young person in the NEET category, who does not belong to any other communities, outside of friends and family, which require commitment and attendance (for instance, school/college, university, work, or other social clubs), this wavering commitment to KCC Live by other volunteers sometimes causes aggravation. Take the following quotations from two separate interviews with Chris:

It's kinda weird for the fact that at the time [of the station relocation], you'd think people would come in and kinda pull together as a team. I know people have jobs and stuff, that's understandable but I saw it as an opportunity to kinda grasp with both hands, kinda share the load with other people
(Chris, 18, interview)

I thought it [the station relocation] would be a time where everybody would pull together, but people started coming in less, saying like "oh I've got to work" or "I've got uni deadlines". So was just the same faces...there weren't that many people
(Chris, 18, interview)

Reflecting on a period in which KCC Live relocated studios in the college, Chris expresses annoyance over the lack of volunteers who assisted in this process, expressing that "it was just the same faces", referencing other volunteers' seemingly preferential commitments to work or education. Thus, for young people such as Chris, whose predominant commitment is KCC Live, this sense of "multiple belongings" (Mannarini and Fedi, 2009:212) is difficult to comprehend.

7.2.1 Family, friendships, and a second home

Rather than using the word 'community', notions of homeliness and of familial relationships were regularly invoked in my discussions with volunteers and station management. See the below examples:

I've spent so many of my free hours at the station this last year, starting out as erm my work experience module at university, it has become my second home
(MJ, 22, interview)

Our radio station, ah this is going to sound so cheesy, but it's kind of more like a family. You know when people are on a TV show together and they say it's like a family, that's what I think about KCC Live, as cheesy as it sounds

(Bruce, 25, interview)

A day at KCC Live is literally like hanging around with friends while doing what you love, it doesn't feel like work at all and everyone is so approachable and friendly...it's probably another reason why it's never a chore coming into the station. It's like a big family and everyone is very friendly and great to get on with

(Taylor, 19, interview)

This place is definitely - I'd call it a family. Instead of saying the word 'community' I'd use the word 'family'

(Trev, 38, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

I think there's a strong sense of - maybe family - that's probably a better way to describe it. So, erm, there's a strong link between the people that come here, so community's probably not a cool word to use with young people, and you'd never say "oh yeah we're a community", it's not a normal everyday word, but instead we'll say things like "family", there's something that links us all together and it is this place

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

Such terms used above are present in Algan's (2005) study of local radio, where volunteers use the word "family" to describe their sense of belonging to the radio station. Participants in my study took this a step further, suggesting the roles they played in this family. Trev (38, audio documentary recording session), one of the eldest volunteers, told me: "I'm the uncle of the group, I'm the big friendly uncle", whilst Shaz (18, interview), one of the youngest volunteers, told me how: "I'm definitely like the little sister of the KCC Live family, and then there's Bruno [KCC Live volunteer] who's like my big brother". These statements are interesting in revealing that KCC Live possesses a family-like structure, whereby volunteers self-identify, and identify others, as occupying specific familial roles. Interestingly, these family roles possess a non-hierarchical structure and, as I explore later in this thesis (see 8.3), age is not indicative of position at KCC Live; rather, possession of radio knowledge and technical skills equate to more superior roles for volunteers.

The social dimension of the relationships at KCC Live extends beyond the walls of the station to include cinema trips; shopping sprees; parties; and other celebrations, as Nikki tells:

It's good because it's just friends as well, I've made like good friends who - we go out like outside of the station as well, erm, and socialise with and it's just nice

(Nikki, 22, interview)

However, for volunteers who do not live within the immediate geographic community of KCC Live, socialisation outside of the station is not always viable, as Damon tells:

I'd like to do more things with people outside of the station. I don't know whether it's practical because I'm from Yorkshire...it's always radio-based if I communicate with people outside of the station...Usually if it's communicating about stuff, it's usually on Facebook, because otherwise I'd be ringing about five people [laughs] every blimbling day, trying to get stuff done [laughs]...So because of the distance [from Yorkshire to Knowsley] it's just usually radio-based for me at the moment

(Damon, 37, interview)

Due to lack of geographical proximity to KCC Live and the associated cost of transport, Damon experiences exclusion from a 'community beyond a community'. Damon's current relationship with KCC Live is "radio-based", although he would like to take part in more social activities outside of the station. For Damon, use of Facebook is important for facilitating social contact with volunteers away from KCC Live (more on this in 7.4). Significantly, then, although KCC Live has been described thus far as more of a sense of 'family', than something territorial, Damon's articulation stands as a reminder that geography remains important in developing social ties (Lee and Lee, 2010). A point made by Michael within the audio documentary supports this claim:

It [community] can transcend the geographic boundary, however it helps a lot based on the area where you live...if you lived somewhere and you had to drive in order to meet friends then you might not be able to do that, you might not have that same lifestyle

(Michael, 21, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

Michael supports Damon's claim of the importance of geography for full participation in the KCC Live community. This resonates with the view of certain scholars (e.g. Daraganova *et al.*, 2012) who position human relationships as predominantly local, maintaining that as the distance between individuals increases, the likelihood of a social tie diminishes.

Extending the idea of relationships, I found that ‘unlikely’ friendships had formed between volunteers who would “never be friends in the outside world” (Modest Mouse, 28, interview). As Chrissie explains:

There’s relationships that have been built at this radio station that I can personally say I know wouldn’t have existed outside of these walls...Their lives are so different and their lives are so far apart, there’s not a chance that they would even have crossed paths, or necessarily been as open-minded to erm make friendships with those people if it wasn’t for inside here [KCC Live]

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

The friendships of the kind described by Chrissie are “relationships and communities of choice” (Friedman, 1989:288), whereby young people choose to befriend other young people of different social backgrounds. A point made by Gee within the audio documentary supports this claim:

My community when I was younger was my friends, my family, my school life, erm like my netball team, things like that. Erm, now I do see erm community sometimes as a geographical erm space, because of how I work with that geographical space...but I think a community is just a belonging of people

(Gee, 24, ‘Community to me is...’ audio documentary)

Drawing together Gee’s claim and Friedman’s (1989) thesis, it can be assumed that other young people at KCC Live would not have had the opportunity to make such diverse friendships in their immediate neighbourhoods, or in the more prescribed friendships groups of school. Friedman (1989) tells that, for children, the community of origin is given as opposed to entered and created. However, for adults, and from my data I argue young people, there are communities of choice, much like friendships. See the examples of unlikely friendships described below:

I think like Chrissie [30, Station Manager], we’re just on the same level of like banter and things like that and cos I’m so loud and so is she really...Anything that crops up or whatever I’d have no problems going to her and saying like, erm even like just like funny stuff, and all the banter and things. Like I’m dead close to her, I think she’s like the person I’m like closest to at the radio, which is a bit mad with her being like the boss and that but, erm, I wouldn’t have it any other way really...I’ve never known like a manager like her. Like where you can just sit down and have just a general chitchat and a laugh

(Fearne, 22, interview)

It's kinda, it's really easy going, I mean we all come from very different lifestyles, like Bruno [38, fellow volunteer], he's in his 30's or 40's or something, and like, we'll joke like we're mates, even though before [coming to KCC Live] I'd never speak to someone like that

(Shaz, 18, interview)

In the above friendships, a key point of difference is age and also, in the case of Fearne and Chrissie's friendship, role. These friendships are of the kind described by Haynes (2013), in which individuals in communities, regardless of age or role, participate together in cultural development. These pedagogies can be seen to collapse what Rael (2009:168) describes as "the walls of adults vs. teen".

Further, I found that friendships at KCC Live were formed between different subgroups of people, as Chrissie explains:

There's lots of different types of young people that come through the door, so stereotypically, if you're going to break them down on appearances, you could be saying oh you've got scallies, and you've got Goths and Emos and you've got students. So there's those descriptions for the types of young people, but then you've also got people, erm, who are quite career-focussed and want to get into radio or journalism...and there's lots of different types with regards to ability, so you've got some people who, erm, struggle with formal education, and you've got ones who don't. But they all come together and get along

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

Above, Chrissie provides an idealistic depiction of different people who "all come together and get along". Diversity is important, as networking with people who are similar to ourselves characterises "people like us" (McPherson *et al.*, 2001:416). Most conceptualisations of community in extant literature privilege cohesion over disagreement (Wiesenfeld, 1996). Yet, for some young people at KCC Live, the notion of difference and 'othering' is not always positive:

Everyone who comes here is different. They're not all nice and sane, some of them are crazy and more difficult to work with, but we're always going to get that in this environment. It's not like we're employing people and we can go through people's CVs and interview them, we give everyone a fair chance. Some people work out, some people don't

(Modest Mouse, 29, interview)

Long-term station volunteer Modest Mouse highlights that the relationships forged between volunteers are occasionally messy. This relates to Panelli and Welch's (2005) argument that, even within the strongest communities, heterogeneity and disagreement are often present. As Modest Mouse tells, notwithstanding discrepancies, owing to KCC Live's voluntary nature, the station gives "everyone a fair chance". This echoes McMillan's (2011) point that a successful community will assimilate differences for the advantage of its members and the community as a whole. Further, this holds resonance with Bellah's (1995:2) remark that a "good" community is one in which there is conflict about the meaning of shared values and goals, and how they will be actualised in everyday life. This also relates to literature on friendships more generally (e.g. Bartos, 2013; Bunnell *et al.*, 2012), which positions friendships as potentially involving negative emotions and tensions.

7.2.2 Bridging the gaps

Throughout my research, I found evidence that KCC Live was successful in creating a bridge between different towns and districts in Knowsley. The following excerpt from Pam illustrates this:

When you look at where people came from who worked on the station and some of the people who came in to do interviews and that kind of thing, it wasn't just sort of Roby, Huyton people, people came up from Kirkby, up from Halewood and, err, throughout Knowsley. When the people from the station took volunteers out to do community projects, it wasn't just things round the corner, you know they were up in Prescot, up in Whiston, Halewood [towns/villages in Knowsley] and places like that. Well although it's a very erm fragmented Borough as such, because they were listening to the radio, and because they had access to the radio and it was feeding them information, and they were taking them back to all these different sort of segments. So, I suppose to a certain extent it was helping to bridge the gaps (Pam, 68, former Vice Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

Above, Pam tells how volunteers and community members who engaged with the station lived in different areas of Knowsley, specifically Roby; Huyton; Prescot; Whiston; and Halewood. Pam emphasises Knowsley's structure as a fragmented Borough, yet tells that KCC Live helped to "bridge the gaps" through providing listeners with information from a central source, which they then took back with them to their own localities. I found that KCC Live not only creates a bridge between

different towns and districts in Knowsley, but also different areas of Liverpool, and beyond. This is teased out in the following quotations:

I'm from Yorkshire, and then there's people from Wirral and then there's Hywel, he's from Lancashire, and then there's others that come from Cheshire, you know, Warrington and that lot, people come from all over so, I only know of two people that come from the immediate area. No - actually, I know three people who come from the immediate area...So yeah, they come from within a three-mile radius, but other than that, they're from all over. Like earlier I found out that Jay is from Wirral, the posh end. So yeah, we're all from all over, and I think it's great that we didn't know each other from before this, and we all just met each other and got on. I think that's really good that is...I think there's more of a community here at this station than there is where I live, where I should fit in more

(Damon, 38, interview)

Kurt: You've got people from all kinds of different backgrounds...like I'm from Kirkby, and there you're either like a scally or a Goth, that's the way people see you, whereas here, there's all sorts of different people and it's, it's a nice environment to be in to be honest...it's kind of like a community group, it brings together different people, and yeah, like presenters like, you're from, where are you from again?

CW: Devon originally

Kurt: Like I would have never met someone from Devon before, without this I don't think. Until I went off to uni or something

(Kurt, 17, interview)

Above, Damon describes the different locations where volunteers live, summarising "we're from all over". It is interesting that Damon believes there is a greater sense of community at KCC Live than there is in Yorkshire, where Damon lives and where he believes he "should fit in more". This indicates a notion of community that extends beyond the geographic into a greater sense of community belonging, that is a community without propinquity (Webber, 1963). In the exchange between Kurt and I, Kurt remarks that, without his membership to the KCC Live community, he would not have had the opportunity to meet anyone southern until he went to university. This reveals a clear case of bridging social capital; that is, social networks that bring together different people (Putnam, 2000), uniting disparate geographic, amongst other, groups.

One particularly telling account of the geographic heterogeneity of the young people at KCC Live emerged through a focus group exchange. I present a lengthy excerpt from this below:

Andy: I live on the Wirral

Chris: Ah them lot!

[Everyone laughs]

Andy: Racist! [Laughs] I understand community as like...Err, people I grew up with and people around me as well, like mainly like me neighbours or people that you know as well

Bruce: I live in Bootle and I -

Harry: I would never have said you lived in Bootle!?

Rita: Where the hell is Bootle?

Bruce: Err well do you know where Jamie Bulger was, well, no, that's the most famous thing that's ever happened in Bootle. No, but I live in Bootle and I can't stand it around there, so I try and avoid absolutely everybody, so I'm not actually involved in anything community-wise there

Andy: You should move to the Wirral!

Chris: Boo!

Rita: I might get bullied for this – because originally I'm from Wigan

Harry: It's okay, he's [Andy] from the Wirral so you won't get much stick

[Andy laughs]

Rita: And, and then I moved to Warrington, so Warrington is just like Warrington, and then isn't it?

Bruce: As opposed to?

Rita: Erm, I've been living there for like the past like five years, but, well I don't really socialise with the neighbours because I don't like them

[Everyone laughs].

Harry: I'm Harry and I live in Tuebrook

Chris and Rita: Ooohh [said jokingly]

MJ: Where?

Harry: Tuebrook, it's by Newsham Park, but then about twenty places are by Newsham Park...I wouldn't say there's much community left particularly. I think community nowadays is more like an association, like this [KCC Live], like a group of people who get together behind something. I wouldn't say that, erm, we really have a community anymore. Like community did used to be your street, or your, like the area you used to live, like your close

Bruce: Can I ask Mr Martin [Chris] over there like about your community? Because like when he [Andy] said the Wirral like as in like a joke you said "boo" and then people said Warrington and when people weren't from local areas to you, you kind of jokingly booed, so like -

Chris: Yeah but I'd boo Huyton!

Bruce: Ah but then you booed everyone when they were from areas that actually aren't from nearby

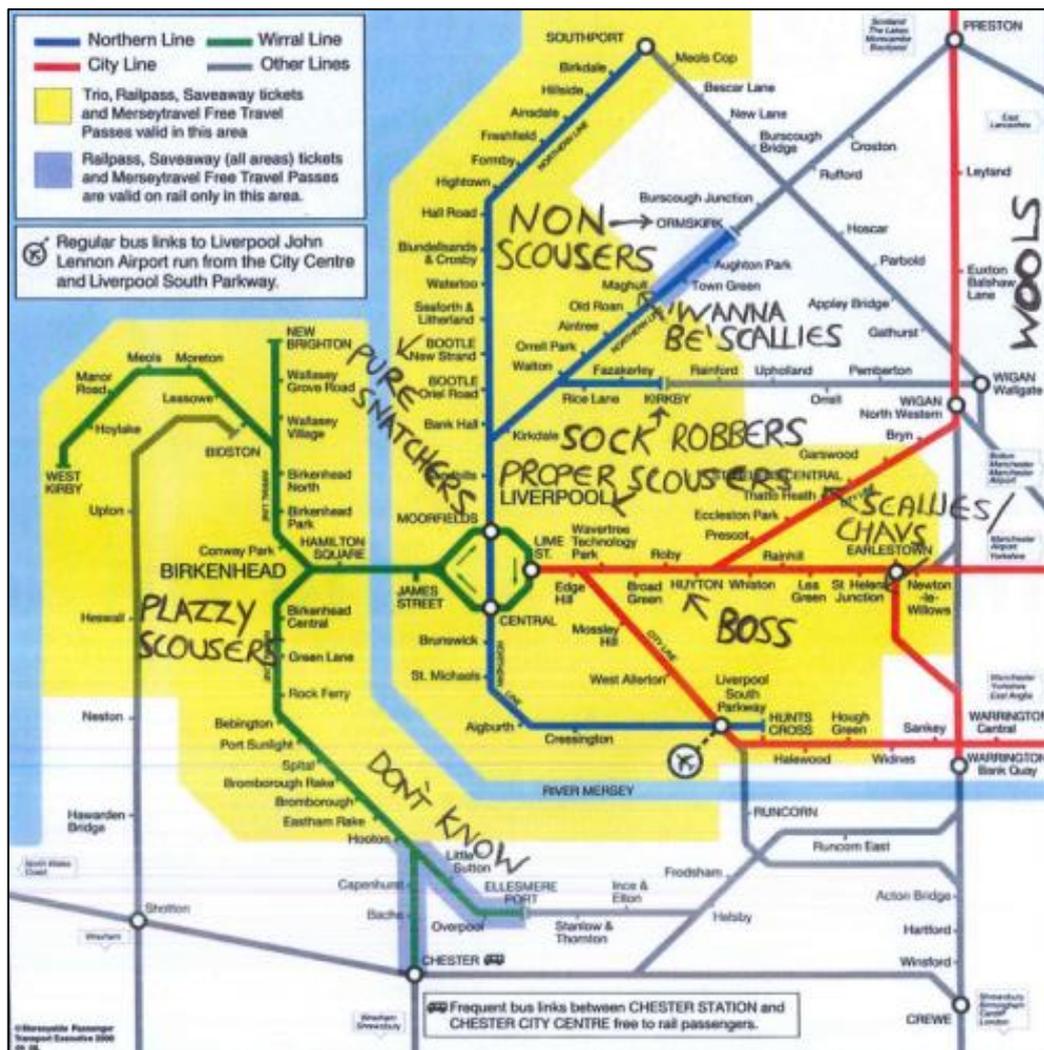
Chris: I think that's just because like the people you hang around with you pick stuff up, like stereotypes off other people and you just automatically like assume stuff, erm off other areas. Like Kirkby, people say "Kirkby sock robbers" [laughs], no it's just like a little joke kinda but I can see where you're coming from

(Andy, 24, Chris, 18, Bruce, 25, Harry, 24, Rita, 19, and MJ, 22, focus group)

This is a powerful example of the diversity of the volunteer body, from which I extract a number of key points. First, the volunteers declare that they live in a variety of locations, within Knowsley (Huyton), Liverpool (Tuebrook; Bootle) and outside of Liverpool (Wirral; Warrington). Through creating social ties between socially fragmented groups, KCC Live enables young people to create substantial stocks of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). The presence of bridging social capital is significant because it not only connects previously dispersed individuals, but as Polson *et al.* (2013) tell, it enables them to work together for the benefit of their community.

Second, this excerpt is useful in understanding how the young people view 'the other', that is young people who reside in different areas of Knowsley and Liverpool, in relation to their self-identification. Chris and Harry in particular make negative, although arguably jesting, remarks about "out-groups" (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014:1168). Chris tells that he picks up stereotypes from people who he 'hangs

around with’, for instance the typecast that people in Kirkby are “sock robbers³²”. Thus, it can be seen that lack of contact between groups generates judgments based on mutual suspicion (Sanderson and Thomas, 2014). Further, Chris’ statement holds resonance with Newman’s (2006:146) point that territories and borders “are as much perceived in our mental maps and images as they are visible manifestations of concrete walls and barbed-wired fences”. This came through strongly during the map-labelling, word association exercise I undertook with volunteers. See Figure 7.1:



7.1 Merseyrail Map Labelling Exercise (Adapted from Merseyrail, n.d.).

³² ‘Sock robbers’ is a reference to the way that burglars from Kirkby allegedly put socks over their hands to avoid leaving behind finger-prints.

As can be seen from labels on the Merseyrail network map such as “scallies/chavs” and “sock robbers”, many of the terms young people suggested had negative connotations. Volunteers were quick to defend their home localities, demonstrating a strong sense of territoriality (see Pickering *et al.*, 2012). Arguably, this defensive nature is because the features, both physical and symbolic, of the localities in which they reside, can affect an individual’s identity (Cox, 2002; Pretty *et al.*, 2003). This understanding considers identity as a system of categorisation, in which boundaries are used to distinguish localities, creating binary distinctions between “us” and “others” (Paasi, 2002:139). During this exercise, in response to a negative comment made about Huyton, where he lives, Robbie said: “ee, you wouldn’t get away with saying that outside of KCC Live”. KCC Live, then, can be perceived as a safe space in which to have such conversations. In this respect, KCC Live creates an opportunity for intergroup engagement, thereby promoting tolerance. The result of exposure to the unfamiliar, as Anderson (2004) tells, is often greater social sophistication that permits positive social interactions amongst diverse people. KCC Live’s role, then, in enabling young people to traverse these boundaries is particularly important as, following Pickering *et al.* (2012), territoriality can limit both a young person’s spatial and social mobility.

Third, although for Andy and Rita community is territorial, Harry’s understanding of community extends beyond the place-based definition to include ‘associations’, such as KCC Live. Harry states that KCC Live is “a group of people who get together behind something”. This implies that the station is a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998), comprising of individuals who work together towards a shared goal. The following excerpts add credence to this point:

I think it’s more we’re all rooting for KCC Live to grow and expand, I think that’s where the sense of community mainly comes from. It’s just, it’s nice being in a creative environment where nobody’s jockeying for a better position, everyone sort of just wants the station to do well

(Bruce, 24, interview)

We’re all here because we love what we do, and we want to make the station the best in Liverpool. So the work people put in, no matter how small the contribution, creates this sense of pride and unity. They don’t come across as peers, they come across as people with the same goal as you, to make KCC Live the best it can possibly be

(Gideon, 26, interview)

I think as a group we have our own little community between ourselves, erm and our common goal there is to make the radio that we make, and to you know get along, and just make the world a better place
(Shaun, 25, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

As Bruce, Gideon, and Shaun suggest, the community within KCC Live is built through the ways in which volunteers are co-contributors to culture creation, moving towards a shared goal. Bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000) can be seen here in that, through the social relations embedded in KCC Live, volunteers collectively unite to achieve a common goal: to ensure the success of the station. Dan (18) reaffirms this conceptualisation of community within the 'Community to me is...' audio documentary: "it could be something like a team of yous are working towards, so something you're a part of". It is noteworthy that Bruce uses the term 'sense of community', employed by Sarason (1974) to refer to a simplistic, effortless, and egalitarian merging of like-minded people. However, as is perhaps obvious from the foregoing discussion, the community built at KCC Live is far from simplistic and effortless. Rather, it is characterised by constant negotiation and a considered effort to assimilate differences.

7.3 The Listening Community

For the most part, KCC Live volunteers perceive themselves as part of the listening community, for instance: "because I am a teenager firmly in the centre of the 10 to 24 year-old range" (Shaz, 18, interview). Interestingly, however, although all volunteers told me that they listen to KCC Live, not all perceive themselves as 'part of' the listening community. The following quotations from MJ and Andy shed light on this:

You've got to talk about the people who may be listening in Knowsley, so you've got to go out and find information out about Knowsley. And, you know, for someone who doesn't live here that's actually kind of hard cos you don't know where everything is. I remember when we did this fundraising thing it was at this erm sport club that had recently been opened and I had no idea where it was. I mean, I listen to KCC Live but I'm not part of the community as such

(MJ, 22, interview)

I enjoy presenting. You know, you're, you're giving something back to the community essentially. I mean I'm not from round here, so I'm not the community, but you know, you're entertaining people who are, you know, maybe driving home, they're going to work or whatever, or they're just wanting to listen to you, you know, and I think that's always good

(Andy, 24, interview)

In the above excerpts, the young people clearly position themselves 'apart from' the listening audience, owing to their geographical belongings. MJ, who is from Chorley but travels into Knowsley to volunteer at KCC Live, recalls an occasion where she was required to locate a local sport club as part of a fundraising event. MJ confesses that she "had no idea where it was", causing her to reflect that although she listens to KCC Live, she is "not part of the community as such". In a related vein, Andy, who is from Birkenhead (a town in Wirral), identifies himself as "not from round here", acknowledging that he is "not the community". Davidson (2004) draws the same conclusion in a study of community radio, in which participants saw themselves as serving the community, as opposed to part of the community served. Overall, this indicates that Andy and MJ consider the listening community in geographic terms.

It is noteworthy that KCC Live has a number of different audiences. The listener survey found that 26% of respondents listen to KCC Live (over one in every four people surveyed). I have analysed the listenership in relation to age category in Figure 7.2.

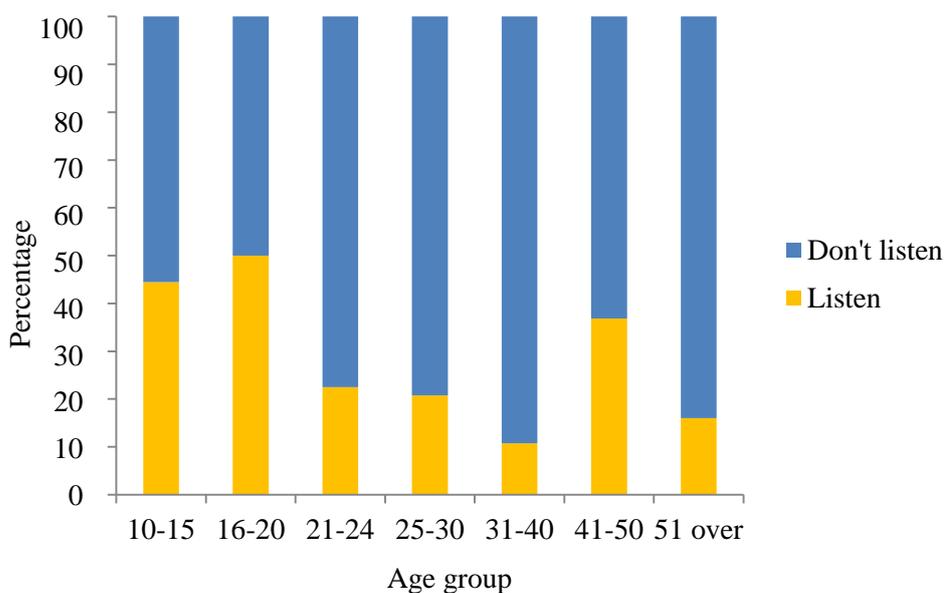


Figure 7.2 Listener Profiles by Age Group (Author's own, 2015).

Table 7.1 shows the percentage of survey respondents, who listen to KCC Live, within each age group:

<i>Percentage of KCC Live listeners in Age Category</i>	
Age group	KCC Live listeners
10-15	3%
16-20	23%
21-24	17%
25-30	13%
31-40	8%
41-50	29%
51 and over	7%

Table 7.1 Percentage of KCC Live listeners in Age Group (Author’s own, 2015).

As Figure 7.2 shows, 44.4% of 10-15 year-olds surveyed confirmed they were KCC Live listeners (although as can be seen from Table 7.1, 10-15 year-olds only comprise 3% of the listeners in the sample). 50% of 16-20 year-olds confirmed they were listeners, and 22.5% of 21-24 year-olds confirmed they were listeners. These statistics demonstrate the reach of KCC Live with a young audience (principally 10-20 year-olds). Interestingly, KCC Live also has a high listenership within the 41-50 year-old age category, with 36.8% of people surveyed within this category being KCC Live listeners. Table 7.1 shows that, correspondingly, the majority of survey respondents who listen to KCC Live (29%) are in the 41-50 age group.

The station’s immediate audience are students at Knowsley Community College where KCC Live is based, who can see, as well as hear, the radio shows being presented. As Kanayama (2007) tells, a number of community radio stations have studios in places that are visible to community members. During my fieldwork, KCC Live relocated from its previous positioning towards the back of the college, to its new position, neighbouring the entrance. One of the new studios had a large window, and so the volunteers jokingly referred to it as “the gold fish bowl”. The following excerpts shed light on the importance of the window to “see the radio, show the radio” (Kanayama, 2007:18):

It was my first time in “the gold fish bowl” today...During the show a college student came up to the window and asked me to “give a shout out” to her friend for her Birthday. As I gave the shout out “Happy 18th Birthday to Helen”, I noticed a rather happy but embarrassed looking student who I soon realised, due to an eruption of laughter and several cheers, was Helen. It was rewarding to physically see the response of my shout out. In this respect, the window is important not only in allowing listeners to look in, but also in allowing presenters to look out

(Author’s field diary, 02/11/13)

I’ve been sat here before and someone’s put a piece of paper up like on the window saying their name and a song. And erm, it was like a band I’d never heard of in my life so I checked it out and basically we didn’t have it, so then I had to like get my phone against the window and typed like ‘we haven’t got it’

(Calvin, 20, interview)

I think, like, because now, obviously we’ve got a window, with like people walking past...like people will walk past and give like the devil horns [a hand gesture typically used at rock concerts], or just smile or nod and stuff, and you see your mates walking past, so you feel more connected to the audience in like a visual sense if you like

(Kurt, 18, interview)

With the window...they [listeners in the college] get to see who the presenter is behind the mic, you know, whereas, you know, you’re sitting behind a mic and no one knows who are you, but you know, when you’re there they get to see ya, and it’s good

(Andy, 24, interview)

In these excerpts, the window permits direct communication between the presenters and the immediate audience. Within my field diary entry, I recall an occasion when I delivered birthday wishes to a listener and was able to witness her response. For Calvin, it enables him to communicate with a college student about a song request, while Kurt acknowledges that during his rock show, students walk past and gesture “the devil horns”, in appreciation of the music he is playing. Andy makes the point that the window permits listeners to “see who the presenter is behind the mic”. This is significant, for as Kanayama (2007) tells, such visibility can increase levels of trust and personal attachment to the station. It is in this sense that Kanayama (2007:18) notes that the radio station can resultantly “function like a hub of the community”, in this instance, the community is the small-scale audience at Knowsley Community College. Interestingly, the listener survey revealed that only 12.5% of respondents who listen to KCC Live know that the station is situated in

Knowsley Community College. As is clear from this statistic, the KCC Live audience extends beyond college borders.

Despite awareness that the target audience for KCC Live, as outlined in the KCC Live (2007:4) community radio licence application, is “10 to 24 year olds in the centre of the Borough [of Knowsley]”, during my interviews with station management and volunteers, there was uncertainty about who, precisely, the listening community is. Take the following quotations:

I think the community can't just be specified as our target audience in terms of who we reach Ofcom-wise. I think the community is like, we established today [during a fundraising bag pack] that some people who were in the Asda are definitely not under 24, they're definitely in their 50s, but they listen to it because they can erm, it keeps them in touch with that they perceive as being the youth community. The people who volunteer here are not necessarily within that target range of 10-24, so the community then is extended to anyone who's got an interest in music, or anyone who lives in this local area. So again, it's dead hard to define what it is, but I would say primarily young people in Knowsley, and anyone who loves music

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

Anyone who can tune in and wants to listen to what we're doing is the community...it could be parents or grandparents listening. I always think when I'm broadcasting, there could be parents listening to this, they could say “ooh what are you listening to?”...or they might just be driving their kid off to some afterschool club or something, I don't know, erm, or they could be over a mates chilling out, doing their homework or something and their parents or friends could be listening in. If they enjoy it, they come back. That's the community, it's the people who are listening

(Damon, 37, interview)

It doesn't matter if you're listening in Australia or San Francisco or Knowsley...you know, people now join in a community regardless of where they are geographically. And yet, Liverpool is a place still, and Knowsley specifically, which is very deprived, is a place where there are still - there's a real sense of community...I know that there's a whole language in Liverpool that's used, like “boss” and things like that, that doesn't tend to be used anywhere else....So, there is a sense of a bunch of people who have similar traits and similar experiences and similar outlooks on the world which you can serve...That's my understanding that there's a community of young people and they tend to have similar interests and beliefs and things that you can perform to and that you can engage with

(Hywel, 34, interview)

Above, Chrissie explains how, during a fundraising bag packing event at a local supermarket, she came to realise that people “in their 50s” listen to KCC Live, as it keeps them connected with the “youth community”. Chrissie summarises that the listening community extends beyond those who live in Huyton, to include those who have an interest in music. Damon repeats Chrissie’s sentiments of an ambiguous listenership, offering an imaginary construct of the listening community as “the people who are listening”, be this young people and their friends, parents or grandparents. As such, Damon has multiple audiences in mind, who are united through the activity of listening. Hywel discusses the listening community as largely imagined, stating that the community of young people in Knowsley have “similar interests and beliefs”. This relates to Anderson’s (1983) notion of ‘imagined community’ in that, although community members will never know their fellow members, they carry with them the image of their communion. Further, Hywel describes that there is “a real sense of place”, in part due to the diction used in the Liverpool region, which is not frequently used elsewhere. This relates to Friedland’s (2001) discussion of imagined communities, which suggests that identities are formed from a collective sense of history and culture that meshes communities together.

Within the field diary extract below, after my first show on air, I attempt to typify the listening audience:

I couldn’t help but try to envisage who was listening. Mainly I imagined young people working away in one of the shops in Huyton, but I also let myself imagine listeners tuning in from far and wide. I imagined the possibility that someone from France or maybe America may be listening online because they like the music I play. If nothing else, I know for sure that my friends were listening in Devon and Rutland

(Author’s field diary, 17/06/13)

Through my field diary entry, I am ‘imagining’ the listening community to include people, not only in Huyton (in Knowsley), but also internationally, owing to my belief that “they like the music I play”. Writing on the topic of media platforms more generally, Litt (2012) argues that the less an audience is visible or known, the more individuals become dependent on their imagination. My imagining of the listening community is somewhat fantastical and I end my diary entry with the stark realisation that it is likely only my friends from my home locations, whom I

specifically asked to tune in, who were listening online out of loyalty. The initial reaction to the community question is the specific geographic area that the radio station transmitter serves. However, in my role as presenter, I demonstrate awareness that, due to online broadcasting, this community is being negotiated away from a place-based definition (Gumucio-Dagron, 2013). Data regarding KCC Live's listenership via the KCC Live website is useful to exemplify this. In terms of unique visitors (new visitors to the website), the first quarter of 2015 saw a figure of 9,158. Page visits during this time stood at 16,894, demonstrating repeat visits (KCC Live, 2015b). As Coyer (2005) suggests, online broadcasting has redefined community away from place-based restrictions, towards international broadcasting.

7.3.1 Presenter/listener disconnect

Despite imagining an international listenership, a recurring theme which emerged through my research was the level of disconnect presenters felt in relation to the listening audience. This disconnect is important as close ties with listeners and the local community are essential to foster a sense of local community (Cammaerts, 2007). In particular, presenters expressed disappointment in receiving minimal interaction on social media from listeners. The following excerpts illustrate this well:

Robbie: We don't get that much response from listeners.

CW: How does that make you feel?

Bruce: Rejected and lonely.

Robbie: No, no, no! Because I can think, well, they're so deep in thought about what we're talking about that they're too thingy to respond. No, I'm joking.

Bruce: Does anyone get a lot of response when they put tweets out and things?

[No, no, no]

Harry: Remember the likes of Radio 1 and stuff have 10 million listeners, so even if 10% of their listeners messaged in that's 10,000 people messaging in, whereas we maybe have 100,000 listeners...if we get 1% of them messaging in, it would be amazing, but it's not going to happen.

(Robbie, 26, Bruce, 25, and Harry, 24, focus group)

I find it difficult to engage with listeners...I still don't know how many people listen to my shows, and I still feel like there's no one listening, other than maybe one person listening somewhere. Because you don't get that instant feedback. It's like being a stand-up comedian but having no audience - you don't know if your jokes are funny. Or you don't know if your material is any good, because there's no one to laugh or give you feedback, it's kind of the way you feel on radio sometimes...If no one can tell you, then how do you know if people are listening or not? So there's definitely a lot of that
(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

The statements above demonstrate uncertainty about audience presence. Bruce tells how he feels “rejected and lonely” due to lack of response from listeners, whilst Modest Mouse considers that no one is listening “other than maybe one person listening somewhere”. These comments indicate that when presenters receive no listener interaction, they believe they may not be connecting with the audience. Here then, a lack of sense of community exists between presenters and the audience. According to McMillan and Chavis (1986), in order to experience a sense of community, four characteristics must be present: membership; influence; the integration and fulfilment of needs; and shared emotional connection. Arguably, membership is present as listeners are invited to interact via social media, and these pages are public. However, through the one-sided communication of volunteers to listeners, a lack of: influence; fulfilment of needs; and shared emotional connection is experienced. This signals the significance of these characteristics in the creation of community.

Results from the listener survey revealed the most popular methods of interacting with KCC Live. Figure 7.3 shows the percentage of KCC Live listeners who interact via a number of mediums by age category:

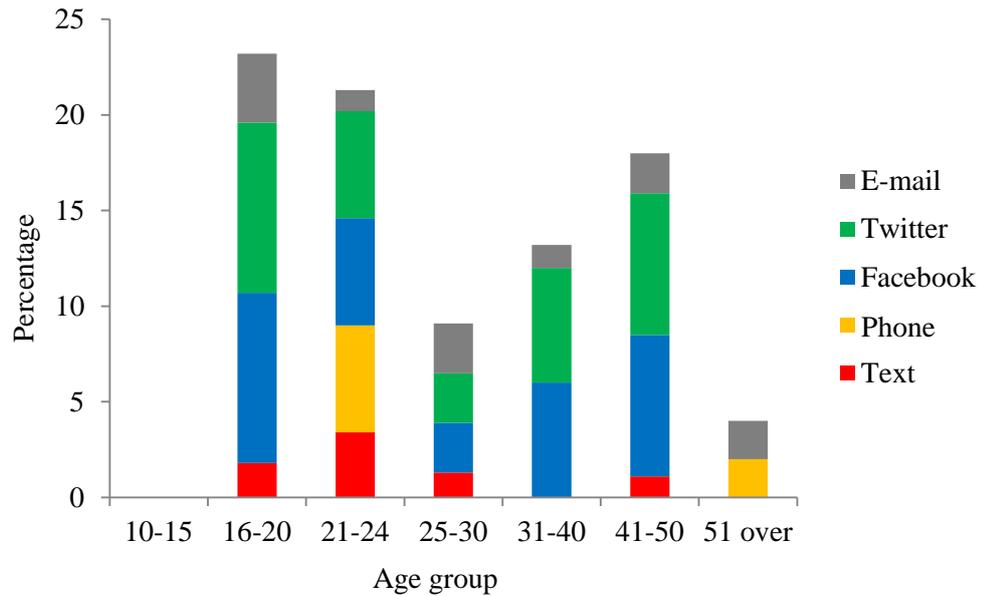


Figure 7.3 Methods of Interacting with KCC Live by Age Group (Author’s own, 2015).

Above, we can see that, of those who responded to the survey, those in the 10-15 age category who answered this question do not interact with KCC Live via any of the listed means. This is arguably problematic as this is a large subset of KCC Live’s target audience (10 to 24 year-olds). More promisingly, the 16-20 year-old category is more interactive with KCC Live. The predominant mediums used by this age group are Facebook and Twitter (both used by 8.9% of this age category). The 21-24 year-old age category is also interactive, and engagement is more evenly spread across the board. The 41-50 year-old age group, previously identified as the surprise KCC Live listenership, also interact via Facebook and Twitter (both are used by 7.4% of this population). Overall, 69.2% percentage of people surveyed, who stated that they listen to KCC Live, do not interact with the station via any of the mediums.

Through my interviews with listeners, I found that the ‘disconnect’ presenters felt with the listening audience was mutual. Listeners expressed disappointment in the minimal level of local content broadcast on KCC Live, believing that the station does not fulfil its commitment to “community storytelling” (Hardyk *et al.*, 2005:157). Thus, this disconnect may reflect how presenter’s imagined audiences are different to the *actual* audiences (see Litt, 2012, on the topic of social media), resulting in misalignment of broadcast content. Conflicts over the station’s mission, and

concerns of loss of local identity, came through most strongly in the listener diary interviews:

It's supposed to be *community* radio. So, alright, like they say "it's such and such from around the corner", or, you know, locally. But erm, you know, it's nothing from local businesses and people tuning in, which you'd thought there would be, from the local butty bar around the corner, they're tuning into something like Radio City [Liverpool commercial station]. So, like, err I don't get a sense of community on a community radio station, which, you know, is a bit of a disappointment, if you look at purely what they are supposed to be doing which is promoting the community

(Maisy, 19, listener diary interview)

On the time I've been listening I haven't heard it. Maybe there are certain shows which are very pro-community, but there should be something on every show, and there isn't... Sometimes they are telling what's going on in the world, and that's fine, but what's that got to do with Knowsley? You know, what's it got to do, you know, with something to the road being up so that you can't drive off the main track from the motorway, across the bridge, down by the railway station. How long is that going to be closed for? You know, the diversions that you're having to go round. Erm, there was a car crash the other day and there was no feature of that. Things like that would be useful

(John, 50, listener diary interview)

The above comments signal that the listening audience does not see itself reflected in the broadcast content. Maisy suggests that she does not hear anything about local individuals or local businesses. Meanwhile, John notes that much of the content he has heard has not been specific to Knowsley. Following from this, KCC Live does not seem to be successful as a source of "community glue" (Foxwell *et al.*, 2008:16), in that it does not unite community members with the station. Rather, the idea of community as a "spray on solution" emerges (Bryson and Mowbray, 1981:255), in that the word 'community' is used as a prefix. Maisy acknowledges: "it's supposed to be *community* radio", yet she does not believe KCC Live fulfils this role. For John, this has much to do with KCC Live's lack of reporting on local news and traffic reports, instead favouring outsourced news stories, thereby blurring the lines of local (see Hood, 2007). John continues:

I don't hear interviews with people from the community, like the local swimming pool, or the local dance academy or - I don't hear any of those interviews... You know if there was more community interest stuff I would be listening probably more often, there would be more of a reason to listen. But, I mean, I haven't heard anything at all like that. I haven't heard presenters doing any live interviews or anything... And it's not like "there's a bring-and-buy sale at such and such today", you know, or "each Sunday the car boot sale is going to be on at such and such" and a shout out to that. I don't hear any of that... The only thing you'd know it's about Knowsley is because of the regular advertisement for Knowsley Community College and the hairdressing salon. That's it. You're not aware of anything else in three hours that plugs the local community

(John, 50, listener diary interview)

In the above quotation, John hints at the placeless quality of KCC Live broadcasts; that is, there is no sense of personal attachment to any specific place (Hummon, 1992). He also expresses lack of awareness of upcoming community events. This is significant because the better-informed that residents are about community events, and the more residents share this knowledge, the more likely they will experience community belonging (Ball-Rokeach *et al.*, 2001). Local content is important, as the imagined community of radio listeners is not defined merely by programming preferences, but also by local interests (Bareiss, 1998). On first glance, qualitative data from the listener survey seems to counter Maisy and John's above accounts: "I love the way it gives local artists a chance to get their own recordings and music out there"; "KCC Live plays artists (including local artists) who are rarely played on commercial stations"; "It's really good in dealing with issues, especially upcoming local (Merseyside) events, education, I really like it a lot". However, on second glance, at issue here is what one defines as 'local'. For instance, in the latter quotation, the listener reports that KCC Live effectively deals with "local (Merseyside) events". However, drawing on the quotation above, for John 'local' is specific to Knowsley, not Merseyside. This indicates that John's preference is 'hyper-local' content (see also participants in Ewart's 2014 study). Whilst Kurpius *et al.* (2010) define hyper-local news as focusing on specialist topics or a specific geographical area, I employ this term with an emphasis on the geographical aspect.

I informed KCC Live management that the neglect of hyper-local stories was creating disconnect between the listenership and the presenters, and therefore recommended the inclusion of hyper-local content to bridge this gap. See the response from Chrissie and Hywel below:

Chrissie: I can completely understand the local side of things, but again in another argument, what is community? Like the community is not this geographical area anymore, it's not...So, I think...there's less focus on things being so Huyton and Knowsley-based...and instead the community is more broader or its more community in a sense of youth, not geographical, but its more everyone can relate to these issues cos you are all at some point gone through these issues at this age...You highlighting the local thing though, it kind of makes me think maybe we need to go back to basics sometimes, I think when you start something and you expand and develop, you forget what your starting point is

Hywel: I think we need to be careful that we don't weigh towards one [type of community], more than the other...you [Chrissie] have, erm, really focussed well on one of those things, which is creating a sense of community which is for young people, where young people live in their heads...Then there's, erm the physical thing...and they really do live in Knowsley...as the world gets more global...people get more and more disconnected, and I think 'disconnect' is a really important word that came from what you said. Because actually, legally, officially, we are about the locale, we are about the physical...The great programming, like stuff that I think would be the brand if you like, stuff that would help the station as a whole, is focussing more on that second strand...so that people listening on the other side of the world get a sense of this, like The Simpsons [an American animated sitcom], you know where The Simpsons is set even though it's not set anywhere...What's our Springfield [the fictional town in which The Simpsons is set], what's our world that we create?

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, and Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, joint feedback interview)

Certainly, Chrissie is correct in stating that KCC Live serves *more than* a geographic community. In addition to the discussion thus far, qualitative data from open-ended questions within the survey are useful for understanding the non-geographic communities formed around KCC Live, for instance, a youth community: "I like its focus on the concerns of young people"; "I really like the positive feedback it gives to young people"; and communities of taste around the music played: "I really like the alternative music", "plays young, current music". However, Chrissie and Hywel acknowledge that, owing to social media and technological advancements, KCC Live has moved away from serving the locale. This is an important neglect when considering that KCC Live's mandate, as outlined in the application for a Community Radio Licence, is to serve the borough of Knowsley (see KCC Live, 2007). Hywel's question "what's our world that we create?" is important when considering Keough's (2010) argument that a community radio station's success is dependent on its efforts to connect the listening audience, both local (within the

broadcast signal) and non-local (outside the range) to the importance of the station as a place; that is, a space that has meaning (see Massey, 2004). My research finds that lack of hyper-local content is significant, as perhaps demonstrated by the statistic that only 18% of survey respondents currently consider it ‘very important’ to have a community radio station serving Knowsley.

Taking listener diarist John’s previous comment that: “if there was more community interest stuff I would be listening probably more often, there would be more of a reason to listen”, it can be surmised that people may not listen to KCC Live due to an aversion to non-local programming. The listener survey was useful in revealing why people do not listen to the station. See Table 7.2 below:

<i>Reasons for not Listening to KCC Live</i>	
Reason	%
Never heard of KCC Live	63.2
Cannot access KCC Live	6.2
Content is not appealing	5.0
Prefer another station	4.1
No reason	21.5

Table 7.2 Reasons for not listening to KCC Live (Author’s own, 2015).

As can be ascertained through Table 7.2, the predominant reason that those surveyed do not listen to KCC Live is that they have never heard of the station (63.2%). This can be exemplified through qualitative survey data: “don’t know what station it is & never knew they had one”; “didnt know it existed”; “don’t even know what KCC is”. The second most dominant reason (6.2%) for not listening to KCC Live is that survey respondents cannot access KCC Live: “can only pick it up in certain areas of St. Helens”; “can’t get it on a digital radio”; “can’t get it where I live”. Of those surveyed who did not listen to KCC Live, 5% attributed this to the fact that they do not find the broadcast content appealing: “too much dance music for me!”; “music style, KCC Live plays to a younger audience”; “don’t particularly like the music that they play, but I have weird eclectic taste”. For 4.1% of survey respondents, they did not listen to KCC Live because they preferred another station: “I tend to stick with BBC channels”; “I have certain shows on others stations I like”; “tuned car to Radio City for news/traffic updates”; “have no desire to listen to anything other than Radio

4". In sum then, the predominant reason people do not currently listen to KCC Live is due to a lack of knowledge of the station's existence. 21.5% percent of non-KCC Live listeners surveyed could not provide a reason for why they do not listen. Nonetheless, these findings indicate that KCC Live must do more in the way of community engagement in order to raise the profile of the station within the Borough of Knowsley.

7.3.2 *Community events*

During my time at KCC Live, I was involved in numerous discussions with young people in which they noted the decline in community events in which the station was involved. Take the below excerpts:

There's erm definitely been less community events and I haven't attended any since we last spoke...So, erm there's definitely less of a community spirit about the station in terms of doing local community events. It's decreased. Maybe that's something the station needs to work on, to move the station forward and feel like more of a community station. Come together as a community with the volunteers and the staff, and take the KCC Live community out to the community of Knowsley
(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

It's quite sad because like, over Christmas last time, like the last few years we've turned the lights on in Huyton and we've done all sorts, whereas this year we haven't really done much. I don't know whether it's because we're focussed on the licence [application for the extension of the Ofcom licence] and all that, but years ago we'd turn on the Christmas lights all the time and we'd be bag packing over Christmas and we'd have all the, like loads over Christmas, but this year we've had nothing
(Calvin, 20, interview)

MJ: When I first joined, we did a lot of fundraising and getting into the community

Bruce: We had that week [dedicated to fundraising in the community] didn't we?

MJ: Yeah, but since then, especially during the winter, we haven't really done that much. I mean I'll never forget when you and me did that Dogs Trust thing [Merseyside Fun Day], that was brilliant. And then a few weeks before that, when I was doing my work placement, that's why I came here, and we went to this youth club thing, I mean no one turned up, it was a complete bust, but you know, it was still something, we were still trying to get the name out - KCC Live - and trying to promote

Harry: That's the thing with man hours though isn't it, cos everyone volunteers here, you've gotta say, right, what do we actually want these man hours to do...It's also got to be something we're interested in doing, like this [the focus group], because we're volunteering it is in a sense our station...And as our little community, our little radio community, we're getting a time when you go "do you remember this? Do you remember that?"
(MJ, 22, Bruce, 25, and Harry, 24, participatory focus group)

In the quotations above, the young people discuss that there is "less of a community spirit about the station" (Modest Mouse), owing to the decline in community events the station has held and attended. Calvin indicates that recently KCC Live has not "done much", lamenting that the decline in community events is "quite sad". Although MJ discloses that an event she previously attended at a youth club "was a complete bust", due to lack of attendance, for MJ "it was still something", telling that notwithstanding the poor turnout, community events are important for raising awareness of KCC Live. This exemplifies Lee and Lee's (2010) point that face-to-face communication is important to make people's imaginations of community concrete. Harry offers the insight that, for volunteers, KCC Live is their "little radio community", and as they are offering their "man [sic] hours", it is important for them to create memorable events. Harry privileges this over the experience of members of the Knowsley community. I therefore advise that KCC Live should place emphasis on organising community events that accommodate young people's interests. This sits in line with Checkoway and Gutiérrez's (2006) argument that, in order to enhance young people's participation, it is important to allow them to plan events of their choosing, and to advocate their interests in the community. This decline in community events is important to address when considering Flora's (1998) argument that community events and projects can build social capital.

The listener survey was revealing, too, regarding the presence of KCC Live volunteers at community events. The survey revealed that 46.3% of those who listen to KCC Live have seen KCC Live volunteers 'out and about' at community events. Of the total respondents (including those who do not listen to KCC Live), this number rose to 59.1%. In delivering the recommendation to KCC Live management that there should be more opportunities for young people to attend/participate in events that are enjoyable for them, Chrissie agreed that this is currently an important neglect:

I agree with that, like I think it can be difficult to get some people involved in certain stuff because it may not be what they like. But if you get there as a group, as a team, then if they have that one positive experience of it being fun, then it's easier to get them to do more stuff...so I think if you can get them at the right one, that's it then, it will set the precedence for the rest of them

(Chrissie, Station Manager, 30, in joint interview with Hywel, 30, consultant to KCC Live)

Above, Chrissie acknowledges the difficulty in involving young people in some activities, owing to their preconceived aversion to certain events. However, Chrissie acknowledges that once young people have a “positive experience” of a community event being “fun”, they are more likely to participate in future events. Participation in community events is particularly important when considering Fabiansson’s (2006:49) argument that involvement in such activities gives community members a specific community identity, which can be considered a “stepping-stone” for community affiliation.

7.3.3 *Mapping the listening community*

For listeners who do interact with KCC Live, a geographic region is acknowledged on air, e.g. ‘Sarah from Huyton’. It is worth noting, however, that when listeners interact via social media, their locations are not included by default and therefore remain unknown. Further, in the absence of genuine audience interaction, presenters construct and read out fake interactions on air, also acknowledging the make-believe geographic region of these fantasy listeners. In this regard, presenters can be seen to consider this spatial component important and use listener locations to “build a sense of audience as community” (Sujoko, 2011:18). Presenters therefore aid the formation of a “community-in-the-mind” (Pahl, 2005:621), affording audience members a collective sense of identity. By including the locales of listeners and imagined listeners, for instance ‘Paul from Huyton’, ‘Laura from Prescot’ and ‘Ben from St Helens’, presenters “map in” the social and cultural situation (see Sujoko, 2011:17). Sitting in as a producer on the young people’s shows, I found that this ‘mapping in’ was a highly selective process, with pre-determined outcomes:

Today I sat in as a producer on Chris' show. Chris was presenting, so it was my duty to find content for his show, and this included making up the 'fake interactions'. I scribbled down some names of people to include (the names of my closest friends), and the genuine locations in which they lived in Liverpool. As I passed Chris the piece of paper he narrowed his eyes, "Emma from Allerton" and "Shane from Wavertree", "it wouldn't be realistic for people from those areas to listen in" he told me, "stick with Huyton, Kirkby, and St Helens"

(Author's field diary, 05/06/13)

The above field diary entry brings up an important point; although online broadcasting means that it is viable for people to listen to KCC Live internationally, Chris considered fake interactions from people living more centrally in Liverpool to be unrealistic. When I questioned Chris about this, he told me: "people in those areas, they listen to Radio City and Juice [commercial radio stations in Liverpool city centre], not some little radio in some college in Knowsley" (Author's field diary, 05/06/13). Through instructing me to use the areas of Huyton, Kirkby and St Helens within my fake interactions, Chris is circulating a preferred representation to the listening community (Bareiss, 1998), in a method of "selective belonging" (Watt, 2009:2874). In other words, volunteers such as Chris can be seen to be rebelling against the homogenised notion of radio, by creating a unique listening place for the audience (see also Keough, 2010). Postcode data from the listener survey were revealing regarding listener locations, I have mapped these locations below (see Figure 7.4).

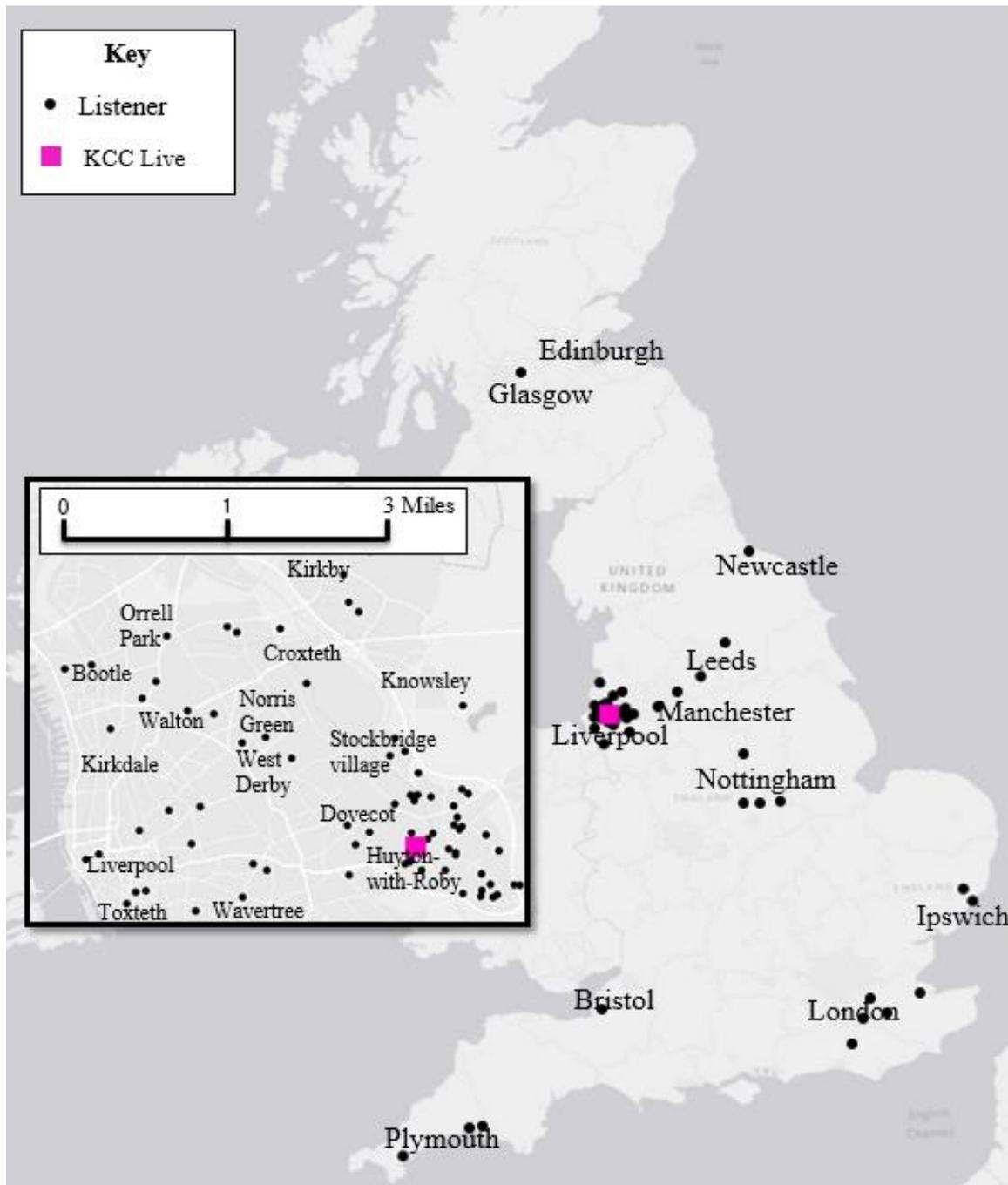


Figure 7.4 Listener Locations Mapped (Author's own, using ArcMap, 2015)

The majority of postcodes are local to the Knowsley and Liverpool area (see the close-up of this area above). A level of bias can be determined as face-to-face surveying conducted by the young people and I in Knowsley would naturally indicate a local postcode. However, I am most interested here in the more distant postcodes, entered principally by those self-selecting to complete the survey online. I have traced such postcodes included within the listener survey to neighbouring

towns and cities including Chester; Manchester; Preston; and Wigan. Further afield, locations from the listener survey include one listener from the Paisley postcode area in Scotland; listeners in the Midlands, including Nottingham and Mansfield; and listeners in the Southern part of the UK, in areas including; Ipswich; Bristol; South East London; and Cornwall. This demonstrates that the community served by KCC Live is a community without propinquity (Webber, 1963), and listeners are part of an imagined community (Anderson, 1983). The above supports Keough’s (2010) argument that advancements in online broadcasting have changed the definition of ‘community’ in community radio.

7.4 Social Networks and Virtual Communities

This section is related to the previous section in the respect that Internet technologies are the predominant link between the listening community and the community ‘within’ KCC Live. The listener survey was revealing in exposing the most popular listening medium for KCC Live listeners (see Figure 7.5).

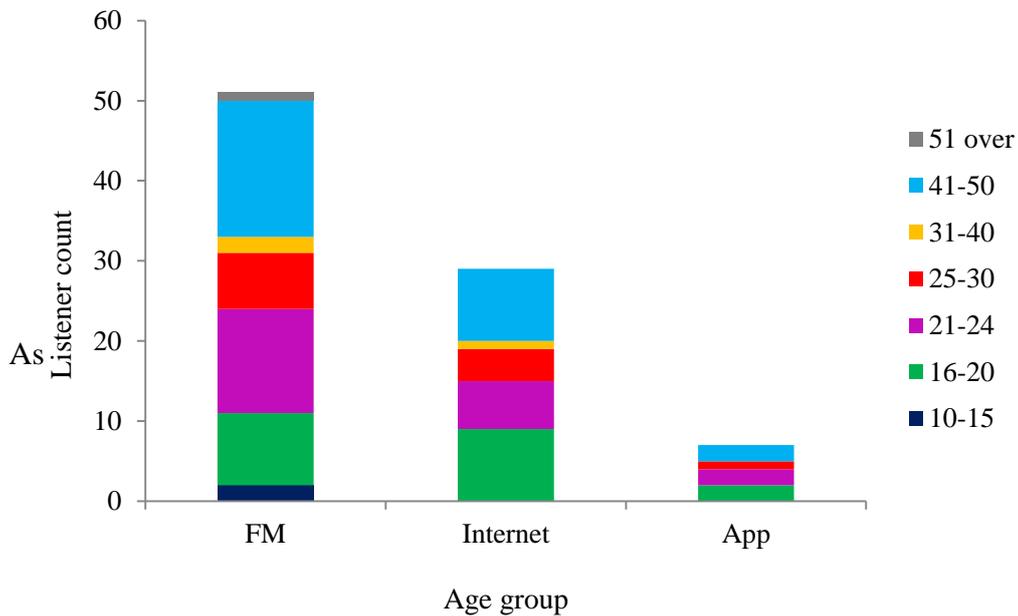


Figure 7.5 Preferred Listening Medium by Age Group (Author’s own, 2015).

Figure 7.5 illustrates by indicating listener count, the most popular listening medium (out of FM, the Internet, and mobile phone application) was FM, with the highest percentage of listeners from each age category using the more traditional mode. Of those who answered this question, listening to KCC Live via the Internet was a popular choice for 16-20 year-olds (10.3%) and 21-24 year-olds (6.9%). Perhaps

more surprisingly, this was also a popular choice for 41-50 year-olds (10.3%). KCC Live's newest listening medium, the smartphone application, is the least popular medium with the lowest levels of adoption across all age categories. It is interesting to note that the youngest age category (10-15 year-olds), although increasingly considered tech-savvy (see Mallan *et al.*, 2010, who debates this label), listen to KCC Live via the traditional FM method. Notwithstanding the popularity of the FM medium, interesting data emerged surrounding the use of the more recently employed Internet technologies and KCC Live from the listener diaries:

Woke up & turned phone on. Checked FB [Facebook] & saw the Riddle question was up...and I knew the answer :D. I love the riddle it gets my cogs working & gives a mini-break from toddler stuff! Put answer on FB.

Switched onto KCC Live on my Tune In App on my smartphone. Benno & Gideon were having their usual banter, bordering on argument lol [laugh out loud]. They amuse me. I am friends with Benno on FB & often say hi on chat in the mornings. Benno talking on air about his missing tooth! Nice song Bonfire Heart - warm & fuzzy!

(Michelle, 24, listener diary, listening at home, 30/01/14)

In the above entry, Michelle can be seen to heavily utilise digital technologies which permit entry into the virtual community(ies) surrounding KCC Live. Michelle not only witnesses the post on Facebook, she also engages with it, posting the answer. Due to seeing this Facebook post, Michelle tunes into KCC Live via the smartphone application. Then, she communicates with one of the presenters, Benno, via the instant messaging service on his personal Facebook page.

Michelle (as outlined in Chapter Six), listens to KCC Live from Cornwall, in the Southern part of the UK. Michelle has never visited Liverpool and does not know any of the presenters personally. Therefore, Michelle's friendship with presenter Benno is solely an online/on-air friendship, as they have never met in person. This is what Beniger (1987:369) would term a "superficially personal relationship" of pseudo-community, as radio presenters are delivering messages to many listeners, not just Michelle. Michelle is a regular listener, tuning into KCC Live every morning. As Herbst (1995:271) tells, ritually engaging with radio results in community formation for the audience member. Thus, whilst previous research suggests that radio functions as a friend or companion (Ewart, 2011), I found evidence of how, through radio, a listener has made friends with the presenter (see

also Sujoko, 2011), taking this friendship off air, onto social media. This is but one example of the significance of the Internet in audience interaction with KCC Live.

Throughout my observations, and my own experience of presenting on air, I found that volunteers use social media heavily during each show broadcast:

We rallied into the studio. Chris and I were going live in a matter of seconds. Chris threw the mics up so that the listeners knew someone was on air. We located our prep [notes used in preparation of the show] and then we waited - almost anxiously - for the computer to load up. By now, I had learnt that we should Tweet and post on Facebook at the very beginning of the show, so that listeners are aware of the changeover in presenters. I didn't move away from the computer though, because I knew that I would have to post again in about 10 minutes. It was a ritualistic procedure for me by now

(Author's field diary, 11/02/14)

As is evident from my field diary entry, use of the Internet, in particular social media, for me was "integrated into rhythms of daily life at KCC Live, with life online intertwined with offline activities" (Wellman *et al.*, 2002:154). I associated beginning the show with posting on social media, describing this as a "ritualistic procedure". When interviewing presenters, they often spoke about the importance of social media for conveying information to the audience. From the presenters' perspectives, the Internet is capable of promoting civic engagement through the provision of knowledge (see Bimber, 1998). Although, as discussed in the previous section, young people noted low levels of interaction from the listening audience on social media, presenters also reported the Internet's ability to allow listeners to get in touch from far and wide. Take the quotation from Kurt below:

I've also set up a Facebook and a Twitter and I've got followers for my individual shows, and I've got followers off that which I've never met before but they've messaged me and said like, "oh I love the show", "I love that you're playing this song"...It's a way to kind of bring a community together I think. I put hashtag 'rock', or hashtag 'metal' and stuff, and people find it through that way so social media is an amazing way to get a community together...I had like an e-mail off a fella the other week asking like if he could listen to my rock show, and if he could like download it and listen to it, and he was like from Canada, and it really surprised me that I had a listener from Canada, and he became a regular...I like think there may be like two or three people listening, but like when you get stuff like that you think like there are listeners, even on such a small station

(Kurt, 18, interview)

Two things are noteworthy from this quotation. First, community in this account is not spatially contained, rather it is “glocalized” (Wellman *et al.*, 2002:162); involved in both local and long-distance relationships. Second, a community of “interest or taste” (Lewis, 1993:18) can be seen surrounding rock music. Taken together, the idea of community without propinquity (Webber, 1963) comes to the fore. Consider also the following quotations:

As a station, we’re ballsy enough to say “fine, you can sod off if you don’t like rock, we’ve got people from Canada who do”

(Kurt, 18, interview)

Using Twitter for my show, it helps me to reach a sort of underground lair of weird people, such as myself

(Bruce, 25, interview)

Drawing on the words of Kurt and Bruce, in line with findings from Wellman (2001), the Internet helps to create non-geographic communities surrounding KCC Live, which comprise of people who may reside in dispersed locations - for instance Canada and Knowsley - yet have shared interests.

A challenge for radio presenters is how to steer, guide and manage listeners’ movements through the multiplatform environment (Stiernstedt, 2014). Within my observations, the lengths that young people went to entice listeners to interact, beyond providing “exits” (Stiernstedt, 2014:295) to social media while on air, surprised me. Take the below excerpt from my field diary as an example:

Whilst sat in the studio opposite Modest Mouse I noticed his frustration whilst using the keyboard to post onto the KCC Live Facebook page. After typing a few sentences and pressing the delete button repeatedly, Modest Mouse said to me in a frustrated tone “one of the internal battles for me is trying to get people to interact on Facebook”. Modest Mouse told me how finding that “recipe for success” is difficult. However, having experimented, he revealed that the most successful approach is to treat the audience as your friend, as opposed to positioning yourself as a business. Modest Mouse’s constant editing of posts, prior to publishing them on Facebook, revealed that the relationship between the station and the listening community was carefully cultivated

(Author’s field diary, 22/06/14)

Above, I note that use of social media for Modest Mouse was not an impromptu act; rather, it required much consideration and experimentation. In the volunteer's quest to provoke audience interaction, he edited the post several times before he was satisfied with its content. This was not an isolated occasion, for as Modest Mouse later tells me:

I think that whenever I'm using social media I'm always keeping an eye on what draws me in and how a certain status or comment has drawn me in, and I try and replicate that when I'm on air. I always put pictures on statuses to try and grab people's attention, so it is a good way, but I haven't had a lot of interaction on my shows recently

(Modest Mouse, 29, interview)

Further, Andy sheds light on this:

You find as well that pictures seem to get people's attentions more, so I tend to attach a picture to everything that I do now, whether it be the first tweet that I send out, the first Facebook post, whether it be just a picture of me and Jessie [Andy's co-presenter], a selfie or whatever of us smiling, or a general "how are you?" picture, or just a general stupid picture. That's why I do the features with the pictures on, because people interact. Whereas if they see a paragraph they'll just scroll through, but if you notice yourself on your phone you always stop at the pictures, and even if you scroll past it, you'll go back to it and that's what grabs people's attention

(Andy, 24, focus group)

Modest Mouse and Andy make concerted efforts to formulate social media content that will encourage audience interaction. Both note the usefulness of pictures for 'grabbing people's attention', whilst Modest Mouse attempts to "replicate" online content which he considers successful. Online content is important as community members can derive benefits from the information, including greater connectedness, thereby fortifying existing networks (Wellman *et al.*, 1996). The idea of constructing the ideal content for social media has resonance with Wellman *et al.*'s (1996) view that individuals must be proactive in communicating with other community members, as opposed to waiting for contacts to interact.

Often, when listeners did interact with KCC Live, they did not do this publicly. Rather, they sent e-mails, used the smartphone application, and sent Facebook messages and direct messages on Twitter. During my fieldwork, one anonymous listener used the KCC Live smartphone application to request a song for her ex-boyfriend:

Hello, plz can u play a song, its for my ex bf. The song is 'Since U Been Gone' by Kelly Clarkson. Plz can u play it, I'm listenin now, I think he is to (Anonymous listener interaction via the KCC Live application, noted in field diary, 28/11/14)

The requested song, 'Since U Been Gone' by Kelly Clarkson (Clarkson, 2004), was a message the listener wished to deliver to her boyfriend. The song expresses a woman's sense of relief with the end of her troubled relationship. Arguably, the listener decided to use the smartphone application to request this song anonymously, as opposed to publicly requesting it, which may have caused embarrassment; for instance, if friends or family saw the post. Messaging anonymously instead of posting publicly on Facebook can therefore be seen as a strategy for mitigating potential regret (see Wang *et al.*, 2011). The same idea came through within the listener interviews:

Sometimes I see a post, like on Facebook, say it's a question and I know the answer - actually, no, like the other day there was a question and if you got it right you could win cinema tickets, and like I knew the answer. It was something really easy like Justin Bieber, but like I didn't want to comment because my friends would see, and like they'd think it was gay, like uncool, that I was writing on the posts and stuff, so yeah I didn't get to win the tickets

(Scott, 17, listener interview)

Becca: I do listen to KCC Live lots, but like I just don't comment [on social media]

CW: For what reason don't you comment?

Becca: Ah! It's just like cringe isn't it. It would be social suicide if my friends saw me gegging [intruding] in on all these posts and trying to be bezzy mates [best friends] with the DJs

(Becca, 19, listener interview)

Above, Scott tells that he is dissuaded from commenting on the KCC Live Facebook page due to an assumption that his friends will disapprove of this action. Becca tells me that, although she is a regular listener, she likewise does not comment, describing this action as "social suicide", as her friends would interpret this act as if she was attempting to befriend the DJs. This strategy of "read but not post" (Wang *et al.*, 2011:8) reveals that the lack of audience interaction on KCC Live's social networking websites is not necessarily an indication that no one is listening, or due to a sense of disconnect (as discussed in section 7.3). Rather, lack of audience

interaction can, in part, be attributed to the culture and norms within young people's friendship groups (see Livingstone, 2008). As such, Scott and Becca can be seen to be "enacting identity" in "an agentic act" (Livingstone, 2008:399; 409), corresponding to their beliefs that public interaction with KCC Live is "uncool".

Thus far, I have considered use of social media for presenters to interact with listeners. Importantly, KCC Live also has a 'secret' KCC Live Team Facebook page that is 'invite only', solely for the volunteers. When new volunteers join the station, management and long-standing volunteers use this page as a process of initiation. When I began my fieldwork, the Station Manager added me to the KCC Live Team Facebook page after my first day at the station. Here are my initial reflections upon receiving an invitation to join this group:

I've just received an invite to KCC Live Team's secret Facebook page, this definitely has made me feel part of the group! I look through the 'members' and see a few faces who I met today, I click on their individual profiles to find out more about them. There are about 50 other members who I haven't met yet. I click on some of their profiles too, to suss them out. When I go into KCC Live tomorrow, I will feel like I know them already

(Author's field diary, 10/03/13)

In my reflexive entry, I note how, as a newcomer, being invited to join this online page "made me feel part of the group". Through inclusion in this page, I was able to "codify, map and view" (Marwick, 2005:2) volunteers whom I had met, and those I was yet to meet, in an act of "Facestalking" (Young, 2011:26). This Facebook page also provides a powerful assembly point for volunteers who are already linked by the station. Gee and Mark reaffirm this point within the audio documentary:

I think in terms of keeping up to date with people's lives, social media does play a big part

(Gee, 24, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

I believe social media plays a humongous part in maintaining friendships these days. I don't know how we survived when we were younger, err but I do believe that it helps, it helps make relationships and friendships a lot stronger compared to what it used to be

(Mark, 25, 'Community to me is...' audio documentary)

The messages exchanged on the KCC Live Team page concern organisation of group meetings; checking station opening times; requesting help with show preparation; finding a presenter to cover a show; and promoting social events. As such, the page

allows volunteers to reinforce their social linkages with others (Papacharissi, 2002). Following certain authors (Lee and Lee, 2010; Young, 2011), this strengthens existing ties, thereby complementing young people's existing accrual of social capital through sustained social interaction.

7.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I advanced debates that attempt to shift notions of community away from static place-based understandings, to explore more networked approaches. My data have shown that notions of community as a homogenous group are misguided. KCC Live increases interpersonal contacts between diverse geographic, and other, groupings. Through creating social ties between socially fragmented groups, KCC Live provides a space for young people to create substantial stocks of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). Communities surrounding KCC Live include: friendships which constitute communities of choice (described in terms of home and family); geographic communities within specific locales; the functioning of KCC Live as a community of practice; imagined communities of listeners; and virtual communities, formed through use of social media. In finding that community exists at a variety of scales and imaginations, I have responded to a question posed by Bailur (2012:92) of "who is the community in community radio?" (See also Gaynor and O'Brien, 2011; Mhlanga, 2009, who pose the same question). My novel contribution to existing theorisations of community is that community can exist at a variety of scales even within one community organisation. This is in contradistinction to existing literature which presents community as one-dimensional, either territorial (Woelk, 1992); a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998); virtual (Wellman, 2001); or imagined (Anderson, 1983). My research therefore contributes towards a new vocabulary for understanding community in relation to young people, therefore allowing for more eclectic and nuanced discussions.

Chapter Eight

Skills, Development and Imagined Futures

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I explore the opportunities for young people, given their membership in the community ‘within’ KCC Live, to develop technical and transferable skills of use within and beyond the station. Although formal training is available at KCC Live, young people predominantly learn new skills informally in the everyday lifeworld of KCC Live, and through peer teaching. Using Bourdieu’s (1986:248) popular typology, I consider the acquisition of social capital as a collective resource obtained through relationships with others, or networking. With this chapter, I argue that young people are capable of learning skills, locating resources and building networks, thereby generating stocks of social capital that set them on the correct path to contest the experience of exclusion. However, building on the sense of home and family at KCC Live, which the young people raised in Chapter Seven, I argue that bonding ties can be restricting for some young people in accessing further training or work opportunities. This is important when considering that KCC Live intends to re-engage young people with employment and education.

8.2 In/formal Learning

The formal training provided at KCC Live, required before volunteers are allowed on air, takes the form of six hours (one hour per week for six weeks) dedicated to Ofcom training, KCC Live procedures, the station identity, getting to know oneself as a presenter, experimenting with technical equipment, and producing a demo. As illustrated through the quotations below, the induction training is useful for volunteers, yet it is not a substitute for more experiential learning:

It [the training] was really good...Hannah [a former member of staff] would give you a breakdown of different techniques within the world of radio, and you would be shown how to do them and you would kind of work your way up from there really. The thing about radio is that you’re not going to learn everything. There’s probably presenters in their 50s or 60s who have really good jobs, it’s one of those jobs where, you know, you get something different from every radio scenario. So the training back then it was good but it wasn’t, it wasn’t a master class. You weren’t going to learn everything which comes with experience

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

Sometimes it [the formal training] was a little bit of a, err use your initiative err, which I think was a good thing, err that you know that they [station management] weren't there all the time, because you kind of get used to doing something, like using equipment, and you get to know how to do it more, rather than them holding your hand as it were and kind of guiding you through it all the time. I prefer to just like do it, rather than be taught

(Andy, 23, interview)

I've just finished my last session of the training, and I scored 100% in the end of training exam! I definitely have a clear understanding of the station identity, what I should or, more specifically, shouldn't say on air, and I have an awareness of my on-air persona. However, I still don't really understand much of the technical aspect of radio, for instance using the controls. If I was thrown on air now, I wouldn't have a clue what to do – but I guess that comes with learning through experimentation

(Author's field diary, 20/06/13)

These quotations demonstrate that the young people value the formal training process for enabling them to gain understanding of the requirements of a presenter, and providing an overview of the use of technical equipment. However, as made clear by Modest Mouse, the formal training is limited in that volunteers cannot learn everything “which comes with experience”. Further, Andy stresses that he prefers to “do it, rather than be taught”. Within my field entry, I also demonstrate awareness that I will learn through experimentation. From the above, the training, although formal, can be seen as an alternative learning environment for young people, affording autonomy, in contrast to the “adult-imposed order of school environments” (Collins and Coleman, 2008:291). The informal learning environment of KCC Live will be touched upon shortly, but first I consider another aspect of formal training provided at the station.

In addition to the induction training, KCC Live conduct ‘snoops’, as a form of reflexive training for volunteers. Station management hold snoop sessions intermittently and call volunteers to a one-to-one meeting. During snoops, management listen to recordings of the volunteer's shows from the broadcast logs, and provide commentary on ‘what worked well’ and what could be improved. Whilst most young people recognise the snoop sessions as a valuable experience, others find the process daunting. The following quotations exemplify this:

Me show's going really well. I've had a few snoops with Hywel who is the kinda founder of KCC Live. He pops in every Thursday. So I had me snoop with him, he gave me constructive criticism which I've taken into account and me shows getting a lot better. I feel like it's getting a little bit better, so I get more confident and try new things, so it's really good. It's crucial to get feedback. If you want to develop and have a career in media, you always need that constructive criticism to kinda improve and develop and be one step ahead of other people

(Chris, 18, interview)

I've only ever had one snoop before and that was with an old member of staff. I was nervous before it and then like afterwards I was like "why was I nervous?"...I always joke with Jessie [Andy's co-presenter] every time we get told we have to have a snoop that we're going to get fired...like "this is our last show" and everything, "she's going to fire us, and get rid of us and demote us" and everything, but yeah I am slightly nervous for my coming one, whenever I have it

(Andy, 24, interview)

Owing to the personal nature of the snoops to the volunteers, I provide an excerpt from my first snoop as indication of the feedback provided during such sessions:

Chrissie: Snoop time! Are you nervous?

CW: Yeah I am actually!

Matt: Can I play you a clip and before I tell you if you can identify what I'm gonna pick up on?

CW: Yeah okay, scary!

Chrissie: No, it's absolutely fine, this is the point of a snoop, there's no right or wrong answer, it's a case of are you aware of it. Don't worry, don't worry.

[Plays song]

CW: I'm scared for what's coming next.

[Plays link]

Matt: So what do you think are the positives?

CW: Okay, so regards to personality, I related it back to me, erm I think that I just do the basics, so I come out of a song and say that was this and then -

Matt: Okay, so would you list that as a positive or a negative?

CW: A negative! And I think that sometimes I'm scared to talk over a song if the song's fading out or anything, so I literally just wait until the song's finished.

Matt: That was the main thing that I was going to pick up on, so we've got this bit here

[Plays clip]

Chrissie: That's your cue, when the beat drops.

Matt: So what I'd do is when you start, so I'd have done this bit now.

[Plays clip]

CW: The same going into songs as well, I literally speak and then press it.

Matt: When coming out of a song it's best not to speak into imaging³³ [, unless it's an ad break, so just take it out and go into a song.

CW: I know what to do, I'm just like scared in case I talk and then a lyric comes on.

Chrissie: You're only human! Just go with the flow
(Chrissie, 30, and Matt, 23, Author's snoop session)

Taken together, Andy and I were harbouring nervous feelings about our snoop sessions. Personally, I was nervous because "I was scared that I was going to be criticised or told off" (Author's field diary, 18/07/14). Andy, although in a joking manner, discusses with his co-presenter the potential of them being "fired" or demoted. Chris does not get nervous, recognising the worth of snoop sessions for providing feedback that will lead to improvement. This indicates the different learning preferences of young people. As young people, we are in different stages of our "learning careers" (Bloomer and Hodkinson, 2000:583), such dispositions to learning can transform over a short period; for instance, due to new events and changing circumstances.

³³ In radio, imaging is the effect of multiple and varied on-air sound effects that identify, brand and market a particular radio station. These sound effects include: voiceovers, music beds, sweepers, intros, promos, and jingles.

As touched upon above, in relation to the formal induction training, most young people express preference for gaining skills in an informal manner, through their daily interactions at KCC Live. Take the following quotation from Station Manager Chrissie:

Some stuff they will pick up naturally and not even realise they've learnt them, so spending time in the station and talking to people. It could just even be learning how to do interviews, so in their learning how to interview a band, they don't realise that in doing that they've actually become really good in interviews. So when they're going for jobs and stuff, they're coming across really well...Erm, so some of them are taught formally in training associated with radio, and even though radio's the tool, it's not necessarily erm all that they learn...So even though in the training they're learning about how to conduct an interview, but they're also learning about open questions and the things that they need to know outside of radio basically...But yeah some of its formal and some of it isn't, it's just a case of being around this environment and this kind of work/office environment, they pick up those skills

(Chrissie, 30, interview)

As Chrissie tells, volunteers "pick up" skills through their everyday participation at KCC Live. As such, learning is woven into the social fabric of the station. This holds resonance with the notion of situated learning; that is, knowing and learning which "cannot be abstracted from the environments in which they take place" (Sadler, 2009:2). Further, informal learning is unplanned and occurs through everyday experiences and even chance encounters (Hayes, 2012). As can be seen, informal learning at KCC Live is experiential and collaborative. The following quotations from Chris and Calvin exemplify this point:

It's completely different from a college classroom, like you'll have people coming into the station with completely different backgrounds, so you're learning from people who are 24 or 25, so you're learning off their life experiences. That kind of gives you an advantage for whatever you want to do, and you get advice off them, you seek advice if you want it. And it's kind of boring sitting in a classroom, doing Maths or English, we've all been there, we all know, but I think it's [the informal setting at KCC Live], it's a good way to learn

(Chris, 17, interview)

I have a really bad attention span, I can't listen that long and learning is difficult usually, but with radio it's just normal, it's what you do, it's just like your normal routine

(Calvin, 19, interview)

Above, Chris describes the learning environment at KCC Live as “completely different from a college classroom”, attributing this to the variety of ages of people who join the station, coming from different backgrounds, enabling him to learn from their life experiences. Calvin references his short attention span, describing learning as “difficult” for him. However, he acknowledges that learning technical skills at KCC Live occurs unconsciously: “it’s what you do”. This relates to Chan’s (2012) argument that traditional classroom-based learning may not be successful in creating deep impressions owing to its passive nature, yet the practical nature of experiential learning is capable of facilitating deep understanding. Following Hayes (2012), informal learning may be particularly valued by those young people at KCC Live who have been marginalised by traditional (and more formal) learning processes.

As Soep and Chávez (2010) tell, young people begin participation in media projects at the edges, and with increased engagement, they move into more involved roles, requiring less direction from others. At KCC Live, this process is cyclical in that, unrestrained by the formal parameters of school, young people impart their newfound skills to new generations of volunteers. This peer teaching takes a variety of forms, for instance: sitting in on other volunteer’s shows; spending time with others in the studios; helping other volunteers with show plan ideas; and listening back to audio and providing feedback. See the following quotations:

I just try and not be one of those people who thinks erm new people and just just let them get on with their work, they’re here to learn, I try to help them out as much as I can. Because when I was volunteering here first I did get a lot of help and support from other presenters and workers here at the station, and I like to be that kind of head over their shoulders that they were to me

(MJ, 22, interview)

There’s a lad downstairs who’s just started called Jay and, erm, he was asking me if I could help him and stuff. So I helped him when I could and, erm I let him like sit in on the show and I listened to his show properly today and I gave him tips and that because he’s only just started. And, erm, I like to give back what people gave to me when I started...like Steve, Steve helped me so much when I started, and if I can just do a little, like even if I can do half of what he done to help me, then I’ll feel like I’m giving back

(Calvin, 20, interview)

If I'm in there and someone needs some help, I'll like always take the time to - because I know what it felt like, and still does feel like, when I haven't got a clue what to do...I'd say there's no one in this station that would say 'no', do you know what I mean? You'd always try and help them out

(Harry, 24, participatory focus group)

Today we had three new recruits starting. They have been through their formal training and now they are fully-fledged volunteers pre-recording shows to go on air. I noticed that Alec was struggling with segue editing his show using Myriad. I can vividly remember a few months ago not having a clue how to use this. I sat next to Alec and talked him through the editing process, he seemed to pick it up really quickly and was very appreciative of my time

(Author's field diary, 20/09/13)

Above, MJ and Calvin recount how they received support when they first started volunteering at KCC Live, and therefore they position themselves as 'returning the favour'. This holds resonance with Jones' (2002) discussion of how mature young people, those possessing increasing independence, effectively supervise young people on the other side of the youth divide. Harry tells: "I know what it felt like, and still does feel like", a reflection of how, although he has been at KCC Live for three years, he often still seeks advice from other volunteers. In my field diary entry, I demonstrate my ability to help another volunteer after several months at the station. I found this experience rewarding, even more so at sensing the volunteer's appreciation. The portrait emerging is that, for young people at KCC Live, peer teaching is characterised by 'giving something back', and results in increased agency and autonomy. This is significant when considering that "young people cannot develop a sense of their own value unless they have opportunities to be of value to others" (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002:34). Taken together, these statements reflect the informal learning community, discussed in Chapter Seven as a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). That is, the young people are working together to achieve the shared goal of making KCC Live a successful station.

Such collegiality was not only present in youth-youth relationships, but also youth-adult partnerships between volunteers and management, as Calvin and Bruce explain:

Chrissie...she'll just sit down and talk about things that, like just mainly music and I get a lot of like advice from Chrissie and she's very very good, I suppose at her job, but she's also good outside of the station as well. Like when we do events and that, like she'll organise the event and then we'll run it together. She's also really friendly

(Calvin, 20, interview)

Usually in any given week there'll be some sort of impromptu meeting, as much as like, "oh what are we going to do for this contest we've got coming up?" And it's very all-inclusive, people feel like they're part of the running of the station, it's not like Chrissie says "this is what we're doing?" it's very much like "how shall we do this?". So, there's a lot of that, err, going on throughout the day, where management ask you a question, and you feel like your input is, erm necessary, not that they're just asking you because they think it will make you happy, but because they do actually take your ideas forward

(Bruce, 24, interview)

Above, Calvin discusses his relationship with Station Manager Chrissie in a positive light: he is able to talk to her and get advice, whilst describing her as "friendly". This is not a traditional hierarchical power-based relationship; rather, it is a meaningful intergenerational connection (see Jarrett *et al.*, 2005). As can be seen through the words of Bruce, young people and adults engage in shared decision-making. This focus on joint production relates to Chávez and Soep's (2005:409) discussion of the "pedagogy of collegiality", in which adult "teachers" and youth "learners" transcend typical positionings. In Calvin's account, not only is Chrissie over-seeing the organisation of community events, she is also involved in the running of events, alongside volunteers. To use Goldman *et al.*'s (2008:202) term, Chrissie is a "youth-allied adult". As such, KCC Live provides an opportunity to bridge the "youth-adult divide" (Jarrett *et al.*, 2005:42). This is significant, for as Kranich and Patterson (2008) tell, positive relationships between young people and adults, built through involvement in media projects, can produce authentic opportunities for leadership roles for young people within the community.

8.3 Skills and Development

Spending time in a youth radio station and engaging with specialist software can create "the possibility of a slow accumulation of skills and knowledge", and can act "as a seed for the future" (Podkalicka and Staley, 2009:3). Throughout my fieldwork, the young people and I gained and developed a variety of skills through our interactions with KCC Live.

First, perhaps most obvious, the young people developed a mastery of technical skills through using specialist radio broadcasting equipment and editing software at KCC Live. See the quotations below:

I mean there were so many things that, in my university course, that I actually hadn't learnt until I came here. I know more about the Myriad system, which is what you use for the recording. I learnt more here than when I was there
(MJ, 22, interview)

I see KCC Live as, well it's helped me. Not like on an academic level, but with the technical skills of the desk [broadcast mixer]. Like say if on my course I have to do a bit of sound tech and sound engineering, I'll know how to use the levels and stuff which will help me. It's helped me on my course at the moment to be honest
(Kurt, 18, interview)

Today marks the six-month anniversary of doing my own show live on air! When I was in the studio, I reflected to Chris about how nervous I used to be before I went live. Now I am excited and raring to go. I'm also much more skilled technically now. I have learnt my way around all of the equipment, largely with the help of other volunteers and self-taught through trial and error, whereas before the desk [broadcast mixer] was alien to me!
(Author's field diary, 20/10/14)

The above quotations demonstrate "digital fluency" (see Hsi, 2007:1509), gained through increased competency in the use of specialist playout equipment. MJ has learnt skills at KCC Live that she had not learnt on her radio university course. Kurt makes the distinction that, although KCC Live has not helped him "on an academic level", he has gained useful skills in sound engineering, which he can use within his college course. My field diary entry demonstrates that, as a young person who volunteers at KCC Live, I too developed technical skills whilst at the station. I report being proficient with broadcast technology, namely the Myriad playout system, and at controlling the broadcast mixer. In my own experience, I was learning implicitly through immersion in the culture (Hayes, 2012). Acquisition of such technical skills is important when considering Hopkins' (2011) articulation that, through acquiring media skills and associated opportunities to experience success, young people become empowered as active citizens, able to contribute to decision-making in society.

As touched on above in Kurt's account, young people often spoke about how the skills they learnt had been useful for their studies, both at college and university, and how they envisaged the skills would be useful for future employment. Take the following quotations:

It's given me that experience within radio, because I know how to use all the controls and, you know what I mean? Like if I got given like a job like in radio, say like if it was in like Radio 1 for example then, like if I was to go in there with no radio experience, to be honest I don't think I'd even get in there without any radio experience. It's so like high calibre and everything
(Fearne, 21, interview)

Me course is going really well and I've been linking some of me coursework with the station because I'm studying Creative Media so that's really helpful... We've just done an audio project, so I linked it in with getting vocals from other presenters to do a college advert. That kinda helps me get the physical side of me course done. My course tutor thinks it's a really positive thing, he thinks it's great that I've got that kinda resource and that I can kinda make me work to a better standard, so I believe it improves me marks as well
(Chris, 18, interview)

It's so easy because I'm doing radio at university and like some of the assignments we've, we've had to do, we had to present an hour-long radio show and everyone's been using the uni studios, stressing out. And I just come into KCC Live and put me show on a pen drive, because we have to feature adverts and we have to have like a 'top of the hour', and Salford Community Radio give us all their stuff. But I spoke to me tutor and that and he said I can use this one [KCC Live] because it's the same thing, community radio
(Calvin, 19, interview)

As can be seen, the young people are using - or envisage using - their skills in further education and employment. Fearne imagines implementing the technical skills of controlling the broadcast mixer, which she has learnt at KCC Live, into a career at BBC Radio 1. Chris uses KCC Live in a way that complements his college course in Creative Media, through the production of an audio project. He speculates how his college tutor finds this link positive, commenting that "it improves me marks as well". Similarly, Calvin uses the equipment and imaging from KCC Live to produce feature advertisements for his university course. As Podkalicka and Staley (2009) argue, the acquisition of media skills is important, owing to the transferability of these skills to the world of employment, in particular, a career in the media.

Second, a prevalent theme running through my data was that of transferable skills developed through young people's engagement with KCC Live. The following quotations illustrate this in relation to 'people skills':

I'm more of a people person, definitely. When I first started I was snobby to people I didn't know. If you were me mate that was it and if like I didn't know you I was horrible and I regret being that sort of person. If I was to ever get famous and write an autobiography, I'd endorse KCC Live. They've completely changed me as a person, made me a better person, because I'm more of a people person. Without KCC Live I wouldn't be at all like that
(Calvin, 20, interview)

I've learnt how to, erm form relationships with people who I seemingly have no common ground with and to, erm, just have the confidence to speak to someone. Even if, because I think when you meet new people, if you feel like you're not someone who they would talk to, you're held back from making a full effort. But I've kind of, there's no type of person that I couldn't get along with now, or have the confidence to speak to
(Shaz, 18, interview)

I've certainly learnt to respect other's viewpoints more and how to coherently argue your point and not just go "I'm right and you're wrong". Also you realise how to work properly as a team, now everyone says "I know how to do teamwork", but I think really once you've worked in a community setting you do. Because you start to realise that within what you see as a group, there are a lot of subgroups and a lot of subcultures in there...and you need to understand how everyone is working within that...In terms of working with different types of people, varieties of people, whether it be age, social background, culture, whatever I think that's certainly improved
(Hendrix, 22, interview)

The above quotations are rich with testimonies of the social skills developed by young people through their time at KCC Live. This is significant when considering Pavlicevic *et al.*'s (2013) argument that, for young people, the transition to adulthood is dependent on confidence, self-worth and motivation, on having the skills to make decisions, and on being able to communicate with peers and unfamiliar persons. My research provides testimonial evidence of young people enhancing their repertoire of interpersonal skills through participation in a community radio setting.

Throughout my fieldwork, I had several conversations with young people in which they commented on how their sustained presence at KCC Live has 'matured' them. See the following illustrations of this:

It's matured me, massively. When I started at this station, I was a bit of a scally. Me mum used to hate it and me mum always says KCC Live made me like and it did. It changed me completely as a, as a person and I've matured through it because I've worked out how to help other people. Because like, the other day I was giving advice to Jay and he's older than me and he's got a full time job and stuff and I'm still in university, so even though he's more mature, but I like to give him advice because I've been here longer. And like, if, like the longer you've been there the more advice you can give and you can give people advice who are a lot older than you...It changed me as a person because it's changed me from such a little idiot to someone who, I like to think of myself as a lot maturer, more grown up, and I think through the art of presenting and music KCC Live's changed me

(Calvin, 20, interview)

I am able to look at myself objectively and identify negative aspects of my on-air and off-air personality without feeling inadequate or angry. Like, I can then make a change to that. I feel like I've improved as a person, and really matured during my time at the station

(Gideon, 26, interview)

I feel like I've grown up loads in the past three years. Erm, and just like it's made me more focussed

(Nikki, 22, interview)

Eccles and Gootman (2002) discuss community programmes as productive in aiding young people to learn the behaviours and expectations needed to progress towards productive adulthood. As the above quotations illustrate, KCC Live can be seen as one such space of socialisation for young people in the passage to adulthood (see also Glevarec, 2005). As Collins and Coleman (2008:295) tell, this is in contrast to formal school environments, which separate "the young from the material world of adults".

As hinted at within Calvin's account above, in addition to increased people skills and greater sense of maturation, young people also reported transformed personalities and lifestyles through commitment to KCC Live. The following quotation from Station Manager Chrissie illustrates this well:

There's loads of examples of people who have completely changed, solely from being at this radio station...Spending some time here and being around like-minded people, it's kind of given them a focus and given them an understanding of what they want to be. Erm, sometimes people come in and again, it's not really about the radio as such, it's just sort of about getting skills to be able to erm progress in life. So, like, Ed for example. When Ed started which, was over ten years ago, when we first started as a station, he – he didn't really know what he wanted to do, but he knew that he didn't have

the confidence to really do anything. And it was over a period of time that I watched him transform, like physically, confidence-wise, his emotion – his emotional stability basically, his mental stability...Erm, and again that was probably down to structure in his life, and coming here and understanding the work disciplines of the radio station. But also the freedom and the creative freedom that he had. It increased his confidence so that he was able to try more things, and in trying more things he'd get more skills, and getting more skills literally transformed his life in getting a job and getting mates and all that

(Chrissie, 30, interview)

Chrissie makes a strong argument in the above passage that, for volunteer Ed, presence at KCC Live enabled him to build effective relationships with people, leading him to securing a job and making friends, ultimately transforming his life. In this regard, KCC Live represents a biographical turning point (see du Bois-Reymond and Strauber, 2005) for Ed. Chrissie attributes this to KCC Live providing structure in the volunteer's life, learning the work disciplines of the radio station, and the creative freedom afforded by the station environment. The same theme of the transformative potential of KCC Live runs through the words of the following volunteers:

It was just that's who I was because like I fucked about, sorry, I fucked about a lot in school. People used to annoy me and I used to have a lot of arguments with people and it was just like me and me mates, and then we didn't get along with many people because we were horrible people in school. And like when I played [football] for Liverpool, I thought I was something and because I thought I was something people didn't like me. And then when I broke me leg it was sort of like everyone was made up [happy] who didn't like me...And then I come to the station, and then when I come here I thought I was something and, like I'd been a footballer and all that, and then it all came crashing down when you saw how mature people were here, and it's changed me as a person

(Calvin, 20, interview)

I was a very quiet person initially at school, and I didn't talk much to people and I was very kinda kept meself to meself. Now I feel more confident, I can talk to - I'm quite lively and stuff. And I just think it's [KCC Live] helped me kinda take that step to get me personality across to other people. I think it's a bit of being on air and then kinda I think the group of people and the team err the station's got, kinda helps you blossom in a way. I know that sounds cheesy as hell, but it kinda does

(Chris, 18, interview)

I was pretty depressed before I came to KCC Live. Unemployed, not really doing anything, faced with the reality that I may have wasted three years on a degree and not get to use it for anything. It's hard to sell yourself in an interview when you're depressed and not really liking yourself much. Erm, and I don't think it was any coincidence that it was after I came here that I started, you know, started to feel better again and got this, admittedly inconsistent, work...So yeah, I think KCC Live did a lot for me. I was pretty low before I came here. So I really love it for that

(Bruce, 24, interview)

These quotations suggest that KCC Live plays an important role in the “self-making” (Battaglia, 1995:1) of volunteers; that is, the process of becoming and negotiating one's ultimate self. Calvin's story demonstrates the trait of resilience in his ability to succeed despite circumstances that might forecast failure. Calvin communicates a strong sense of self, he is now a “better person” and has ‘bounced back’ (Dyer and McGuinness, 1996); he has assumed a new role, and has consequently re-written his life narrative. Personal and social transformation of young people is also found in Neelands' (2004:47) discussion of drama education, in which the author suggests that such transformations are not so much “miracles”, rather they “could be the rule”. My data sit in agreement with Kranich and Patterson (2008), in that when young people produce their own media, interact with community members, and represent their collective identities, progressive outcomes occur.

Throughout my time at KCC Live, young people were provided with, and sought out, a variety of opportunities to implement their newfound skills. The following quotations explore these opportunities in their various manifestations:

Radio City Live, I couldn't believe it when I got asked to do that [interview artists backstage at a music gig], cause I literally, I think for that I'd only been at the station for, it couldn't have been more than a couple of months...so that was like a proper privilege to be asked to do that. So erm, it was all based on me being able to talk to anyone and to socialise. I couldn't believe it, I was gobsmacked. I'm still gobsmacked that I got chosen to do that

(Fearne, 21, interview)

I've kinda picked up quite a lot of experience, which has helped me move to other stations, so I volunteer at a hospital radio. I produce the sports show there. Because people there know I present on KCC Live, they ask for a bit of advice, because they know KCC Live has a bigger listenership. So that's through me experience here, which is quite vital in a way cos it kinda opens a lot of doors

(Chris, 18, interview)

I'm teaching a few radio courses at City of Liverpool College that's a couple of hours every week. That's paid as well, and yeah I'm doing a couple of projects with some of the students there. That opportunity came about through KCC Live as one of the volunteers on the talk show works at the college in the Enrichment Department. Yeah, and so, she said "oh we've got this radio studio which never gets used...so do you want to come in and do a few sessions?"...I enjoy it. It's quite rewarding. I don't do it because I get paid, I did a couple where I didn't get paid. It is rewarding to actually see people develop and get better

(Bruce, 25, interview)

Taken together, Fearne, Chris and Bruce convey a sense of accomplishment, realised through their participation at KCC Live. These young people generate stocks of social capital by contributing to community-based projects and developing relationships at the local level, with people outside of their typical networks (Jarrett *et al.*, 2005). Significantly, for Bruce this is paid work, demonstrating how he has converted his stocks of social capital into economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Following Jarrett *et al.* (2005), social ties such as those described above are important, as the formation of personal relationships between young people and adults in the wider community is a significant aspect of development.

In particular, work experience was influential for many young people in achieving social connectedness. Take the following quotations:

I've recently had the chance to go to Radio 1 and 1Xtra, and that was through kinda doing work here and the application form I filled out to do that, obviously I used my experiences here to do that, so yeah I think that gave me a little bit of an edge in getting selected and stuff...So, I got to go down there and actually record a show as if I was presenting on Radio 1 and 1Xtra, using all their equipment and like the studio they use to do their shows. And, err, I got to meet like loads of people...So that was good, and like everything I recorded on that day they gave me on a pen drive to take away and like keep for like portfolio and future stuff, so yeah it's been dead good and it was a really good opportunity to like go down there and yeah, see like another station. Like obviously a national station and see like, it's err, it's, even though we're just community, we're still doing all the stuff here that they're doing

(Nikki, 22, interview)

We [KCC Live] entered an awards called the Nation and Regions award, and this is kind of the awards that you need to win in order to be nominated for a Sony award, which is like The Oscars of the radio world. One of the panellists was the boss of BBC Radio Merseyside, she really liked how the station sounded and what we were about and she actually voted for us and we won that award, the first stage of the Nation and Regions award...Through

that they set up a bit of a Q&A session for the volunteers at KCC Live to go down to Merseyside. From that they set up a work placement so you had to apply for it and go through a very tough interview process, that made people probably want to cry a little bit, and from there I was successfully chosen

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

The above quotations resonate with Jarrett *et al.*'s (2005:52) finding that ties to "resource-rich adults" can assist towards further education and employment opportunities. Nikki uses her connections at KCC Live to secure a recording session at BBC Radio 1, whilst Modest Mouse takes advantage of KCC Live's connections with BBC Radio Merseyside to gain a work placement at this station. Raffo's (2000) interpretation of Granovetter's (1973;1983) concept of 'weak ties', suggests that fostering social contacts beyond the immediate locality can provide disenfranchised young people with productive pathways for informal learning. This confirms the strength of weak ties for connecting young people to new networks that have the potential to change their social positions (see also Wells, 2011). Here, the role of station management can be seen as "brokers, catalysts, and coaches" (McLaughlin, 1993:660), in making the contacts necessary and providing the introductions to make such opportunities possible. It can be surmised that, through building these relationships, participation at KCC Live has a positive impact on social capital and social involvement for volunteers.

8.4 Imagined Futures

Within the transitions literature young people are characterised as thinking ahead and concerned with their futures (Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015). This is important when considering that young people, particularly those from deprived areas, such as Knowsley, can become "locked in a revolving door of unemployment and low-paid insecure jobs" (Miller *et al.*, 2015:469). As the following quotations from staff at KCC Live and Knowsley Community College make clear, for some young people, KCC Live is an important site for realising potential and possibility:

I've seen people who were about to become NEET or to be kicked out of the college...I've seen those people come and volunteer and stick at it for two years, and then after those two years they then become university-educated people who then become actors and things...I think some young people have a lot of energy, and in a place like Knowsley that energy goes to destruction and they'll smash bus stops up. If you can give them something which they don't have much of in Knowsley, if you can give them something where they

can be creative...if you can capture them, and if you give them a chance to do something, in my experience it really develops them....There was one kid who came in and he couldn't read very well at all, very very dyslexic, but also wasn't engaged with reading at all. He said "I want to be a news reader", and we sort of went "right?", and he taught himself to read. He started reading books constantly because he wanted so much to be on the radio as a news reader

(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, interview)

I think that in an area where you've got a rubbish reputation, you've got deprivation and poverty, and you've got things that, low aspirations is probably the way to describe it. If you're in an area where there's not a lot of talk of people going beyond it, having something that's a little bit different is important, because it reminds them [young people] that not only is there something that's accessible to them, but that if we can do this from basically nothing, what can they do

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

I saw the radio station in those terms, it was creative. But can you teach creativity? Yes, I think you can...I think can you provide an environment where creativity can flourish. I profoundly believe that to be the case. It's kind of, you know, it can challenge you and bear in mind that this is a white working class area, and the poorest performing group that you can identify in the education system are white working class boys. So, you know, you have to be sure what you're doing if your response for this kind of challenge is, you know, make them work harder - I mean you've got to do that, but actually you could stimulate them to lift their eyes up and look at other things (Sir George Sweeney, 67, former Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

The above quotations position KCC Live as providing opportunities for young people to convert their energy into a positive resource. This can be understood through a resilience lens, whereby spare time activities can have resilience-enhancing potential (Gilligan, 2000). That is, for those young people who are experiencing adversity, it is important for them to have "havens of respite or asylum in other spheres of their lives" (Gilligan, 2000:38). Further, through the above accounts, KCC Live can be seen as a space of capital building. Just as in Miller *et al.*'s (2015) study, the acquisition of social capital increases young people's awareness of opportunities, resulting in them holding more optimistic views of their futures. Adding weight to this, Chris and Hendrix speak of their possible selves (Markus and Nurius, 1986, see also Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015):

I want a career in radio and this place has helped. It can open a lot of doors, it's just knowing how to take the opportunities kinda thing, so it's kinda just making contacts and biding your time, learning the trade

(Andy, 24, interview)

I've never really known throughout the entirety of school, college, university, what I've wanted to do as a career, and I think working in radio has helped me realise that I might want a career in radio yeah, but the creative media in general sort of, whether it be marketing, something along those lines. It's certainly helped me, err, look at different industries and decide what I want to do from there

(Hendrix, 23, interview)

Above, Andy and Hendrix can be seen to be crafting 'agentive selves' (Hull and Katz, 2006). Andy acknowledges that KCC Live "can open a lot of doors" for a broadcast career, whilst Hendrix has a more general aim of a career in the creative media. Such narratives are significant because, as Hull and Katz (2006) argue, for young people from marginalised or disadvantaged communities, it is especially important that they have confidence in their competences and imagined futures.

8.4.1 *Making it big*

For some young people, their imagined futures contain a vision of "making it big" (Lange and Ito, 2010:289), or as one participant described it, "tunnel vision" for the most prominent commercial radio jobs:

I'd love to do presenting for like a national radio. I have a bit of a tunnel vision for 1Xtra. Erm, so hopefully with all the experience and just, you know, the development of meself, it will hopefully lead to that goal...In the meantime I'm just gunna keep on producing demos and building a KCC Live portfolio, which I can take with me and be like "well here's all, everything I've done so far", and I think it puts me in a better step for having that experience, compared to maybe somebody who hasn't

(Nikki, 22, interview)

Me course [at university] is Television and Radio, but it's radio I wanna do and to graduate in that...I just wanna, my aim is to take over Zane Lowe³⁴, I mean I speak to Zane Lowe, he's a lovely man, and I'd just like, I'd feel horrible taking his show because it's his job, but I wanna be on Radio 1. I want to present an alternative show and if that's not possible I'd present a commercial show where it's One Direction [an English-Irish pop band] for an hour, I wouldn't be bothered. I just wanna get paid to present radio...preferably on the BBC, if not Capital or something like that

(Calvin, 20, interview)

³⁴ Zane Lowe is an award winning radio DJ and presents on BBC Radio 1.

The above quotation from Nikki is an example of how a young person's imagined future can affect their present (see Worth, 2009). Nikki is producing demos and building up a portfolio to assist her into her desired career. This relates to Hardgrove *et al.*'s (2015) point that possible selves are rooted in daily life and in personal experiences that help an individual to picture what his/her life could become. Nikki's 'possible self' took shape through her commitment to KCC Live. She believes the experience she has gained through KCC Live, including her previously mentioned placement at BBC Radio 1Xtra, puts her in a good stead to secure her desired career. Calvin's, more specific, aspiration to "take over Zane Lowe" stands apart from the socio-economic landscape within which his life is entrenched (see Heggli *et al.*, 2013). As McInerney (2009:28) tells, "young people who are subjugated by oppressive social, economic and cultural forces are denied any real sense of agency and lack a capacity to act on and change their world". It is necessary to draw on the notion of habitus here, which Bourdieu (1984:473) argues inculcates "a sense of one's place", resulting in an individual's disinclination to seek employment and experiences outside of what is normalised for his/her particular habitus. Unlike in Bourdieu's (1984) thesis, Calvin has not become content with what he has, rather he is seeking opportunities to fulfil this goal, including forming a social tie with Zane Lowe himself.

Although in King *et al.*'s (2008) study, celebrity goals stated by participants masked a troubling reality of no career planning in their lives, Calvin's imagining of a high-profile career is supported by his active involvement in activities which help shape his biography (see Shanahan, 2000), most principally his university course in Television and Radio. Adding credence to this, Calvin told me in a later interview: "I'll be like that annoying kid who always walks in with stuff, constantly giving them CDs and demos". As such, Calvin's narrative opposes Prince's (2014) finding that young people's imaginings of their possible selves are interrelated to the physical and affective qualities of their localities. Thus, whilst Reay (2004) argues that social circumstances can impact dispositions towards possible futures, that is, habitus can be transformed through process to raise individual's aspirations, I attribute this potential to KCC Live.

8.4.2 *Sonic futures*

In the previous ‘micro-moment’ (Arnot and Swartz, 2012), Calvin can be seen to engage in an agentic process of “re-writing of self and future” (Dimitriadis and Weis, 2001:225), disrupting the hegemonic path determined by his habitus - that is, what courses of action are most appropriate for his future (see Pimlott-Wilson, 2011). In a later interview, Calvin told me:

If I can't make it on the BBC I'd love to stick around Liverpool but I'd happily relocate, but I'd love to do something in Liverpool, I'd love to, obviously BBC Radio Merseyside because I'm very proud to be from Liverpool. And if it was the case that I had to move to London I'd do it for the Scousers, and everything like me show would be like a play on Scouse – like Cilla Black. People don't like the Scouse voice, but seems as they've got it on Radio 1 it would help, because people in Liverpool don't like Radio 1, they listen to Radio City and Juice [commercial radio stations in Liverpool]. If there was a Scouser on Radio 1 it would be boss, so that's what I'd wanna do

(Calvin, 20, interview)

Above, it is significant that Calvin is torn between his attachment to his local place (Liverpool) and his aspiration of a job at BBC Radio 1, London. A closer look at this quotation suggests that Calvin is influenced by his belonging to Liverpool; that is, his social location; emotional attachments; and political values (Arnot and Swartz, 2012). For Calvin, local identity is important, as he surmises whether he can ‘trade on’ the Scouse identity of his broadcast persona and accent in London and “do it for the Scousers”, whilst demonstrating awareness of the absence of Scouse accents on BBC Radio 1. Calvin remarks on his “Scouse voice” as disliked by those outside of Liverpool, but comments how he would make a commodity of this sonic marker. This, alongside Calvin’s reference to Cilla Black³⁵, relates to the idea of “Stylised Scouseness” (Tessler, 2006:49); that is, how Liverpoolian broadcasters re-present the Scouse accent to achieve commercial success. As Martín-Barbero (2002:626) argues, local identity can transform itself into a “marketable representation of difference”, and is subject to “make-overs” which strengthen its commodity.

³⁵ Cilla Black was the stage name of Priscilla Maria Veronica White (1943–2015), an English singer, actress, entertainer and media personality, born in Liverpool. Her accent was reportedly somewhat of a caricature, and was accentuated throughout her career (Storry and Childs, 2013).

Further evidence of the significance of accent in relation to young people's imagined futures, came to the fore within a recording for 'What we Found'³⁶:

Trev: I'm gunna bring Lucy in on this, because as we were saying, there's plenty of accents heard every day in the street and on TV, radio and that lot, but there's stereotypes of accents, and err, some people even change their accent to get on in life, depending on work or even if they move to a new place outside the area that they're from just to try and fit in. So how important do you think accent is in this world today for young people?

Lucy: Erm, I think it's quite important - well I think for your own identity first of all it's important. I think your accent says a lot about you. Erm, in terms of people dropping their accent...I think in sort of professional industries or creative industries when you're on TV, and when you're on the radio and you hear a Scouse accent - I'm proud of being a Scouser, but I always think it sounds unprofessional when you hear it on the radio -

Trev: Really??

Lucy: Unless you hear it, like on Radio City or in Liverpool when it sounds fine...

Ritchie: But if you listen to a lot of local radio stations, big radio local radio stations, the people on there aren't necessarily Scouse.

Trev: I'm not Scouse.

Lucy: Thanks for letting us know Trev [sarcastic tone].

[Trev Laughs]

Dan: I'm not, I'm not Scouse.

Trev: No, you're not Scouse either, you're a plazzy Scouser [laughs].

Ritchie: But do you see what I mean? They don't have a Scouse accent.

Lucy: Yeah, I mean I think it sounds unprofessional, I know that sounds really derogatory to say.

Trev: That is, that is really sort of erm, I'm trying to think of the word, not paradoxical but, it's -

Dan: Two-faced.

[Everyone laughs]

Trev: It's contradictory, it's contradictory that.

³⁶ As a reminder to the reader, you can access the 'What we found' radio series here: <https://soundcloud.com/kcclive/what-we-found>

Ritchie: I do actually agree with Lucy, because if you, if you turned on News at Ten, and you heard someone reading you the news in a Scouse accent, I think most people would think it didn't sound right.

Lucy: Yeah, it's maybe it's because we're conditioned to sort of link...the sort of posh accent, or neutral accent.

Trev: The Queen's English
(Trev, 38, Lucy, 18, Ritchie, 26, and Dan, 24, 'What we Found' radio series)

The above comments are a clear reference to the 'sonic exclusion' of certain accents in the media. As explored in Chapter Six of this thesis, Boland (2010:1) employs Matless' (2005) notion of sonic exclusion to determine the extent to which a distinguishing vernacular determines "who is in" and "who is out" as a Scouser. I extend this concept here to explore the inclusion/exclusion of certain accents, not within a geographical locale, yet in a careerscape. Ritchie notes that, for most people, hearing the news read in a Scouse accent would not "sound right". Similarly, Mugglestone (1995), in considering accent as a social symbol, reveals that, for listeners in his study, the integrity of the news was compromised when delivered in Yorkshire tones. Lucy is aware that the media function as arbiters of what Trev informs her is "the Queen's English"; that is, Received Pronunciation, thereby influencing projections of dialect and accent in the formation of identity (see Tessler, 2006). Lucy continues in an exchange with Trev:

Trev: Now Lucy, you were a bit contradictory earlier on about accents, so how about you then?

Lucy: Well, I like my accent, even though I just before I said I don't, I do like it, because as I said earlier I think it's a part of your identity, and I'd never, you know I'd never diss Scouser, I love Liverpool and it's very much a part of me. But, if I, if I was like, I do, if I - because of the industry that I want to work in [film and Television], I would probably work to lose my accent

(Trev, 38, and Lucy, 18, 'What we Found' radio series)

From the above, Lucy's previous rebuke of the Scouse accent, of which she possesses, is reflective of her opinion of it being detrimental for her desired career in film and television. Lucy feels constrained by external prejudices towards the Scouse accent and tells that, in pursuing her desired career, she would invert her Scouseness and "work to lose" her accent. Another interpretation of this is not that Lucy would be 'working to lose' her accent, rather she would be 'losing [her accent] to work'. The debate ensued:

Trev: So do you think then, we should change, you should change your accent, say for a new job?

Ritchie: I think it depends.

Trev: Or should you stick with what you've got no matter what and then -

Ritchie: No because if you, if you for example went to work in the city in London as a banker with a thick Scouse accent, don't think you'd get the job, don't think you'd get very far

(Trev, 38, and Ritchie, 26, 'What we Found' radio series)

However, Dan strongly contests this:

No, you should stick with what you've got...that's what you've been given, that's what you should stick with. If people don't want to give you jobs because of that and be a plain boring company with all posh-minded people who talk in the same tone and drone on, then that's not the sort of place I'd want to work for, that's all I'm saying

(Dan, 24, 'What we Found' radio series)

These narratives complicate the notion of identity-based inequities. Whilst Lucy is keen to work to lose her Scouse accent/lose her Scouse accent to work, and Ritchie recognises that a Scouse accent may be prohibiting, for instance "if you went to work in the city in London as a banker", Dan perceives this as "selling out" (Baratta, forthcoming). Dan believes "you should stick with what you've got", dismissing "posh-minded" companies who desire Received Pronunciation. This relates to Baratta's (forthcoming) discussion of how the decision to modify accent can be considered fraudulent and disloyal, particularly when trying to appease others. The discussion here ties in with my overriding argument that the futures of young people are in contest with those presumed by their social positions (Bourdieu, 1984); that is, how they adjust their possible selves in relation to their habitus and the cumulative life experiences that shape it.

8.4.3 Less defined possible selves

Although most young people at KCC Live are full of hope and optimism for the future, for those with complicated biographical circumstances, they have "far less defined possible selves" (Hardgrove *et al.*, 2015:168). Take the following illustrative quotations:

I'm kind of reaching my late 20's now, and I'm someone who's struggled to find a career or a job that kind of fits me. So erm, I think I've struggled a lot more over the last year or two, because I am reaching 30 and I think that I should have some sort of career. And I like radio and I like doing it, but at the same time it's difficult to get a career in radio, and I'm not the most motivated person when it comes to sending demos or networking...I'm now looking for employment within the world of radio but I don't know quite what it is that I'm after, because there's so many jobs in the world of radio

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

My aim for the future is to get even more experience in radio and to pass my qualification, maybe even study Level 2 [BTEC award, certificate and diploma] next year. I also started thinking about uni lately, maybe that's a possibility, I'm not too sure yet, but I'm just taking each step at a time really

(Chris, 17, interview)

To be honest, like I haven't really planned my future out, because like the way things are going now, it's changed a lot since I like started on KCC Live...I do still wanna become a solicitor, but I think, like only if I was to get some sort of good way in the DJing and stuff, like have a proper job, like working in the night clubs and things, and you know residencies and stuff because you'd be getting paid good money for that. Erm, it's, it's definitely that I'd consider going into. Like, for example, Fearne Cotton, she's doing well and stuff and obviously she's on Radio 1 and I wouldn't mind being her. But like at the minute I'm set on becoming a solicitor, that's why I'm at university doing Law and Criminal Justice, I've kept my options open because that was the safest thing to do

(Fearne, 21, interview)

Drawing the above together, these young people struggle to imagine a concrete future beyond their current circumstances. Modest Mouse reveals that his future is characterised by uncertainty, owing to the difficulty in securing a job in radio, and that he lacks motivation in seeking out opportunities. Chris' career trajectory is less certain still. This resonates with Woodman's (2011:113) finding that some young people are "present-centred", owing to the overwhelming insecurity and scepticism they possess about their futures. It is worth saying that Chris is younger than Modest Mouse, and it is therefore perhaps more natural that he has a less defined future, resulting in him "taking each step at a time". Fearne's discussion reflects her fluid and varied senses of self. She is divided between her desire to be a Solicitor and a DJ, although noting: "at the minute I'm set on becoming a solicitor". Interestingly, a few weeks later, in a follow-up interview requested by Fearne, she told me that she now wishes to become a DJ. This was due to a success that Fearne had in a local DJ competition, as she enthusiastically informed me:

Since I last spoke to you, I won a competition for me DJing. And I get to warm up for a DJ, which not that many people have heard of him but if you're into the DJ scene and clubbing then you'll know who he is, and he's really big. So I'm getting to warm up for him, that was the prize you win in the competition. But erm, there was eight of us in the competition and I was the only girl, so it sounds boss, it sounds well good. It felt great like, my head just blew up from that. I definitely want to be a DJ now, I'm set on that
(Fearne, 21, interview)

Fearne's conflicting narratives provide an example of how young people's "storied selves" (Hull and Katz, 2006:45) are numerous and shifting within the context of everyday actions and relations. Fearne, alongside Modest Mouse and Chris, is experiencing confusion over "who and what" (Halpern *et al.*, 2000:470) she may become. I thus argue that KCC Live's practice of training young people yet not providing them with direction of 'next steps' is reminiscent of "sending youth on a journey without a map" (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002:107).

8.4.4 *The strength of weak ties*

Many young people used KCC Live as a platform to progress onto a career in the media, or to venture on to further education. To provide two examples from during my fieldwork, one volunteer secured a place at Oxford University (mentioning KCC Live within her personal statement), and another gained paid full-time work at Liverpool commercial station Radio City. Many young people maintain/intend to maintain ties with KCC Live when they move on from the station. Take the following quotations:

I think, erm, that a lot of the people who carried on volunteering even after they left were people who have gone on to do media-related things. You know, they were erm perhaps studying Media at university, or they'd gone to volunteer at larger stations after they'd left...So I think there was definitely for some of them, obviously not everybody, but for some of the students a kind of erm career path, or if not a career path a sort of life interest
(Frank, 63, former Principal of Knowsley Community College, interview)

I'd always like to have some involvement at KCC Live, cos I'd like to think this is where it started. So, you know, whether it be in ten years or twenty years, when hopefully I'm getting a paid presenting job, you know, I'd come back here and teach the next generation or help out the next generation. That's what I hope...You know, and radio as well, it's such a hard area as well, you know, if you have a job and then all of a sudden you get dropped and one day you could have a job, one day you couldn't. So it's err, it's a very difficult – and it's always good to have ties with community stations,

because you know, it can get you back into jobs, or you know, it can just keep you ticking over while you haven't got a job or whatever
(Andy, 24, interview)

As can be extrapolated from the above, Andy's discussion of KCC Live as "this is where it started" evokes a sense of KCC Live as "a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (Massey, 2005:130), characterised by meaningful interactions attached to this place. Further, Andy emphasises that he would "always like to have some involvement at KCC Live" owing to the precarious nature of the radio industry. I therefore intimate that some young people maintain/intend to maintain ties with KCC Live owing to what Jeffrey and McDowell (2004) describe as the ambivalence in transitions to adulthood and the lengthening processes of these transitions.

A further explanation for maintaining ties with KCC Live can be attributed to the sense of home, family and belonging that young people feel in relation to the station (discussed in Chapter Seven). This is explored in the following interview exchange between Chrissie and I:

Chrissie: The retention rate of KCC Live is really good, but it's not supposed to be. It's supposed to be a stepping stone into the world of radio, or employment or education or whatever it is, but it's not. We tend to retain people while they're on their journey of whatever it is they're going for. So whether it be going to uni, they'll still come back here, whether it will be going and getting a job, they'll still come back here.

CW: For what reason do you think you retain people?

Chrissie: I think there's probably a few reasons and there's not just one. So I think the bonds that they have with people at the station, that sense of community and sense of family brings them back. So when you're in a world where life can become stressful, whether it be work, whether it be home, whether it be uni and deadlines or submissions, or pressures in the office to get certain things done, I think we all need that escape from those norms of life, and I think the station has accidentally found itself being that escape.

(Chrissie, 30, Station Manager, interview)

As Chrissie illustrates, KCC Live is intended as a "stepping stone"; in other words, young people should use the space to reengage with employability skills, but it should not be an "end point" (Podkalicka and Staley, 2009:5).

The young people Chrissie is speaking of have moved on from KCC Live (i.e. secured employment or further education), but maintain ties. However, my research demonstrates that such ties and bonding social capital can be "disabling and

constraining” (White and Green, 2011:51) in accessing additional training or work opportunities for some young people who remain at the station. Modest Mouse, who describes himself as a KCC Live “veteran”, explores this:

With me being here for five years now, I do think it may be time for me to move on in the next year or so...That’s not a knock on KCC Live, that’s more me feeling like I have to move on to progress...I might get settled and get too comfortable in an environment and I almost get a little bit lazy and I sometimes feel like I need to push myself out of that and find a new challenge. Erm, and my ultimate goal is to get a job or career that pays and that’s something that I haven’t got at the moment, and that could very well mean moving away from KCC Live to achieve that

(Modest Mouse, 28, interview)

In an interview over 12 months later, Modest Mouse told me:

I feel like I’ve learnt everything that I possibly can...The only way I’m going to learn to do new things is through other places. Unless someone new comes into KCC Live and teaches me new ways of working, or unless I get different job roles at KCC Live, the things that I learn now will be from different places...I mean, obviously, I would prefer to not stay here for the next five years, because if that’s the case I still won’t have a proper full-time job, erm which isn’t the be-all and end-all in life, but you know. Erm, so it does feel tough sometimes when it feels, it kind of feels to me like I’m treading water now. I’ve gained all the experience I need to gain

(Modest Mouse, 29, interview)

Modest Mouse is self-confessedly “treading water”. He speculates that he remains at KCC Live, although he has gained the experience that he needs to progress beyond the station. Within the first excerpt, Modest Mouse states that “in the next year or so” he intends to move on from KCC Live, yet in the later excerpt and even as I am writing this thesis (more than two years after the first interview), Modest Mouse remains at the station. Unlike Modest Mouse, Bruce expresses no immediate desire to leave KCC Live:

Erm, for a while, it’s [my plans for the future] just been to get into, well pretty much to get into the place where I am now, because after being down and out for a while, god I did some awful things as well, erm, you wouldn’t believe it. I don’t want to go into that though. But my goal was to be where I am now, and now my goal in general is to, I think I need some more consistent work, I think I need, I need to get out of that fucking house, argh, families! I’ve not got a job that is consistent enough to warrant paying for my own accommodation, electric, bills, water and so on. Personally, that’s a massive goal for me because, well, independence. I think I’m reaching a period of stability, I am on the road to that period of stability. Right now I am just happy doing what I am doing for a bit. I don’t have plans to leave any

time soon. I'm happy as long as I have a little slot where I can do what I want. Obviously I'm quite, erm, spontaneous...I'm quite like "I'm done with that, what's the next thing?" But I'm unlikely to do that at KCC Live where people are relying on me

(Bruce, 24, interview)

It is clear that Bruce has place attachment to KCC Live; despite his spontaneous character, he feels compelled to stay at the station because of the dependency people have on him; in other words, the strength of community ties. As Manzo and Perkins (2006:347) tell, "people are motivated to seek, stay in, protect, and improve places that are meaningful to them". This is significant, as place attachment may limit social and geographical horizons (White and Green, 2011), and may impede social and spatial mobility and individual progress (Fried, 2000). In sum then, Bruce's attitude, stemming from the emotional and affective bonds he has made at KCC Live, may limit his awareness of available opportunities in employment and training outside of the station.

Thus, I argue that a regrettable consequence of KCC Live's homely environment, and the strong ties built (as discussed within Chapter 7), is that, for a small number of young people, the sense of belonging in this community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998) is so powerful that they do not wish to leave. The following quotations from MJ and Beard add credence to this point:

I wanted to do a local radio station here in the North West...I applied to KCC Live and thankfully I got it, and I did five weeks here and I fell in love with the studio and the people here and I decided to stay on for the summer, and that's why I'm still here

(MJ, 22, interview)

It's a bit like the home is where the heart is, it's that saying where how you live your life is where you feel most comfortable. That's what I'm like at the station, that's why I've been here for donkey's

(Beard, 28, interview)

MJ tells that, due to friendships she has made with volunteers at KCC Live, she has stayed at the radio station beyond the time allocated for her work experience. Further, Beard, who has volunteered at KCC Live for ten years, tells that "home is where the heart is", explaining that he has remained at the station as it is the place he feels "most comfortable". This is perhaps an upshot of the fact that, through community radio, young people are producing new communities and founding new

ways of belonging (Bloustien, 2007). Just as in White and Green's (2011:51) study then, "the insular nature of strong ties" may result in "bounded horizons" for some young people at KCC Live. Even if these young people are a minority, they indicate a need for support and encouragement to achieve imagined futures.

I presented the above finding, that some young people lack direction for moving on from KCC Live, to station management. The following comment from Hywel demonstrates acknowledgement of this trend:

I hold my hands up, and this is all to do with staff reducing, and the amount of time that I would much rather be putting towards direction, rather than constantly trying to be the politician for the business. I just wish we could, and I feel that we've sent them down a mineshaft with a pickaxe and a helmet and then we've not seen them again for six months and I totally totally agree. I'd certainly like to do that more
(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live in joint feedback interview with Chrissie, 30, Station Manager)

Above, Hywel acknowledges KCC Live's role of training volunteers and equipping them with skills, yet not providing direction towards life outside of the station. He describes this process as sending the young people "down a mineshaft with a pickaxe and a helmet". Hywel attributes this to staffing cuts at the station, yet affirms that he would like to devote more time towards working through future directions with volunteers. Thus, as Evans (2011) writes in relation to 'Big Society' in the UK, although volunteer time is unpaid, the training, co-ordination and support of volunteers' work requires accountable management, and requires clarity about the purpose to which their time and skills can contribute most meaningfully.

8.5 Concluding Remarks

With this chapter, I have offered an important contribution to the children's geographies literature. Young people predominantly learnt new skills (both technical and transferable) informally in the everyday lifeworld of KCC Live, and through peer teaching. As such, the young people were agentic in locating resources and building networks, thereby generating stocks of social capital that set them on the correct path to contest the experience of social exclusion. I extended this understanding of the agentic potential of young people in relation to what Battaglia (1995:1) terms "self-making", relating to how the young people commence a process

of becoming and negotiating oneself. Conceptually, my research therefore provides evidence that challenges the dominant perception within the literature of young people as the receivers rather than the producers of social capital (e.g. Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Woolcock, 2001). Further, this chapter has illustrated that Putnam (2000) was mistaken in presenting bonding social capital as omnibenevolent. Building on the sense of home and family at KCC Live that the young people raised in Chapter Seven, I showed how bonding ties can be restrictive for a small number of young people, resulting in them not moving on from the station. As such, my research adds weight to White and Green's (2011:51) discussion of bonding social capital as "disabling and constraining", for some young people, in accessing further training or work opportunities. I now draw this thesis to a conclusion.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

In this thesis, through a participatory approach, I have provided insight into the value of a community radio station for young people in exploring their voices, developing friendships and useful networks, and gaining a mastery of technical and transferable skills to implement in their (imagined) futures. I have highlighted the importance of KCC Live as a provision for young people in the liminal space between education and employment/further education. Within this final chapter, I discuss the conceptual contributions arising from my work. Following from this, I detail the policy recommendations I offer to other youth-led radio stations and, in a final pocket of participation (Franks, 2011), include a recommendation that the young people and I offer to Ofcom. I then signpost potential avenues for future research.

9.2 Conceptual Contributions

Several broad conceptual arguments that cross-cut the individual empirical chapters have emerged through this research. First, performance is important in several ways. I showed how young people at KCC Live perform more sanitised versions of themselves on air, characterised by putting on their ‘radio voice’. For some young people, these voices were schooled and fashioned in efforts of “speech production” (Goffman, 1981:218), taking steps towards producing ‘spontaneous’ and fluent speech. Other young people performed within a pre-censored idea of speech, aware that the airwaves are being policed by Ofcom, and thus accordingly station and college management. This ranged from young people not using swear language, through to the belief that they cannot express their opinions on air. Speech, here, is performed in “an already circumscribed field of linguistic possibilities” (Butler, 1997:129), supporting Arnot and Reay’s (2007:311) notion of “pedagogic voice”, which engages with power relations that produce and shape voices.

However, my findings highlight that, through performance, some young people at KCC Live use the airwaves to create a new language that is not condemned by presuppositions (Butler, 1997). This includes producing ‘creative audiobiographies’, carefully cultivated ‘fake interactions’ and crafted debates. My role as an observant participant enabled me to “separate fact from fiction and gossip from information, whilst strategically using both to gain further data” (Moeran, 2007:148). This helped to tease out the related idea of pretend play (play that includes the use of fantasy and make-believe, Russ, 2004). Recall Chris’ fabricated love story, which unfolded over several months, as he told the listeners that he had been romantically reacquainted with his girlfriend, and eventually that he desired to end this relationship because he had fallen in love with another girl. Other young people told how they made up stories on air, and were so carried away in the telling of these tales, that at the end of the performance, they had to remind themselves that it was not true. I therefore offer an important contribution to children’s geographies in finding that pretend play, characterised by performance, has the potential to become a “life-span activity” (Göncü and Perone’s, 2005:137), not an activity confined to childhood.

Those who have considered performance in relation to radio have typically focused on commercial radio settings (Goffman, 1967; Rampton, 2009; Stiernstedt, 2014). Further, these understandings of performance are concerned with unveiling the truth behind the performed persona and the resultant embarrassment (Stiernstedt, 2014), as opposed to the positive potential of on-air performances. This downplays the ways in which young people can rehearse and perform a range of diverse personas, and re-imagine their current circumstances and possible futures. Engaging with performance, more liberally, in the study of community radio thus enables insight into the ways in which performance is not just an act of refinement and sanitisation, but also an act of exaggeration and caricature. My role as an observant participant was further useful in revealing this finding. To recall, the shift from participant observation to observant participation is concerned with the ability to see beyond the social front that informants present to strangers in their everyday lives (Moeran, 2007); that is, to know that there is a difference between their frontstage and backstage behaviour (Goffman, 1959), and to have ready access to both those front and back stages. This enabled me to know whether a young person’s delivery on air was a performance of their backstage selves. Backstage at KCC Live comprises of

bad language, playful acts, joking, as well as talk of more serious issues, such as those concerning politics. Frontstage typically consists of the abovementioned more sanitised presentation of self, as well as fantastical presentations of self, embellished with storytelling. Thus, my research stance as an observant participant has enabled me to contribute to debates in human geography (Gregson and Rose, 2000) that argue that spaces, too, need to be thought of as performative.

Second, building on the above, my research extends existing literature on sonic geographies (Boland, 2010; Matless, 2005; Revill, 2000) through remedying the silence of youth voice. I drew on Matless' (2005:758) term "sonic exclusion" in two key ways. Firstly, to consider how young people at KCC Live, who do not possess the Scouse accent, are sonically excluded from certain on-air activities. Young people at KCC Live who possessed the Scouse accent spoke about how they constantly heard their voices being played out on air. However, those who did not possess the Scouse accent felt sonically excluded from certain on air activities, such as recording vocals. In this regard, my research builds upon the work of Ames (2003) who, discussing local radio, finds that specific youth voices within the community are projected, whilst others were silenced or neglected.

Further, I applied the notion of sonic exclusion to discussions of young people's imagined careerscapes. A further strand of performance can be seen here. I provided examples of young people who, owing to the possession of a Scouse accent, believe they will be [sonically] excluded from pursuing their desired career. Some young people discussed how they would *perform* different identities, for instance working to lose their accent, or what I characterised as losing [their accent] to work. However, other young people discussed the opportunity of 'playing on' their Scouse accent. By 'performing' Scouse, like the late Cilla Black, some young people believe that they can make a commodity of this sonic marker. I believe that my sonic positioning as possessing a southern accent, and therefore holding a different broadcast dialect to the majority of KCC Live volunteers, meant the discussions of accent naturally arose. Further, I argue that the methods I used were important in enabling reflections on voices. For instance, in the co-production of the audio artefacts, during the 'snoop' style sessions elected by the young people, I played back recordings of the young people's contributions to the documentary. Often, this

caused reflection about how “Scouse” or “non Scouse” an accent was. Further, focus group discussions enabled young people to hear their voices in relation to others. My research therefore satisfies the demand for a heightened scholarly attention to geographies of speech (see Brickell, 2013; Kanngieser, 2012; Livingstone, 2007). I propose a sonic geographical perspective as a valuable lens for geographers of children and young people, through which to better understand voice, as young people perform it.

Third, by exposing young people’s conceptualisations of community at KCC Live, I have contributed towards a new vocabulary for understanding community in relation to young people, therefore allowing for more eclectic and nuanced discussions. Discussions of community in the literature to date present community in various ways. However, these understandings of community are not considered in relation to age. Though research exists in children’s geographies (Jung, 2014) which has focussed on the process of defining community from children’s perspectives, there remains a void in understanding what, precisely, community is for young people. For young people in my study, communities surrounding KCC Live manifest themselves in a number of forms. Young people spoke of how they developed friendships, which constitute communities of choice. These were described in terms of family, whereby KCC Live was positioned as a second home. Also arising in these discussions was ‘unlikely’ friendships, between people of different ages or positions at the station. Further, community was discussed by some young people in a territorial sense, bound by specific locales. This arose in how young presenters, who were not from the Knowsley area, did not consider themselves as part of the listening community. Further, for those young people who lived outside of Knowsley, the distance was considered prohibiting in developing ties they had built at KCC Live. However, for the most part, young people characterised the community within KCC Live as a community of practice. The relationship between listeners and presenters was discussed by both groups largely in imagined terms in that, though both groups will likely not meet each other, they construct images in their minds. An important point to arise from my research was how the Internet, particularly online broadcasting, was re-defining the community away from the locale. Further, use of social media around particular shows was creating virtual communities.

A further strand of community came through in the research design of this project. To explain, the participatory approach to this project functioned as a ‘community of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). Goodnough (2014) also characterises her youth-led action research project this way. In the community of practice of this research project, the young people and I developed relationships and roles through working towards shared goals. This was co-opted in a process of mutual learning (Ho, 2013b), whereby the young people became knowledgeable about social research, whilst I became knowledgeable about DJing and radio presenter-related skills. However, I problematised the alleged emancipatory potential of participatory research. As I exposed within the Methodology and Research Design, I assumed the young people, as proficient creators of audio content, would desire a hands-on role in editing the audio artefacts. However, I found that not all young people wished to occupy such a role. I therefore allowed the young people to dictate to me how this would work, and they suggested a snoop style format that reversed typical research power relations. Notwithstanding the difficulties associated with the co-production of the audio artefacts, this method was effective for two key reasons. First, it enabled scope for the young people to (literally) have their voices heard. This is particularly important for this research project, which is concerned with young people finding and realising their voices. Second, the audio artefacts functioned as a method of data analysis. The audio artefacts became a ‘sounding board’ to receive feedback on my interpretations of data I had gathered; particularly through observations where there was less scope to clarify what I had seen/heard without altering that moment. Thus, the co-production of the audio artefacts, including discussion about what should be included, was useful for illuminating the fit between the data I gathered and my interpretation of this data. The off-air conversations that emerged through the production process also enabled young people to clarify key findings prior to dissemination.

The above reflexive tale contributes to work on the “promise and perils” (Luke *et al.*, 2004:11) of a participatory research approach, in highlighting that the meaning of ‘participatory’ in participatory research should be determined in communication with research participants. Only then can research be considered truly participatory. My research offers insight that, at least for some young people, co-producing research can be a burdensome and undesirable task. This stands in contradiction to research

(e.g. Merriam and Simpson, 2000) that has positioned participatory methods as emancipatory, and the cure-all to unequal power relations. Thus, in the ‘community of practice’ of this research project, the same tensions came through as in the community literature more generally, for instance that a “good” (Bellah, 1995:2) community is one in which there is disagreement about the meaning of shared values and goals, and how they will be actualised in everyday life.

As is clear from the different manifestations of community, KCC Live increases interpersonal contacts between diverse geographic, and other, groupings. As Weller (2006c) maintains, alternative understandings of community, and the different ways young people develop and maintain social networks, are important to consider when exploring social capital formation. Through creating social ties between socially fragmented groups, in person, on-air, and online, KCC Live provides a space for young people to create substantial stocks of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), which they then mobilised to enable opportunities. For instance, young people at KCC Live spoke about how the skills (resources) and relationships (networks) enabled them to take part in a number of opportunities, such as interviewing music artists, securing work experience at local and national radio stations, and in the case of one volunteer, securing paid employment teaching radio skills. I have thus shown that young people’s understandings of community are central to their production of social capital. Further, I have contributed to the children’s geographies literature by enhancing understandings of young people’s agentic capacity. My research therefore extends Weller’s (2006c:572) emphasis on ‘Skateboarding Together’ as a starting point for examining young people’s relationship with social capital. I have shown how ‘DJing together’ (typically independently but within the same community organisation) can build stocks of social capital. This, of course, stands to counter Putnam’s (2000) thesis of *Bowling Alone*. However, social capital is not infinitely good, and in this thesis I showed how bonding ties can be restrictive for a small number of young people, resulting in them not moving on from KCC Live. I therefore contribute to geographical scholarship in extending discussions of the pitfalls, as well as promises, of social capital (Portes and Landolt, 2000).

9.3 Policy Recommendations

Throughout the empirical chapters, I have integrated recommendations, emerging from my research, which I offered to KCC Live. Here, I offer recommendations more broadly for community youth-led radio stations.

First, I recommend that management should encourage programmes to be produced by young people that may or may not be broadcast on air, allowing young people to follow their own conventions. This includes more flexible programming, which would give young people space for working through and discovering their senses of self. This will enable young people to find and realise their voices without the pre-censored, convention-following and time-limited rules of ‘best practice’ for radio production. Second, in encouraging more playful and performative accounts of youth voice on the airwaves, youth-led media organisations should seek to collaborate with local theatre organisations. Creative output could include radio drama; radio soaps; radio comedy; or even reality radio, which brings the ‘backstage’ personalities of the young people to the ‘frontstage’. This would be beneficial in seeing the true characters of young people ‘behind the scenes’, as opposed to a diluted and ‘schooled’ version.

Third, management and volunteers should co-ordinate community-based events to build and strengthen ties between the organisation and the immediate geographic listening audience. This would increase the station/organisation’s prominence in the local community, thereby attempting to minimise the disconnect between presenters and listeners. Accompanying this, organisations should host ‘open days’ where they invite members of the community to see the organisation at work. This would disentangle the ‘imagining’ of the audience for volunteers, enabling them to realise who constitutes the listening audience, and to create personal connections between listeners and the station as a place (Keough, 2010). Fourth, community media organisations should source hyper-local news to cater to their locality. Though outsourcing national news may be more time-effective, I recommend that management must consider the resulting feelings of disconnect by listeners who have an aversion to non-local programming.

Fifth, management should arrange meetings with young people, to assist with ‘next steps’. This process would increase young people’s awareness of available job opportunities. Management could run work sessions to assist with young people’s job applications, ensuring that they have accurately documented the skills they have gained through the organisation within their CV and application. Such procedures will motivate/enable young people to move on from the organisation; as such, the organisation will fulfil its function as a pathway to re-engage young people with further education and employment, and not become an “end point” (Podkalicka and Staley, 2009:5). Related to this, I recommend that youth-led community organisations should provide an accreditation system; for instance, a certificate, for young people who have demonstrated sustained commitment to the station. For those young people who lack all-important qualifications to enter the labour market, recognition of the skills they have gained through participation in the organisation is invaluable.

In making these recommendations, the future of community radio should, however, be borne in mind. As intimated in the introduction, KCC Live recently declared in local press that it is struggling to survive in the current economic climate, due to difficulty in securing funding to support the station (see Belger, 2015). This story is not unique to KCC Live, and due to cuts to government spending, financial support for community organisations more generally is lacking. Owing to the research conducted as part of this thesis, KCC Live now has robust data to demonstrate its worth in future funding bids. A further recommendation, therefore, for other youth-led community organisations is to document their value, through both qualitative and quantitative research, thus giving themselves the best chance of securing funding in order to survive.

9.3.1 Dear Ofcom, ...from KCC Live

With this thesis, the young people and I offer a broader recommendation to Ofcom, which we are currently shaping into a letter to the regulatory body. This research has demonstrated that current regulations outlined by Ofcom, and then slavishly complied to by station management through fear of financial reprisal, can function as restrictions to voice for young people. A fixed ‘watershed’ does not apply to radio in

the same way as to television. Currently television broadcasters must observe the 9pm watershed, which means that material unsuitable for children should not be shown before this time, and that more ‘adult’ content can be shown after this time. However, currently, for radio broadcasters, there is no watershed, rather radio broadcasters must have particular regard to “times when children are particularly likely to be listening”, typically the school run and breakfast time (Ofcom, 2013:8). We advocate that a watershed for radio may be useful in encouraging young people to explore issues they currently feel they are unable to voice through fear of repercussions. As this research project aims to give young people a voice through developing a participatory approach, it is only apt to include some of the young people’s written words about this:

I think that a watershed in radio would be perfect, it would allow more presenters the opportunity to explore more topics that they feel they simply couldn’t do on air currently. The Ofcom rules now mainly highlight Breakfast and Drive [prime time in radio], however I feel after a Drive show people still won’t open up fully about things that a television show would do. Stations such as KCC Live have talk shows, but I feel some presenters may still be worried about what they can and cannot say, due to there not being something set in stone. With a watershed on radio you may start to see more ‘adult’ shows which broadens the listener capability.

(Calvin, 20, written contribution)

The application of a watershed could provide an exploratory stage for young people - a codified time between which ‘anything goes’ (within legal and sometimes moral reason) - as with some TV channels. It could be argued this is indeed the ‘best of both worlds’ - allowing for the linear scheduling and clear identification of content suitable to safeguard some children or to adhere to parent’s wishes, but also allowing for a space in which creativity, taboo themes, and investigative content can be utilised not only to entertain but to inform young audiences. The current system of identifying key times of youth listenership does work to safeguard children, but if complemented by an official watershed for more currently-restricted content, could certainly open a world of exploration and expression of the our [KCC Live presenters’] ‘backstage’ behaviours

(Hendrix, 23, written contribution)

The young people and I argue that the Ofcom (2013) broadcasting code is currently set out to protect children, defined by Ofcom as under 18’s (who are listening), but this may be at the expense of young people (who in the case of KCC Live, are presenting). Arguably, this can, in part, be attributed to Ofcom’s conflation of ‘children’ and ‘young people’. As Hendrix argues, implementing a watershed in community radio may be one way to allow a time and space on air in which young

people can be themselves, enabling their “backstage” behaviours “frontstage” (Goffman 1959:109; 114).

9.4 The Beat Goes On: Future Research Considerations

After feeding back to KCC Live, station management are going to implement a number of my recommendations, as summarised by Hywel in the excerpt below:

The fact that I’ve got a list of things to take forward from you is great. Like really useful stuff, like I’m gunna do a project with them [volunteers] where we make a Simpson’s map, we make an animated map of their world and it can just cut out the bits that they don’t wanna talk about, they don’t care about. But we can create actual places that they can talk about, and actual real-life characters that they can talk about, so that you end up with your Chief Wiggum and your Bart Simpsons [Characters from the American animated sitcom *The Simpsons*] of the world so that we can connect, we can give them a starting point, they don’t have to use it, but we can give them a starting point to talk about the local area more. A Blank Space show, so saying “look if you’re not bothered about audience and you’re not bothered about traditional radio and you want to try something completely different, and if you want to do something that’s much more inventive, then do the Blank Space show”. Facebook guidance for Ofcom, and a well-done qualification

(Hywel, 34, consultant to KCC Live, in joint feedback interview with Chrissie, 30, Station Manager)

In relation to the above, it would be interesting for future research to consider the impact of my recommendations once implemented. In particular, I see great potential for a research project surrounding the production of *The Simpsons*-like map in a participatory animated mapping project with young people, and tracing the eventual impact of this on on-air content. Very often researchers make recommendations, but less often do they continue work with the partner organisation to document the impact of the recommendations. In moving away from “hit and run” research (Byrne *et al.*, 2009:76), I propose that future research should follow youth-led radio organisations in the implementation of the above recommendations.

Further, I argue that longitudinal work must assess whether young people at other community organisations fulfil their possible selves. This work may span over ten to twenty years and would involve intermittently meeting participants to document their career trajectories. Essential for this type of research would be to build genuine friendships with research participants based on trust and mutual respect (Hopkins,

2011), such as those that I have built with young people in my study. In this way, participants would welcome the researcher as part of their life, and following up with them intermittently would not seem like a burden or a task.

Further, with this thesis, I position it as fruitful to use a sonic geographical lens in the study of youth voice, for providing an entry into young people's soundworlds. Combined with a performance lens, we can begin to develop a much more nuanced understanding of the relationship between youth voice, identity and presentation of self. Through uniting these currently disparate lenses, I argue that community radio research will have its 'finest hour'.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Young People Information

Volunteer pseudonym	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Role at KCC Live	Relationship to KCC Live
Andy	Male	White British	23/24	Presenter and Head of Music	Andy joined KCC Live in 2012. “My involvement ranges from, I dunno, where I get all the music for the station, err update the playlist on the website, and then I’m a presenter as well. I was looking for a way into radio, cos I was in university in my last year and I did Accountancy and I didn’t want to do Accountancy anymore...I was looking for community stations and then I saw the Station Manager at the time was advertising for overnight presenters, and I thought that would be good, you know, a good training ground for me and I applied, had an interview and got it”.
Beard	Male	White British	27/28	Presenter	Beard joined KCC Live in 2008. “I joined the station to improve my confidence talking to people, as well as getting some first-hand practical experience in radio for the university course I was going to do a year later”.
Bruce	Male	White British	24/25	Presenter and Executive Producer	Bruce joined KCC Live in 2011. “I have a degree in radio and I wanted to continue to volunteer for a radio station in some capacity. I hadn’t done anything in a while, so was keen to join. I have been acting as an Executive Producer for Thursdays...I also present and produce my own show and do the odd other show here and there”.
Calvin	Male	White British	19/20	Presenter	Calvin joined KCC Live in 2010.

					<p>"I've always wanted to play music and that fact that like when you're presenting you get to play music and give people joy, that's why I done it basically. I present a show and I also help with the playlist of local bands and like I love local bands, I get them on me show, play most of their stuff and always welcoming local music really. That's like me main role in the station".</p>
Chris	Male	White British	17/18	Presenter	<p>Chris joined KCC Live in 2011.</p> <p>"I heard about KCC Live through, like mates and they listened to it, and then when I joined the college, it was a big thing like posted around the college, so I thought I'd talk to Phil who was in charge at the time, and he gave me like little tasks to do and I enjoyed it and then signed up to it. I got involved just to try something new. I am a Presenter and I also help out with other jobs at the station".</p>
Damon	Male	White British	37/38	Presenter-Producer	<p>Damon joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>"I live in Yorkshire, I used to do a radio station over there but got removed from the on-air schedule. I got involved [with KCC Live] because I was applying for positions at various stations, and KCC Live was the one that gave me the opportunity to get back into radio".</p>
Fearne	Female	White British	21/22	DJ	<p>Fearne joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>"I got involved in KCC Live to have fun, meet new people and make friends, learn new skills, and for publicity for me DJing. They really wanted me to have a show, I sorta like got big headed about that, cos I sort of thought,</p>

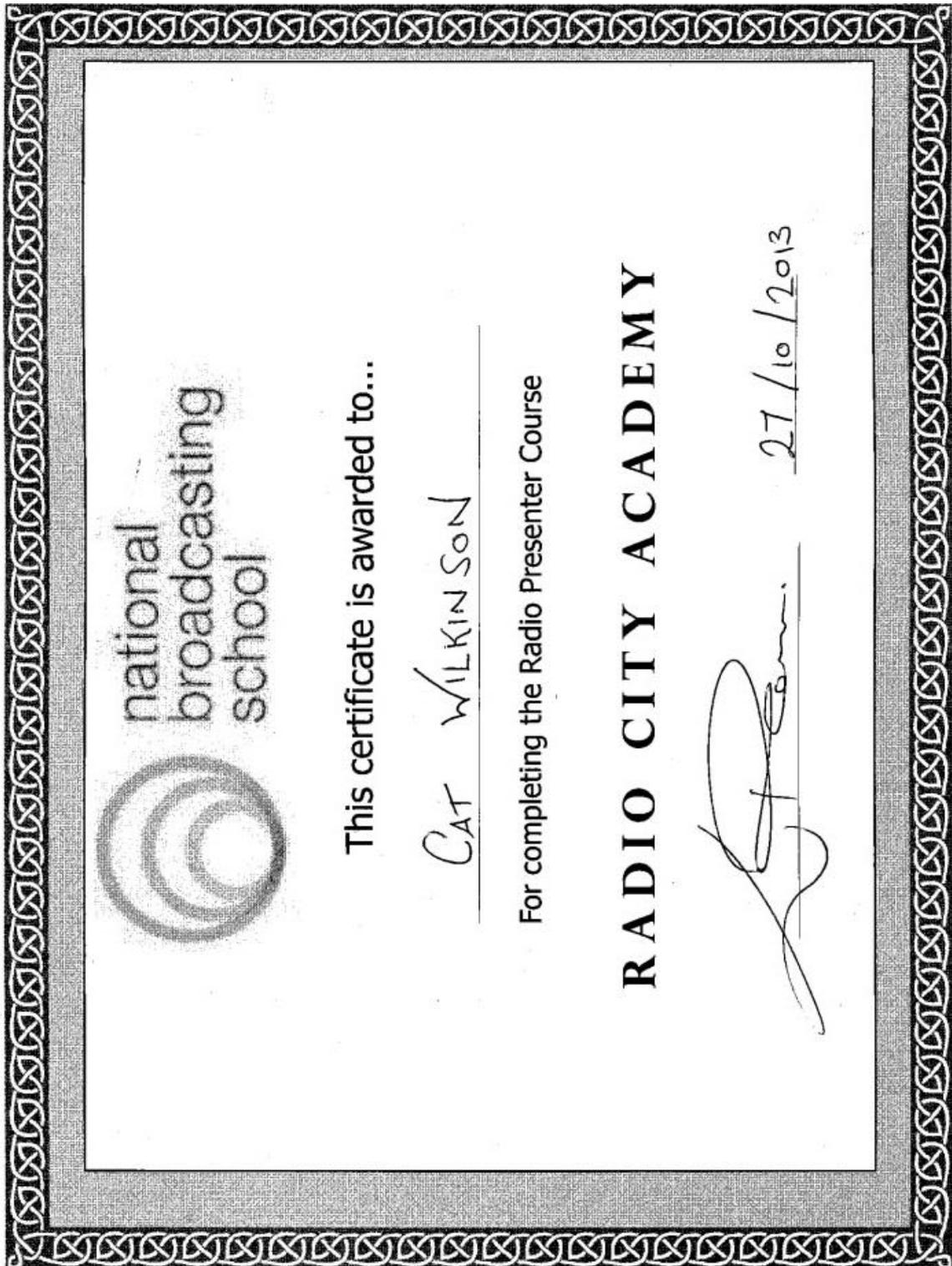
					you know, these want me! So it was like, you know when you feel like a little star of something, so I just thought yeah I'll go for that and I went for it. I spend about four hours at KCC Live a week".
Gideon	Male	White British	26	Presenter	Gideon joined KCC Live in 2010. "I co-host a show on KCC Live. I joined because, at the time I was DJing and a friend's boyfriend who had a dance show on the station, recommended KCC Live to me as a new path, so I asked him to pass along my contact details. I spend 12 hours presenting the show, and usually find myself doing another hour or two every day in planning and meetings. So I would say around 16 to 18 hours of my week are taken up by station commitments".
Harry	Male	White British	23/24	Presenter	Harry joined KCC Live in 2013. "I joined the station and it was mostly to further my skills in a media-based creative environment, and also the opportunity to work under Chrissie [Station Manager] and learn from her".
Hendrix	Male	White British	22/23	Station Imaging Producer and Broadcast Technician	Hendrix joined KCC Live in 2008 "I was interested in the media industries, primarily broadcasting and journalism, and saw it as a useful and fun extracurricular activity alongside my college studies. I've volunteered for varying amounts of time. So most days 2008 to 2010 when in college, sporadically but still regular when in uni, then a lot during breaks".
Kate	Female	White	25	Volunteer	Kate joined KCC Live in 2014.

		British			<p>“My reason for joining KCC Live is that I wanted to use my skills from doing a erm, post grad in radio journalism, but present instead. I don’t currently have a show anymore, but I’m hoping to start a new show soon”.</p>
Kurt	Male	White British	17/18	Presenter	<p>Kurt joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>“I was at KCC Live for two and a half years, I started when I joined the college, but before that I did my work experience from school at the station for two weeks, I’ve now moved on so am no longer part of the KCC Live team, but I still keep an eye on what’s happening at the station via Facebook”.</p>
Madonna	Female	White British	17/18	Talk Show Panel Member	<p>Madonna joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>“I joined [KCC Live] because I wanted to get more experience in different areas of media, like broadcasting, as that’s the line of work I want to get into, and I guess my current role is sort of a panel member of a debating show. So, it involves researching the latest news topics related to our target audience and bringing it to the table to discuss with each other”.</p>
MJ	Female	White British	21/22	News Reader and Presenter	<p>MJ joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>“I joined KCC Live after I finished work experience at university, I enjoyed doing what I did on the work experience so joined the station as a volunteer. I’m still a presenter, when I can actually get down to the station”.</p>
Modest Mouse	Male	White British	28/29	Presenter-Producer	<p>Modest Mouse joined KCC Live in 2009.</p>

					<p>“I was at a bit of a loss in my kind of working life really, I’d moved from one shop to another...I’d always been kind of interested in, in music and technology and erm, being a bit of a showman too if I’m honest, being a bit of a performer and a comedian...So after finishing this retail job, erm I kind of dropped in my details [to KCC Live] and someone got back to me a few months later on and I did the training and things. I suppose the reason I chose KCC Live was because it was accessible for me”.</p>
Nikki	Female	White British	21/22	Presenter	<p>Nikki joined KCC Live in 2011.</p> <p>“I was initially on a course that was just purely learning about radio production and then a few of the managers [from KCC Live] came there to look for new volunteers to present and stuff and I had no idea that they even existed, and it was practically like in my back garden. I live round the corner, so it’s dead handy for me. So from there, I went to like an interview and then managed to get training and was on air within a couple of weeks. I’m a presenter, so I do three shows a week”.</p>
Olly	Male	White British	17	Trainee	<p>Olly joined KCC Live in 2014.</p> <p>“I used to go to erm, Knowsley Community College, so that’s where I heard about KCC Live. I just saw it and that’s how I knew about it. I got involved for the love of radio and the fact that they were a local station and played good music”.</p>
Rita	Female	White British	19	Trainee	<p>Rita joined KCC Live in 2013.</p> <p>“I joined KCC Live because, well I was drawn to a profession in the media as a popular future career and wanted to find out</p>

					more, and err gain experience that would be valuable if I chose to pursue the interest professionally”.
Robbie	Male	White British	25/26	Presenter	Robbie first volunteered at KCC Live in 2004-2006, then re-joined the station in 2012. “The reason I originally joined was because it was an enrichment programme, when I was in college. Then I went back a few years later, because I missed it. I co-present a show now and I used to have my own show”.
Shaz	Female	Iranian	18	Presenter	Shaz joined KCC Live in 2010. She left the station during the research project to study at university. “I was looking for community stations and there’s not really any in Liverpool. I was chiefly a presenter but also considered myself part of the community. I was kept informed of other projects and ways I could help out, like at events. In a typical day I bumped into a lot of people and had fun conversations whilst we each got on with whatever we were there to do”.
Taylor	Female	White British	19	Trainee	Taylor joined KCC Live in 2013 and left later that year. “I spent three weeks there [at KCC Live] during work experience. I loved it there and it made me want to come back full time, my only regret is I didn’t join earlier. I was in the process of training to become a presenter but left due to uni commitments. Hopefully I can return and be a presenter soon”.

Appendix 2: Broadcast Training Certificate



Appendix 3: Questions for Young People's 'Biography' Interview

1. Can you tell about yourself?
2. What is your role at KCC Live?
3. How long have you been at KCC Live?
4. For what reason did you get involved in KCC Live?
5. How much time do you spend at KCC Live per week?
6. How did you find the KCC Live training process?
7. Can you describe a typical day at KCC Live?
8. Can you tell me about activities you have been involved at during your time at KCC Live?
9. Tell me about your relationship with your peers at KCC Live?
10. Can you describe how you 'fit in' at KCC Live?
11. What have you enjoyed most about your time at KCC Live?
12. Can you describe any difficulties you have faced during your time here?
13. What have you have learnt throughout your time at KCC Live?
14. What things (if any) can you observe about yourself that are different now from when you first started at KCC Live that you believe is directly related to your time here?
15. What are your plans for the future?
16. Is there anything you would like to say about KCC Live that was not covered in these questions?

Appendix 4: Stakeholder Information

Staff Member	Position	Involvement in KCC Live
Chrissie Farrell	KCC Live Station Manager	<p>Chrissie was employed by Knowsley Community College as an Admin/Marketing Assistant, prior to working at KCC Live from 2003.</p> <p>“I am the Station Manager, so my involvement is to over-see the daily running and the tasks of KCC Live. I’ve been at the station from its existence pretty much... so at first I was just a member of staff, but over the years I’ve increase my involvement and responsibility to the point now where I am the Programme Controller”.</p>
Frank Gill	Former Principal of Knowsley Community College	<p>Frank worked at Knowsley Community College whilst KCC Live was broadcasting on FM. During this time, he presented his own show, where he played Jazz and Swing music.</p> <p>“I was Principal of Knowsley Community College. I worked at the college for 21 years all together, so I was Assistant Principal and then Vice Principal and erm the radio station was put under my kind of guardianship when it was first suggested as an idea. You know, way back erm by Hywel, and it was just looking for a pet project really at the time and, erm we were quite keen on the idea and George gave it to me to oversee”.</p>
Hywel Evans	Consultant to KCC Live	<p>Alongside Sir George Sweeney, Hywel was responsible for setting up KCC Live in 2003, and now works as a consultant to the station.</p> <p>“My involvement with KCC Live, err that I set it up, Sir George Sweeney asked me to do something with his college. Well my official job title was Fun Formulator...and it was the idea that someone in the college was in charge of the atmosphere in the corridors. And, erm, my girlfriend at the time said to me, well why don’t you set up a radio station...She suggested it and I kind of thought that’s a brilliant idea. So I said to him, I’ll set it up”.</p>
Matt Marshall	Assistant Programme Controller	<p>Matt volunteered at KCC Live from 2008, before being recruited into a paid role between 2013-2014.</p> <p>“I got involved firstly because I enrolled on an A Level in Media at college, alongside some others and I thought that the radio station did complement the choice of subjects that I’d made quite well, and then when my friend signed up, I thought I’d sign up as well...The stuff that I like to do most is the technical side of things, making sure the equipment works and</p>

		doing some of the on-air imaging, so jingles, adverts and stuff like that”.
Pam Lunt	Former Vice Principal of Knowsley Community College	<p>Pam was Vice Principal of Knowsley Community College when KCC Live was broadcasting on AM. Pam had her own show where she played mostly Elvis music.</p> <p>“Being the VP for Operations, once senior management team decided it was a good idea, it was a case of “right go and find somewhere to put it”, which is basically what I did in err J block, ground floor. And, erm, Hywel basically said what he needed and I just made sure that he got it”.</p>
Sir George Sweeney	Former Principal of Knowsley Community College	<p>Alongside Hywel Evans, Sir George Sweeney was responsible for setting up KCC Live in 2003.</p> <p>“As the Principal I was the accounting officer...which meant that how the budget was spent was my responsibility, so I could – under being responsible to the Governors, I could spend the money the way I deemed best. So...the radio station came into existence because I decided we would have it. That’s not to say that it was my idea but, because I said “yeah okay we’ll do this””.</p>

Appendix 5: Questions for Station Management

1. Can you tell me about your involvement in KCC Live?
2. What is the purpose of KCC Live?
3. Who do you see as the community being served?
4. Can you tell me about the young people that come through the door?
5. What sort of relationship is there between young people and other young people?
6. What sort of relationship is there between management and young people?
7. Can you describe the relationship with listeners?
8. Does this extend onto a virtual platform, for instance social media?
9. In what ways do you believe interaction on-air is important for developing ties with listeners?
10. How important do you think it is to have a community station serving Knowsley?
11. In what way do you believe online broadcasting has changed the community which KCC Live serves?
12. What opportunities do you believe KCC Live provides for young people?
13. Can you tell me about any changes you've noticed in yourself through your time at KCC Live which you can directly attribute to your time spent here?
14. Have you seen any changes in volunteers through their time at KCC Live? Can you provide some examples of this?
15. In what ways do you believe KCC Live is successful in encouraging a positive self-image of young people?
16. In what ways do you believe KCC Live is effective in providing minority voice representation?
17. What sort of skills do young people learn through their time at KCC Live?
18. How do they learn these skills?
19. In what ways does KCC Live help in providing pathways for young people beyond KCC Live?
20. Can you explain how KCC Live attempts to bridge gaps amongst the distinct boroughs or Knowsley?
21. What struggles has KCC Live faced as a community station?
22. How has the station tried to overcome these?

Appendix 6: Questions for KCC Live Founders

1. Can you tell me about your involvement with KCC Live?
2. What was the reason for creating KCC Live as a college radio station?
3. What was the ultimate goal for KCC Live?
4. What was the response like from students?
5. As the young people were already being served by Radio City, what different benefits did KCC Live bring?
6. Did you face any initial challenges?
7. What was the driving force behind making the transition from a college station to a community station?
8. What was the reason for targeting 10-24 year-olds?
9. In what ways do you believe the 'open door policy' of KCC Live was important?
10. Did the direction of the station change when having to serve a wider community?
11. Do you believe that KCC Live benefits the listening community, and if yes – how?
12. Within the Ofcom application, Knowsley Community College is referred to as landlords and supporters in kind of KCC Live, can you tell me about this relationship?
13. In what way do you believe the positioning of the station in the college helps/hinders community interaction?
14. In what way to you feel the work-based model of KCC Live benefits students in a college environment?
15. What do you believe the importance is of KCC Live providing work experience for young people?
16. In what way do you believe online broadcasting has changed the community which KCC Live services?
17. In what ways do you feel KCC Live has a positive impact on NEET young people?
18. In what way do you believe the ethos of 'community radio with attitude' reflects the target community?

19. In what way do you believe the specialist shows on KCC Live reflect the needs of different subcultures?
20. Please can you provide more information on KCC Live's inclusion policy?
21. In what ways does KCC Live broadcast to the marginalised groups in the community?
22. In what ways does KCC Live attempt to support young gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people?
23. Can you explain the 'by stealth' education policy within the radio training?
24. In what ways have you seen KCC Live shape the geographical identity of volunteers battling with a fragmented sense of community?
25. In what ways does the Steering Group ensure a better understanding of the target community?
26. Please can you explain the idea behind the station aiming to sound like a 'youth club in your bedroom'?

Appendix 7: Co-produced Listener Survey

KCC LIVE LISTENER SURVEY

Hello, this survey is part of a PhD research project, about community radio, at the University of Liverpool. I would appreciate your help in answering the following questions. If you complete the survey, your answers will be anonymised and used as data within a PhD thesis and possible publications. Please only proceed if you consent to taking part.

1. Please select your gender

Male
Female
Other

2. Which category includes your age?

Under 10
10-15
16-20
21-24
25-30
31-40
41-50
51 or over

3. What is your postal code?

4. Which of the following categories best describes your situation?

Please select one answer only

Full time education, full time training, work placement or apprenticeship
Employed, working up to 16 hours per week
Employed, working up to 30 hours per week
Employed, working 31 hours or more per week
Seeking employment
Not employed, not looking for work
Disabled, unable to work
Retired

5. Which radio stations do you listen to?

Please select as many as applicable

Radio City 96.7
107.6 Juice FM
Real Radio
BBC Radio 1

BBC Radio 2
BBC Radio Merseyside
Other, please specify

6. Do you listen to KCC Live?

Yes
No

7. If you answered no above, is there a reason why you don't listen to KCC Live?

If you selected 'no' above and have answered this question, please skip to question 28.

8. How did you find out about KCC Live?

Radio
Internet
Friend
Event
Other, please specify

9. When did you start listening to KCC Live?

January 2013 - present day
2012
2011
2010
2009
2003-2008 (broadcast within the college)

10. Where do you listen to KCC Live?

Please select as many as applicable

Home
Work
In the car
On public transport
Out and about
Other, please specify

11. How do you usually listen to KCC Live?

Please select as many answers as applicable

FM radio
Internet
App

12. How often do you usually listen to KCC Live?

- Daily
- Most days
- Occasionally
- Only to certain shows, please specify

13. What time of the day do you listen to KCC Live?

Please select as many answers as applicable

- Weekday breakfast
- Weekday mid-morning
- Afternoon
- Drive time
- Evening
- Weekend
- Overnight

14. On average how many hours do you listen to KCC Live per day?

- Up to one hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-6 hours
- More than 6 hours

15. How many people are there in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

16. Other than yourself, how many people in your household listen to KCC Live?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- More than 4

17. Have you interacted with KCC Live in any of the following ways?

Please select as many answers as applicable

- Telephone phone-in
- Text

E-mail
Facebook
Twitter
Other, please specify
None of the above

18. Is there anything about KCC Live e.g. specific shows or features that you really like or dislike?

Please explain

19. What type of music would you like to hear more of?

20. What type of music would you like to hear less of?

21. Which of the following community groups or issues do you think KCC Live deals with well?

Please select as many as applicable

Upcoming local events
Relationship issues
Health issues
Drug and alcohol use
Employment
Education
Crime
Inequality
Other, please specify
None of the above

22. Which of the following community groups or issues do you think are overlooked on KCC Live?

Please select as many as applicable

Upcoming local events
Relationship issues
Health issues
Drug and Alcohol use
Employment
Education
Crime
Inequality
Other, please specify
None of the above

23. Have you ever volunteered at KCC Live?

Yes

No

24. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = unimportant, 3 = neither unimportant nor very important, 5 = very important) how important do you think it is to have a community radio station serving Knowsley?

25. Are you aware that KCC Live is situated in Knowsley Community College?

Yes

No

26. Have you seen KCC Live volunteers out and about at community events?

Yes

No

27. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = unlikely, 3 = neither unlikely nor very likely, 5 = very likely), how likely are you to recommend KCC Live to a friend?

28. To be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 Love2shop gift card please enter your e-mail address below.

29. If you would like to take part in a listener interview in the future, please provide me with your name and e-mail address/contact number below:

Appendix 8: Participant Information Sheet - Listeners



Connecting Communities through Youth-Led Radio

Participant Information Sheet - Listeners

Hi,

My name's Cat. I'm a PhD student at the University of Liverpool and I'm working with KCC Live to do some research on the radio station - I'm looking at what different people's experiences are of involvement in the radio station as staff, volunteers, and listeners. I'm contacting you because you filled out a listener survey about KCC Live and at the end of this you said that you'd be happy to take part in a follow-up interview. This gives you a bit more information about what this would involve. Have a read through and if you have any questions get in touch. If you have changed your mind about taking part then that is fine. Otherwise I'll be back in touch to arrange a suitable time.

The interview would involve telling me a bit more about what you think about KCC Live. It will just be you and me, I will ask you questions to generate a conversation. I can either do this by phone or in person. The location of the interview can be at KCC Live or another location convenient to you.

I would like to record our discussion because I want to use your opinions as part of my research. What you say might be used as part of a radio documentary about the station, broadcast on KCC Live, and as part of my project report and any research publications I write afterwards. If it is, I won't mention your name as all people involved will be anonymised. If you'd prefer me not to record our conversation, that's fine.

Hopefully taking part will be fun, but if you change your mind and decide you don't want to take part at any time that is absolutely fine! If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, just let me know. You can email me on Catherine.Wilkinson@liv.ac.uk or my supervisor bethan.evans@liv.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

If you have any further questions, just get in touch using the email above.

Thanks
Cat.

Appendix 9: Listener Information

Listener Name	Age	Occupation	Location	Involvement in KCC Live
Becca	19	Student at Knowsley Community College	Huyton	"I'm a student at the college, and like I obviously saw KCC Live there, I did try out volunteering for a bit, but it wasn't, err, for me. I listen all the time at college, because like it's on in the corridors, and then at home, and on the bus all the time. I like the music, it's all the 'in' music and then, like other stuff that I haven't heard of, but then I'm like "no, I like that, that's cool".
Damian	18	Student at Knowsley Community College	Roby	"I listen to KCC Live every day while I'm in college, I listen in lessons...I've got the majority of the class listening to it as well...They gave it a try and they like it. I've persuaded like six of them to listen to it. Me girlfriend listens to it too...Sometimes I'll listen by meself, sometimes I'll be with like other people. I've got me dad into it as well...He thinks it's okay, he actually likes it. He says it doesn't play all of this rap and it doesn't play other crap that he hates. He used to be a Smooth FM head".
Eddie	21	University student, studying for a Music degree.	Huyton	"I started listening in 2012. I literally live round the corner, so I know KCC Live well. The majority of time I listen to KCC Live in the car, because that's when I listen to radio. So, but I listened to it yesterday in the house for what I would say is one of the few times I've done that. It's mainly Drive time I listen to".
John	50	Retired	Warrington	"My daughter got a work placement from University during the summer and, erm, as a result of that she's been given erm an increasing involvement in the station...I listened originally to her, but I've since become a regular listener, well when I've got time I erm plug into the Internet. That's the only way I can listen as I'm too far out of the frequency living in Warrington, because it won't broadcast out of a certain radius. But I do like some of the shows, they are good".

Maisy	19	Student at a local private school	Liverpool	“I came to know about KCC Live some time in 2013, because me and me friend were in a band and we seen on Facebook that they were looking for bands to come in and air their music and do an interview. We did a little band interview and they played our own songs, so it was a little live session. Ever since then we’ve just, we’ve listened to KCC Live. I listen every Monday and Tuesday in psychology, in my lessons. The teacher puts it on for us, he allows it. He listens to it himself. And then every now and then when I’m in the car I’ll stick it on”.
Michelle	24	Stay-at-home mum	Cornwall	“I used to listen to a local station in Cornwall called Atlantic FM and they got taken over by Heart...One of the ex-presenters is a musician and I saw on Facebook he had sent in some music to KCC Live and I listened to it. I like the variety of shows KCC Live have. It makes me want to get up in the morning too, so I listen on my phone when my toddler wakes me up!”.
Scott	17	Not in Education, Employment or Training	Liverpool	I used to go to Knowsley Community College, so that’s where I heard about KCC Live. I never got involved in it when I was at the college, I was, erm, a bit tempted to. I started listening in erm January 2014. It’s just a different radio station to all of them, erm, just different types of music and stuff. I like old stuff, and stuff like that. I like some of the chart music, but not all of it...I mean, I’m 17, and KCC Live done a good job in targeting my age group, they play like all modern day music that people listen to”.

Appendix 10: Listener Diary Guidance Sheet

The purpose of this diary is to establish your listening habits relating to KCC Live.

Please fill it in honestly, you can use the points below as guidance if you wish:

1. Record the days and times you listen to KCC Live.
3. Include where you are listening e.g. at home, in the car, whilst out and about.
4. Include if you are listening alone or with friends/family.
5. Mention what was happening on air whilst you were listening, e.g. what show you listened to, what the presenter was talking about, what topics were discussed.
6. Please mention if you interacted with the show in anyway, e.g. Facebook, Twitter.
7. Please mention how you felt while you were listening: how did the presenter/the music make you feel? Did it alter your mood at all?
9. Was there any mention of the community or local issues? How did this make you feel?
10. If one day you listen to another radio station over KCC Live, why did you choose to do so?

Appendix 11: Participant Information Sheet - Staff



Connecting Communities through youth-led radio

Participant Information Sheet - Staff

Hi,

My name's Cat. I'm a PhD student at the University of Liverpool and I'm working with KCC Live to do some research on the radio station - I'm looking at what different people's experiences are of involvement in the radio station as staff, listeners and volunteers.

I'm looking for some staff to volunteer to be interviewed about the station. These interviews will be used to inform my research that will then be turned into two radio documentaries and will be written up for the university and I might write some articles for research publications afterwards. The interview would involve telling me a bit more about what you think about KCC Live, I will ask you questions to generate a conversation around the radio station. I can either do this by phone or in person. The location of the interviews can be at KCC Live or at another location convenient to you.

All information will be anonymised where possible, but if you are a high profile member of staff e.g. Station Manager, and so you would be identifiable, I will return a transcript of the interview to you for approval and editing before using it as data. To help with this, I'd like to audio record the interview.

If you change your mind about being involved at any point that's fine. If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, just let me know. You can email me on Catherine.Wilkinson@liv.ac.uk or my supervisor bethan.evans@liv.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

If you have any further questions, just get in touch using the email above, or come and talk to me if you see me around KCC Live.

Thanks,
Cat.

Appendix 12: Participant Information Sheet - Young People



Connecting Communities through youth-led radio

Participant Information Sheet - Young people

Hi,

My name's Cat. I'm a PhD student at the University of Liverpool and I'm working with KCC Live to do some research on the radio station - I'm looking at what different people's experiences are of involvement in the radio station as staff, listeners and volunteers. I'm looking for people to volunteer to give me their opinions about KCC Live. I'm looking for people to take part in some individual and group discussions about the radio station, and to help me to make two radio documentaries. If you want to get involved, you can help me to work out exactly these documentaries will contain.

Discussions would take the form of interviews/focus groups and would involve telling me what you think about KCC Live. If it's a focus group, it will be with a group of about 5-6 other people, I will ask you questions and hope to generate a discussion around the radio station in an interactive group setting - this means you will be free to talk to other group members. If it's an interview it will just be you and me, I will ask you questions to generate a conversation. I can either do this by phone or in person. The location of the interviews/focus groups can be at KCC Live or at another location convenient to you.

I have to write up my project for the university and might write some articles for research publications afterwards. To do this, I'd like to record the conversations we have. If you don't want me to record it, that's fine – just let me know. When I write up my project all information will be anonymised. As part of my research, I will 'shadow' (observe the everyday activities of) 12 volunteers for a year. I will also conduct informal interviews to see what the station means for their lives. There is a possibility that I may select you for this more in-depth research. If you would like to volunteer yourself, please contact me on the e-mail address below.

Hopefully taking part will be fun, but if you change your mind and decide you don't want to take part at any time that is absolutely fine! If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, just let me know. You can email me on Catherine.Wilkinson@liv.ac.uk or my supervisor bethan.evans@liv.ac.uk. If you remain unhappy or have a complaint which you feel you cannot come to us with then you should contact the Research Governance Officer on 0151 794 8290 (ethics@liv.ac.uk). When contacting the Research Governance Officer, please provide details of the name or description of the study (so that it can be identified), the researcher(s) involved, and the details of the complaint you wish to make.

If you have any further questions, just get in touch using the email above, or come and talk to me if you see me around KCC Live.

Thanks,
Cat.