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The Listening Practices Of Secondary School Students Whilst They Are Studying

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The Listening Practices of Secondary School Students whilst they are Studying

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck

Supervisors: Dr Janet Soler, Dr Byron Dueck and Dr Felicity Fletcher-Campbell

Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies

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Abstract

This thesis discusses why and how fifteen to twenty-one year old students in formal education listen to music or religious scriptures during study. The fieldwork for this research was conducted in two educational institutes in London: a large further education college (FE) and a small fee-paying academy of Islamic faith. My study combines sociological and ethnographic approaches, most notably from sociology of education and ethnomusicology. The theoretical framework used merges Bourdieusian critical theory and Wengerian social theory to analyse student learning experiences, listening practices and personal contexts within a critical sociocultural frame. This involved analysing how students enact their agency within the parameters of educational, social, economic and cultural structures. A mixed-method ethnographic methodological approach was used, which consisted of short-term classroom observations, in-depth narrative interviews, and a mixed survey using both open- and closed-ended questions. Data collection resulted in a total of 30 surveys returned, 7 classroom observations, 5 teacher interviews, and 10 student interview transcripts from 20 student interviewees. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, at institutes and one-to-one or in groups. The data collected was analysed using narrative inquiry and thematic analysis. Findings showed that the practice of listening during study is connected to a student's learning and personal contexts. In addition to this, students were found to use different listening strategies to manage different economic, social and cultural conditions, and to use their recordings to enact accommodative agency within each learning context. They adopted this strategy to fit in, and conform, rather than resist authority and rebel against commonly accepted institutional and societal educational aims and objectives.

Keywords: music, religious scriptures, listening practices, secondary education, agency, Bourdieu, Wenger, identities, learning narratives

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Contents

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

List of Tables

List of Figures

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

List of Interviews

Interview 1 Student – Sana, 8 February 2016

Interview 2 Student – Nicole, 9 February 2016

Interview 3 Student – Emily, 16 February 2016

Interview 4 Teacher – George, 10 March 2016

Interview 5 Teacher – Adnan, 3 May 2016

Interview 6 Teacher – Mahir, 4 May 2016

Interview 7 Teacher – Atefeh, 4 May 2016

Interview 8 Student – A Level Group Interview, 4 May 2016

Interview 9 Teacher – Naima, 6 May 2016

Interview 10 Student – GCSE Level Group Interview, 6 May 2016

Interview 11 Student – Zahid, 6 May 2016

Interview 12 Student – Said, 6 May 2016

Informal Conversation 13 Student – Aisha, 6 May 2016

Interview 14 Student – Meelaaney, 9 May 2016

Interview 15 Student – Bilan, 9 May 2016

List of Classroom Observations

Classroom Visit 1 – CON1: college, science practical, 4 February 2016

Classroom Visit 2 – CON2: college, science theory, 10 March 2016

Classroom Visit 3 – CON3: academy, social science lesson, 3 May 2016

Classroom Visit 4 – CON4: academy, science lesson, 4 May 2016

Classroom Visit 5 – CON5: academy, science lesson, 4 May 2016

Classroom Visit 6 – CON6: academy, social science lesson, 4 May 2016

Classroom Visit 7 – CON7: academy, science lesson, 6 May 2016

Glossary

1. **Agency:** Bourdieu and Wenger use this term to refer to an ability to self-determine or make choices.

2. **Capital:** Bourdieu discusses four types of capital: cultural capital – credentials and knowledge; social capital – acceptance and inclusion, symbolic capital – prestige and pride; economic capital – money.

3. **(Cultivated) Listening preferences / choices:** New terms created to group students' overall listening decisions. This term represents students' agency through the recordings they consciously and deliberately select over others, thus cultivating particular listening biases and preferences over others. To some extent, the term also represents listening behaviours, which produce particular preferences or choices. Students' listening choices/ preferences are specific to the qualities within preferred recordings.

4. **Cultural tool:** A material resource that can be used to create or access cultural capital.

5. **Fields** (Bourdieusian) and **/ constellations / communities** Wengerian terms. Artificially constructed groupings of similar or interrelated ventures and activities – the learning community (local and micro) or educational constellation / field (national and meso or international and macro).

6. **Habitus:** Bourdieusian term. A person's way of thinking, knowing and behaving, which is shaped by their accumulation of capital, conditions of existence and underlying structures. There are two types of habitus, primary and secondary. Primary habitus comes from the family field and early social fields (often encouraged by the family) such as religious or cultural fields. Secondary habitus comes later and from fields outside of the family such as the educational field.

7. **Identity:** This study uses Wengerian concepts from communities of practice and Bourdieusian concepts of habitus and capital to describe identity as negotiated through social, cultural and symbolical practices.

8. **Learning conditions:** Term built on Bourdieusian notions of the material conditions of existence. The term was created and used to discuss the social and cultural dimensions and demands in a learning space that are produced by structural factors, which encourage particular types of material conditions of existence – particular types of social, cultural, economic and symbolic conditions within learning and learning spaces.

9. **Learning spaces:** Term that was created to emphasise the social and cultural dynamics in the physical spaces of learning. Learning spaces refers to classrooms, libraries, bedrooms, cafes, lounges, lobby spaces, any space where learning or studying occurs.

10. **Listening materials / recordings:** Term created to neutrally discuss the recordings students use, such as music or religious scriptures. Traditionally the term music is used, but enough participants in this study used religious scriptures in the place of music that an alternative term that describes the medium students use had to be created. However, many listening

materials / recordings come with visual representations such as music videos, pictures and lyrics, English translations or subtitles.

11. **Listening practices / strategies:** Terms created to substitute the early usage of the verb and noun musicking. Listening practices is utilised as a noun which provides greater degree of nuance and complexity regarding the acts students engage in – the act of listening. Listening strategies can be seen as referring to the types of listening acts, called strategies, that students use. This is influenced by Bourdieusian frames and Small's application of the term 'musicking' (see 11).

12. **Musicking:** Ethnomusicologist Small's term – the act of listening to music, singing, dancing, writing, tapping, humming, performing, and anything related around music or musical experiences. Small used the term to encapsulate the verb (the actions in musical experiences) and gave it a name (the noun which also represented action). Terms 8-10 have been created to replace this term and to fit the purposes of this study.

13. **Positionalities –** Wengerian term. The positions and statuses in and around communities and constellations. They determine how an agent is treated and engages in a community, such as the learning community.

14. **Structures:** A Bourdieusian term that refers to the intangible constructs of reality that shape the social, symbolical and cultural conditions and interactions of communities. Bourdieu throughout his work lists many structures. The two most readily acceptable and applied structures appear to be economic and (social) class. However, Bourdieu also lists structures as: language, the political, the cultural, the motivational, the cognitive. This is confusing as structures therefore include almost everything. To compound this lack of theoretical clarity, Bourdieu in his work states that (objective) structures are repeated / transformed in the form of (subjective) habitus and only observable as such or through other manifestations such as discourses, doxa, practices and institutional protocols. In this study, the term structures is used more specifically to include very specific or relevant structures – the economic, the political, the cultural, the motivational and the social class. These have been identified as relevant for two reasons – they exist within the educational and personal contexts of students (this is explicitly underpinned by a Bourdieusian frame), and students or teachers refer to and respond to these structures, directly and indirectly.

15. **Trajectories:** A Wengerian term which is part of a host of other terms derived from the communities of practices concept. The term explains the direction and motivation of an agent's engagement in a community. Leaving or entering a community, for instance, shapes how an agent negotiates and navigates community structures, conditions and other agents. This is very relevant to this study, since student listening experiences, strategies and choices are in the context of learning statuses that arise from students' trajectories.

Chapter 1: Study Introduction and Rationale

1.1 Teaching experiences and research inception

This thesis will analyse why and how secondary school students aged fifteen to twenty-one years old listen to music or religious scriptures during study. This research group is typically enrolled in Level 2 and 3 courses that are equivalent to GCSE/ O Levels and A Levels. These levels are the most crucial educational stages as they shape lifelong educational and employment prospects (Gardner, 2017). My study's focus is exclusively on students who listen to any type of recording when studying in school or college, in the library, at home, cafe and any other place of study. As far as I am aware this topic has not been researched before and is based on my teaching experiences for this age group over a period of five years, across three educational institutions in London. Since my study is based on my previous teaching observations and conversations with students from a variety of backgrounds, I will briefly summarize my five years' teaching experiences as the foundational basis of this study.

I first encountered the phenomenon of students listening during learning and studying after teaching students aged sixteen to twenty-one in preparatory classes at a further education (FE) state college in south west London. Previously, I had mainly taught adult females in the age range of mid-twenties to middle age. The contrast in age and mixed gender versus female only classes, drew my attention to a significant change in modern young students, which related to their learning behaviours, attitudes and technological savviness. Therefore, before discussing my experiences of students' listening practices I will analyse the differences I noted between my first year teaching adults and second year teaching younger students in these preparatory classes. This will enable me to introduce an observed shift in student identities, educational experiences and attitudes, which appeared to be due to the emergence of digital communities developed through the availability and advancements of technological devices such as smartphones and MP3 players.

My first year of teaching involved an older cohort of predominantly female students, many of whom had been out of education for ten or more years. This cohort was more dependent on the resources that were provided. They preferred textbooks and were less likely to supplement their learning with technologies such as internet, laptops and mobile technologies. Their educational attitudes and expectations, which I will term 'educational outlook', were also different to younger students. This may have been partly due to the fact that they were on Access courses that were preparing them for specific degrees such as nursing, physiotherapy and speech therapy. The classroom environments were often silent, focused, intense and littered with booklets. I created these workbooks and booklets for each module from a variety of sources such as textbooks, reliable websites and hand-outs as students were reluctant to do any independent learning without the information supplied in their work packs. This was demonstrated in my first term of teaching when students were unhappy about my use of online links to resources or giving them additional independent reading to complete at home to help them with their work.

In contrast, the younger cohort had a different educational outlook. The most obvious difference was their classroom engagement and use of digital tools for learning. They preferred websites, online interactive tools, PowerPoint presentations and computer-based texts over textbooks, booklets and note taking. They preferred succinct chunks of knowledge that were delivered quickly, but also with plenty of in-class practice opportunity. They valued and expected their student voice to be heard, whereas the older cohort had valued and expected to listen to the teacher's voice. This was sometimes evident in the way students told off other students for answering questions that were directed at the teacher. From these experiences I was able to note a change in students' views on what a classroom environment is, how students engage in a classroom, what teaching tools can be used, and how these tools should be employed for different classroom environments. Importantly, I also observed the state of play between credentials, employment and society during the economic downturn following the 2008 economic crisis. Thus, the broader economic context is

clearly relevant to this study and is discussed in the literature review and findings chapters.

In the younger aged classes (literacy skills, study skills, I.T and catch-up classes, which were compulsory for all students) students appeared to use music as a tool that aided their learning and engagement. Many of the young people at the FE college seemed to be heavily dependent on their music listening within the educational setting, rather than solely for leisure purposes. Music also seemed to have a clear effect on their behaviour, mood and engagement with classroom tasks. For instance, students who were often problematic, and regularly distracted others and themselves in class, often only focused on their work when they listened to music. Likewise, students when left to do their independent work in class, sometimes shared music with the whole class. This required compromises as students needed to agree on the music choices. As the teacher, I needed to ensure student listening choices were appropriate for class. Agreeing to listening during class meant that I had to ensure all students engaged with their work, that there was silence, and that during theory and 'Q and A' there was no music. Any violation of these conditions forfeited the privilege of music for everyone.

When students engaged with music in this way, I kept strict control over the class, to reduce the likelihood of students misusing their music. For example, I did not allow listening without my permission, and digital devices were confiscated for the duration of the lesson if students did not seek permission. This was to monitor who was listening and when. Students had to negotiate when they could listen to music by demonstrating the work they were doing and would continue to complete. Providing poor quality work at the end of sessions meant students were not allowed to listen to their music in class, almost indefinitely. Some students opted to do their work alone and quietly outside class in the lobby space or corridor, and returned to class to hand me pieces of their work as they finished sections as proof of work. This proof allowed me to provide evidence to other teachers and the head that this unconventional classroom setup was in line with teaching and learning values, targets and legislation. All students were engaged in learning, albeit

unconventionally, and I was still teaching in a controlled learning environment. This teaching and learning setup was not something I created or believe should be adopted readily. Coming from a very traditional educational background myself, I felt forced towards this teaching setup because of my dedication to reduce student educational exclusion and disengagement.

During my early encounters with students listening while studying, I had formed stereotypically shallow opinions of students' music dependency in class as a clear lack of ability; a deliberate act to undermine my authority; and an unwillingness to cooperate or conform to school rules and regulations. This was based on the conflict it created between my students and me, and the added fear I felt if another teacher or manager observed listening practices in my classes and labelled me as unprofessional. At the time I was twenty-three years old and teaching students in the younger cohort aged up to twenty-one. This put great pressure on me as I had to 'symbolically' exaggerate the gap between myself and my students and reduce the gap between myself and more experienced teachers to create a professional identity and gain authority. So, when a class of seventeen to twenty-one-year-old NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) students, in a level two functional skills class spontaneously began to sing Pink Floyd's 1979 'Another Brick in the Wall' and Bob Marley's 1980 'Could You be Loved' and emphasized the poignant lyrics, '…don't let them fool ya, or even try to school ya…' it reinforced both my assumptions of students and my fears as a new teacher. It also created new prejudiced assumptions which would also underpin my initial deductive research questions. That is, I assumed that allowing these listening practices would reinforce the fallacies that already exist regarding any phenomena that is deemed inappropriate, 'otherly', or deemed as having low ranking. I immediately interpreted the male students' behaviour as anti-school rebellion (Woods, 1979) and a prime example of counter-school culture (Hammersley, Thompson, and Willis, 1977).

However, after a while, I began to reflect on these teaching experiences and ask questions about the meaning of school and its purpose for such students. I also

began to reflect on these students' relationship with education and the people involved with it. I later discovered that these questions were in line with what Paul Willis has noted in his work:

> *'Despite their sometimes antisocial nature and the undoubted difficulties they produce for classroom teachers, these cultures continue to pose, in living form, crucial and collective questions …: What is "progress" for? What can I/we expect from the sacrifice of hard work and obedience in school? Why am I/are we compelled to be in school if there appears to be nothing in it for me/us?' (Willis, 2003: 396).*

I also began to notice that music (and other listening practices) often appeared to be a tool used by students who were perceived as 'problematic' or 'struggling'. Students appeared to use it to exclude themselves from being distracted by others or to help them concentrate by blocking out their environment. I speculated that their listening strategies were an attempt to substitute sonic environments of their choosing for the class's sonic environment. My assumptions about student listening were thus initially based around sound and environments. Furthermore, students did not use music simply to alienate themselves from others and escape from learning, but perhaps to enhance, encourage or enable their learning as they continued to engage with their class work. Though I cannot say whether it improved their ability or the quality of their work overall, music nonetheless seemed to give them the cognitive, psychological and maybe even physical space to do their work, which has been further corroborated by studies included in the Literature Review.

From these teaching observations and readings, I came to recognise that listening practices could also perhaps have been interpreted as a means of creating a familiar-sounding environment from an overtly impersonal, culturally foreign, and perhaps daunting educational or institutional setting that students found themselves in, and to which I perhaps contributed through my own pursuit of 'professionalism'. This is in line with Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital and primary and secondary habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Classroom etiquettes, norms, cultures and modes of speech/ language, being (sitting upright on a chair, not wandering in class, asking for permission to leave the class and putting your hand up to speak) were viewed by some students as restrictive or too formal. When I asked

the students I taught why they needed music, they usually described their educational environment and/or curriculum as learning experiences that were dulling or stifling and uncreative. They often wanted to express their individuality and personal learning interests, and to learn what they were directly interested in. Some students also expressed a desire to have educational courses which were more vocational so they could provide them with physical skills and knowledge rather than the abstract concepts and ideas provided by the curriculum currently on offer. This does not mean that students wanted the traditional vocational courses on offer. Students wanted to learn the academic content in less abstract ways – in more tangible or applicable ways. These particular students often displayed educational outlooks notably different from the expected norm. They wanted *their* education to teach them skills to make money to become entrepreneurs, and not to apply for more courses which resulted in 'working for the man'. The man represented working for others, and this was perceived to be undesirable because of a Marxist view of employment, work and being a worker. Some students saw their education as leading them to employment that required them to work hard for others (the man at the top) who would grow wealthy off their labour while they remained poor. Students told me in a joking way that they wanted to be taught skills and knowledge to help them become self-made, not pass an exam and join the workforce – like I had. For male students, I was a good example of what not to become – long term employment in demanding work that paid poorly, and with no foreseeable future of leading the glamorous lives they aspired to.

In their conversations with me, or with their peers, these students also displayed differing educational outlooks. Some viewed education's purpose as the maintenance of a pre-ordained societal order. As they supported this view with frequent references to popular culture I found this thought-provoking. It implied students were trying to alter, support or even transform the discourses they received in their educational environments. What was unknown to me at the time was why they were doing this. This triggered the following questions: did they make use of music because their learning environment was difficult, exclusive or countered their own expectations? Was listening a way of reaching out to other like-minded cultural

individuals and communities? Was listening a means of using tools to control their educational space, to cope, to reduce anxieties or alienation that they perceived within education and/or outside it? These questions developed from what I saw while teaching, what I knew about the students I observed, what they told me, and what I heard from other teachers, managers and trainers, in the teacher training sessions I attended each week.

When I moved to teaching at an independent / private college in north London that also served as a tutorial college, I found students' educational outlooks varied immensely. Students had diverse backgrounds in relation to socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, culture, nationality and religion. They came from many different educational settings: state, grammar, faith and private schools. Yet while some of these students had not achieved in mainstream education, they were not labelled by other staff in the same manner as the former students that I had taught at FE. This could be explained by the fact that students who attended any of the courses in this college were all fee paying, thus accounting for the different treatment of educational failures as short-term or 'soft', not 'hard' and permanent (Vallet and Annetta, 2014: 175-176). These students also listened while they learned, and often their listening was seen as promoting learning – perhaps because they listened to more acceptable music genres such as classical music or instrumental music (i.e. music without lyrics) as opposed to genres such as garage, grime, American hip hop or dubstep widely preferred by the previous groups.

At the time I felt my observations indicated that students at the independent college also had a different educational outlook from the NEET students discussed earlier. They viewed education as a way to gain access to scarce resources in a competitive world. From this perspective, education provided the opportunity to be part of the game. This educational outlook fitted into the Frankfurt School's conflict theory perspective of social relationships (Fromm, 1961; Au, 2006; Benedict, 2009), and it is alluded to in the literature review in the Bourdieusian discussions of learning conditions (section 2.5). Students with this educational outlook often talked about

how their parents encouraged their schooling and wanted them to succeed, or the importance of certifications or degrees for social status. This was also substantiated by the fact that their parents paid for additional tutorage which sometimes was supplementary to their after school support, private schooling or even boarding school. These students did not have the same concerns towards 'working for the man'. Rather, they feared being left behind, not being able to compete or to work in the jobs students from the previous college rejected or derided. This is in line with Bourdieu's idea that education provides credentials that can later be converted into economic capital through the exchange of labour and time whilst the dominant culture of the ruling class is assimilated. In view of their educational outlook, school ethos, parental expectations and financial investment(s), I assumed students may not have regarded education as optional, but mandatory to get ahead or even stay on par with peers. My observations of their listening practices led me to believe that these students used music to allow them to increase their willingness to learn and study. They created playlists for studying and used songs as indicators for breaks. These students did not appear to use listening practices to question or challenge the status quo. They simply found ways to assimilate into it, demonstrating that not all listening was anti-education or countercultural. This notion of conformity is discussed further when discussing Bourdieusian concepts in the Literature Review.

At the last educational institute I taught in, an Islamic community centre and academy, the students informed me that they used music to motivate and express themselves while learning so that their lessons were not as dull. They reassured me it was not because of the way I interacted with them or my teaching style. It was due to the content and process of learning itself, which they viewed as slow, laborious and repetitive. Listening appeared to 'psyche' them up and unite them as they shared music with the class. The male students (classes were segregated by gender) often shared the same tastes in music and were more collectivist than students I had taught in other institutes, and the female students in the same academy. Furthermore, the male students' tastes did not always embrace commercial music. Some listening choices reflected London's fractious neighbourhood and ethnic identities, its real and imagined versions of the 'ghetto life'

with its struggles for emancipation, competition and recognition of 'inner-city urban experience' (Barron, 2013: 5). Invariably this suggested that those students felt hard done by, by the State, education and the 'outside' communities. This sense of religious persecution was for some students quite significant. It was the result of non-Islamic communities being perceived as hostile to them. This was sometimes due to unpleasant experiences from previous schools; police stops and searches for the boys; negative portrayals in the media, public discrimination (the girls' hijabs (headscarves) being taunted or pulled off); and shared narratives of persecution and discrimination from their families. This is relevant because it places students' communities and levels of societal participation on particular trajectories (Wenger 1999) that will be discussed in further detail in the Literature Review. From this, I reasoned that such music listening could be seen as a 'tactic' (De Certeau, 2011) for asserting one's own culture over that of the mainstream culture. It appeared to me at the time to allow such students to learn in a more personalized manner and have some measure of control over their environment. It is important to note that music for this religious group is a source of conflict as well as liberation. The students that I spoke to, mostly GCSE boys at break times, told me that they could relate to particular lyrics and artists and that it was good to have somebody validating their experiences, but also that non-religious music was 'haram' (forbidden) as it did not encourage the ideals represented by their faith. This was because the subject matter in their songs included crime, drugs, alcohol, violence and sex, all of which are problematic.

Most of the students, however, did not appear to lead the lives expressed in the songs, but they had an affinity for the ideals represented in the songs for various reasons. The most common reasons included empowerment, hardship, unfairness and rejection. Listening practices also allowed these students to carve an identity for themselves in an educational system they believed overlooked them or had little meaning and relevance to their lives. I was aware that this is similar to what Mawhinney and Petchauer (2013) discuss when they describe how they used American hip-hop as a tactic to counter the educational exclusion of African American identities, histories and cultures.

In summary, many of the students discussed above listened to music during learning, a practice that can be deemed anti-establishment, anti-education, anti-authority, and even anti-female. This gave credence to the notion that music provides alternative, if not competing, ideologies to those assumed in education. From the outset students' investment in the time listening to music was sometimes greater than their investment in endeavoring to understand and engage with the curriculum content. I came to this conclusion because, while full time education was at least 16 hours a week, many students spent more time than that engaged in some form of listening. This led me to ask what students gained from listening practices in learning environments. Why were some listening to music that was antipathetic to study? Did this make their experience of learning harder? During the course of this study, these original questions, assumptions and biases were often shown to be problematic. As my ability to engage in greater 'reflexivity' grew from 'intuitionist' (Bourdieu et al., 1991) sociological, individualistic and narcissistic reflexivity (Maton, 2003) towards the idealism of 'empiricist', 'methodologist' and epistemic reflexivity (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu et al., 1991), my assumptions were replaced by sounder knowledge and lines of inquiry.

The first of the assumptions checked and replaced through knowledge-based objectivity (epistemic reflexivity) was that listening materials and choices are subjective. For this reason, it is inappropriate to label a student's choice as inappropriate or antagonistic, since the meaning of a recording belongs to the respective listener as opposed to the observer. Secondly, by assuming a right and a wrong listening choice there is a biased assumption of a right and wrong point of view, experience, and discourse. Such lines of inquiry can be considered an inappropriate use of power, meaning and value (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Yet they reflected my own initial biases and lack of understanding. This realization enabled me to address these presumptions and view listening practices, strategies and choices as solely belonging to the user. Simultaneously, this stance does not default to an infinite right and wrong, and it is understood or known that listening

materials are not all equal. To avoid the intellectual tendency of placing listening materials and choices into class, cultural and economic hierarchies this study focuses on the meanings behind listening uses (strategies) and their connection to learning and personal contexts.

To summarize this first section, my observations of, and conversations with, the students I have taught over the last five years in three different institutes led me to consider the possibility that students' listening practices in learning spaces encompass a variety of reasons and motivations. The multiple rationales I have observed for these listening practices may be influenced by the fact that the students I have encountered come from diverse backgrounds and have different educational outlooks and motivations. This diversity of rationales underpinning listening practices does not support the preconceived idea of listening as something exclusively countercultural and working-class. In the present study, due to the voluntary recruitment of participants, the data collected was predominantly from black and African female and/or minority students: British Somali, Afro-Caribbean, and British Kurdish. Although the main part of this thesis will thus be based on data collected from these groups, my previous teaching experiences, as discussed above, led me to view listening during study as commonly widespread among students of various backgrounds.

The teaching experiences I have shared led me to undertake an ethnographic investigation of student listening practices, strategies and choices to address the following research questions.

1.2 Preliminary research questions

1. **How do students use recordings during study?**

2. **Why do students listen to recordings during study?**

To answer each of these questions, a theoretical frame was required that treated recordings as cultural tools and enactments of agency. Two theoretical approaches – social theory and critical theory – were identified during the literature review phase as useful in framing and exploring the complexities of listening practices from a personal context and within educational institutions. Social theory was useful in providing a conceptual understanding of where recordings come from, the existence of multiple community memberships and the importance of membership to community participation. Wengerian concepts from the communities of practice toolkit provided a conceptual scaffold with which to define and discuss the communities, trajectories, positionalities and crossover between students' personal and educational spheres. It also provided a theoretical frame for the concepts of identities and agency. Critical theory provided a dialectical understanding of personal agency versus institutional and sociocultural structures, and the constant exchange and transformation of capital through practices and interactions. Bourdieusian concepts such as habitus, cultural tools, the various forms of capital, structure and agency translated students' narratives, listening practices, interactions and aspirations into a theoretical model that could be analysed. Identity within this frame was also something implicit and negotiated through various forms of practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, the present study looks into the relationship between listening practices and learning experiences. On the surface, these two activities are seemingly separate, and several contemporary studies independently investigate either listening (Kane, 2012; Prior, 2013; Lozon and Bensimon, 2014) or learning experiences (Abraham, 2008; Bucholz and Sheffle, 2009; Smyth, McInerney and Fish, 2013). In this study the two aspects are looked at in a combined manner as students engage with study and listening simultaneously. For this reason, the literature review in this study involves the discussion of three aspects: music, agency, and the structures that can produce particular learning conditions, which in turn can encourage listening practices during study.

The three aspects discussed in this chapter help to construct an 'epistemic' (Bourdieu et al., 1991:33) frame of knowledge to support the analysis in the discussion chapters. The conceptual frames discussed in this chapter explicitly use critical and social theories as an 'epistemological principle' and as 'an instrument to break with naïve realism' (Bourdieu et al., 1991:33). This means that this study uses the empirical acts of students listening to recordings during study as 'the actual' 'things' to investigate the 'conceptual interconnections of problems' in their learning spaces and contexts (Bourdieu et al., 1991:33-36). This approach opens up 'new discoveries', 'truths', 'points of views' and 'methods' (Bourdieu et al., 1991: 33-36) which are based on the domination of the theories selected. There is no escape from this theoretical domination as 'without theory, it is impossible to … interpret a single reading' of reality (Bourdieu et al., 1991: 36).

The key ideas discussed in this chapter are music studies and their contribution to the understanding that listening allows the user particular affordances (section 2.2). After establishing the role of listening, the notion of listening as agency through communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) is explored (section 2.3). Lastly, the conditions in which listening occurs during study are discussed through structures (sections 2.4 and 2.5). Structures, as will be discussed, exist more broadly.

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Therefore, in order to examine how listening practices and choices enact agency within the backdrop of (educational) structures and tensions, I will define structure and agency, and their relevance and application to learning spaces and conditions. Sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 of this literature review add to the depth and complexity of understanding listening as a social practice through the use of relevant Bourdieusian and Wengerian concepts. These sections interrogate how the conceptual tools discussed can be applied to students' contexts and listening practices.

Bourdieusian and Wengerian concepts have been selected to help frame this study as they allow for the sociocultural discussions of structures and agency. Both perspectives discuss multiple communities without attempting to restrict or reduce experiences and exchanges between people. The theoretical frames work in similar ways. Bourdieusian concepts such as agency, capital, habitus and structures work on a grand scale, temporally and geographically. Wengerian concepts from the communities of practice 'toolkit' are suited to local, present-day experiences. Each balances and supplements the other, by creating flexibility in the place of perceived rigidity and determinism with the concept of structures; and providing historical grounding or relevance to the day-to-day practices and exchanges conceptualised in communities of practice. This theoretical justification will be discussed further in this chapter.

Critical and social theory from Bourdieusian and Wengerian perspectives best reflect the experiences that students and teachers report in this study. This is because Bourdieusian concepts of structures and agency, when combined with Wengerian concepts of trajectories, positionalities, identifications and memberships, provide a theoretical explanation of student and teacher accounts. Student and teacher accounts allude to concepts when discussing personal lives, educational conditions and employment prospects; therefore, they have value as explanatory concepts. Also, both schools of thought view learning spaces as containing structural tensions, unequal power relations and social dynamics that encourage students (agents) to respond in ways that do not undermine their status, interests and community participation. Both schools of thought can be deployed to approach listening

practices as implicit forms of agency that do not directly challenge structures. Lastly, from this theoretical perspective discussions on learning conditions are viewed as varied and debated.

The initial section of this literature chapter provides an overview of the listening studies in the research literature which can be seen to be relevant to this study. It briefly discusses how these listening studies and their findings relate to the specific findings of this study, even though they utilise different disciplinary perspectives. This section ends by highlighting the new connections between listening choices, habitus in the form of identities and various forms of capital that can be controlled through recordings, in the form of cultural allegiances and representation.

2.2 Music, digital practices and young people

As discussed in chapter one, during the initial literature review process, I discovered that many studies relevant to the current one used different approaches and focused on different aspects of young people's listening activities. Research methodologies and questions varied with respect to how young people and their listening activities were viewed, and the contexts and locations in which research was conducted. This generated research findings that I then categorised under three, sometimes exclusive, categories. These are A) studies that view young people's listening practices for the purposes of psychological and/or biological regulation; B) studies that view young people's listening practices as changing their engagement with external aspects of their environments; and C) studies that view young people's listening practices as products of sociocultural interactions and contexts. These three categories seemed to reflect the types of affordances listening gave users, and the relationship and directional effects of listening strategies under study. Affordances could be classified as: A) Listening to influence an internal physiological change inside one's body and mind. B) Listening to change how the listener engages with the external physical environment. C) Listening to (symbolically) transform sociocultural engagements.

A Bourdieusian/ Wengerian frame was then be applied to indicate that listening practices were agentive and consistently generative by transforming a student's engagement with themselves and the world – by transforming their habitus and social and cultural capital. This theoretical frame was included, after I was certain which category was the best fit for this study.

Any of the theoretical stances and concepts used in the literature could have been applied to this study. The psychological and biological (internal) regulation could be seen as agentive self-regulation and protection from structures in a young person's contexts. Listening practices could also be seen as a response to (physical) environmental conditions or sociocultural context. Therefore, before data collection and analysis, each of these three listening reasons/ affordances was seen as equally plausible. At the time it was unknown if there were other listening strategies and affordances that were overlooked.

2.2.1 Music studies on the internal affordances of listening

Studies that view listening as a practice that maintains a person's psychological health or biological functions take the stance that music is a tool that manages emotional wellbeing (moods) (Krueger, 2013; McFerran and Saarikallio, 2014), physiological states (hormones, heart rate, blood pressure, brain activity) (Rudd, 2013; Bigliassi et al., 2015)) and cognitive efficacy (concentration, recall, learning, attention) (Kassabian, 2008; Nutley et al., 2013) . Such findings provide valid explanations for why students listen during study, by showcasing a variety of therapies through music. Yet, the problem or gap that I encountered with these studies was that they did not focus closely on social problems to which listening strategies responded. Some studies that explored music and well-being or music and preferences included personal factors such as gender, age, ethnicity and class (Lonie, 2009; Lilliestam, 2013). This provided an example of the type of information that should be included in data collection, but the difference in disciplines (health

subjects) meant that it was not clear how much was relevant to non-mental health studies.

With reference to Bourdieu, listening practices are likely to be 'timely strategies' with objective meanings that relate to structural conditions (Bourdieu, 1990). This makes them linked to history or accumulations of historical factors – not just the present. This indicated that the studies I categorised into group one (internal) were more interested in the immediate ahistorical or isolated effects of listening. This is different from the listening practices and choices I recorded, which were influenced by a variety of factors such as time, experiences or events, and by circumstances as well as psychological and cognitive needs. However, although the studies in this category were robust and reliable, I still needed to find out more about why students needed to manage their emotions or cognitive efficacy during study. I still needed to know about the underlying causes of listening to understand its significance and objective meanings.

2.2.2 Music studies on the external affordances of listening

At the same time, the studies in group two predominantly understood listening as a way to control external or physical environments, such as the geographical, interactional, spatial, auditory and temporal spaces (Bull, 2000, 2006, 2008; Couldry, and McCarthy, 2004; Camilleri, 2010). These studies provided more information about contexts. They were very useful in highlighting how physical contexts could help uncover listening reasons that would otherwise be excluded. They also indicated that listening strategies could address external or tangible factors. Therefore, they suggested that listening strategies are not limited to the listener's state of mind or body. This highlighted that listening could be linked to what was happening to students, and across several fields. The studies cited indicated listening could be used: if the listener felt estranged from others because of a new or alienating setting; if a setting was too noisy or silent; if the conditions were cramped or too big/ empty, or institutional. Listening could also be used to effect a change in how listeners responded to, or protected themselves from, the hostility of

environments or others. When combined with the findings from the first category, all of these reasons indicated that listening strategies were purposeful management tools. This literature suggested that students used their listening to help them cope with psychological and environmental factors.

Some studies focussed on immediate listening experiences. Listening on a commute was found to be for entertainment, to deal with boredom or to pass the time, but there was no further analysis of the social or cultural norms that dictate how people engage with each other in public spaces. This approach placed listening in a vacuum and encouraged it to be treated as ahistorical, apolitical, and non-cultural. It excluded several important interconnected structuring contexts, such as the cultural, the social, the economic, and the underlying circumstances in a listener's life, all of which may be addressed through very specific kinds of listening.

To recap, by analysing the pre-existing literature findings I came across over the years while I was still teaching and as I began my PhD, I was able to categorise the three listening uses most commonly cited as reasons for listening practices:

1. To control psychological, cognitive and physiological states
2. To control environmental aspects
3. To manage social and/or cultural aspects.

I was then able to formulate preliminary deductive assumptions about why students listened during study. These assumptions did not permit me to explain or verify why they listened, but they did allow me to see what was still missing from my literature search. What was missing was, how and why listening was used as a dynamic, lived experience, rather than as standalone listening practices and choices. Thus far the literature findings in the first two categories indicated listening was either perceived as providing a euphoric psychological and environmental space or castigated as the cause of deviant behaviour and a way of reaffirming anti-social norms and ideologies in young people (Lilliestam, 2013; McFerran and Saarikallio, 2014; Prior, 2014). Listeners could use music or other sounds as a sonic barrier, to keep the user in

their own idealised world and/or keep out the world (Bull, 2000, 2008). If any of these findings was relevant to the students in this study, I still needed to find out why.

In addition, many of the studies in the first two categories do not directly address certain critical assumptions on listening practices or popular music, particularly the idea suggested by Adorno (2001), in *On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening,* that listeners are passive. This lack of an explicit stance about whether listeners engage passively or actively suggests there is not always enough critical reflection on how listeners are viewed. This is important since it clarifies whether listeners are viewed as active or passive, contributing or unwitting. It also clarifies how much power and value is given to recordings; that is, whether they contain or produce meaning. To avoid this, I worked on crafting research questions that relied on the explicit assumption that students actively engage in listening practices and cultivate listening choices consciously, enacting an agency that stems from them and not from the recordings. This stance is echoed by cultural theorists Hall (1998) and Lull (2011) that state that recordings are often actively re-interpreted by the user for their own purposes, and often in ways that can counter the creator's meaning or cultural hegemony. The desire to rectify the gaps I have discussed and to avoid producing dichotomies moved the research towards sociocultural studies of listening.

2.2.3 Music studies on the sociocultural affordances of listening

Sociocultural studies often include several contextual factors and treat listening choices as empowering cultural tools that afford the listener particular social freedoms or cultural benefits (Mocombe, 2011; Dueck, 2013; Venkatesh, 2013). This stance understands listening as an engagement with (symbolic) meaning and purpose. Such studies often explore listening for a variety of interconnected sociocultural contexts. For instance, the sociocultural studies cited investigate listening in the context of gender, sexuality, identity or culture, class, trauma, politics

or genre. Consequently, this has produced a very wide range of reasons for listening that no longer fall within dichotomies.

The term 'listening or listening practices' is used rather than the term musicking, which was adopted in the early phases of my study. Before student data was collected, musicking encompassed all the key components of the intended research. Small (1995) coined musicking as a verb because music and its meaning stems primarily from music as performance and an act rather than a thing. The term is full of rich meaning, not neutral or transparent, and relates to other activities: listening, watching, dancing, composing, humming, tapping, singing and more. Small referred to Clifford Geertz when coining the term, because Geertz states all activities are about communication, interaction and relationships that are dreamed of (imagined) and experienced in action. Initially this stance was in harmony with my study.

Small states that it is the listener who responds emotionally to the music. Emotional arousal during performance is a sign that 'the lived-in order has merged with the dreamed-of order' (Small, 1998). This merger requires the active participation of the listener to explore and affirm their relationship with the world; to create and maintain it, and to be moved or equally not moved. Each of these points is evident in students' narratives and survey responses in the findings chapters. According to Small, there are also innumerable ways to music. The difference in tastes and genres between people reflects the differences in patterns to musicking, or the different kinds of relationships with which people relate to the world. This is seen through the different kinds of recordings students prefer, as well as how they use them – the listening strategies they develop to help with their learning, interactions or spaces, and the different ways they use listening choices to reflect their experiences.

Initially, all these points made by Small (1998) appeared to be in line with this study. The concept of musicking indicated that listening choices and materials were emotionally engaged by students and gave the students' listening experiences

meaning and purpose. The concept also suggested that listening strategies and activities were themselves part of listening performances, and allowed students to form relationships between reality and the imagined realm of perception and aspirations. The term only deviated slightly from this study when musicking was found to be primarily grounded around standalone music experiences, and performance. Students in this study engage in listening practices and strategies to help them with learning or personal issues, non-musical contexts and experiences. Thus, in the context of studying, beneficial listening practices are used to enhance learning and the experience of learning. Musicking in this study is what students perceive to be distractive and unbeneficial listening practices: singing, humming, dancing, or losing one's self to the music. As discussed in chapter five, musicking and not the affordances of listening is the reason given by several students who do not listen during study.

As my study progressed, it also became apparent that the concept of musicking did not relate to students' actual listening materials, which included recordings of things other than music. The term did not seem appropriate given that the majority of the students cited in this study who listen to religious scriptures from the Quran do so in part because they do not want to listen to music, which they understand as irreligious or prohibited. In short, given many students' strong feelings about music, it seemed improper to categorise listening to Quranic recitation as musicking or the same as listening to music. Due to this, I sought out other terms, including listening practices, materials / recordings, choices / preferences and strategies.

The decision to create new terms in place of musicking was difficult since the concept of musicking involves an action, a sound and an actor or actors. It was nonetheless necessary to replace this useful term with something else that could expand the scope of this study. New terms also had to allow for how multicultural students used and transformed cultural tools that were not music. New terms have built on Small's notion of listeners as creators or co-contributors – the actors who are essential participants in experiencing and valuing listening.

Many sociocultural studies produce findings that do not tend to contribute to dichotomies or fall within exclusive categories. This is because the lives of participants, where possible, are included and used to help explain listening practices, choices and stories. There is a group of sociocultural studies (Laurence, 2009, 2015b; Rimmer, 2010; Henley et al., 2012; Mawhinney and Petchauer, 2013; Henley, 2015; Cohen and Henley, 2018) that demonstrate how research findings can traverse more than one research discipline or sociocultural field. Henley's collaborative studies on the benefits of music education in prisons, for instance, explore the 'catalytic' (Henley et al, 2012) personal and social effects of music learning, making and listening for prisoners. Her studies indicate that prisoners can use music-making and listening for agency, social cohesion, identity formation and transformation, and emotional development and expression. These effects are said to result in those incarcerated altering their criminal narratives and identities (Cohen and Henley, 2018), which is a crucial for desisting crime after prison (Henley, 2015). Henley's work on how music is taught in schools in Catalonia and England to link to mathematical concepts (Viladot et al., 2018) and in prisons across the globe highlights how music is a tool for learning, for developing cognitive and social skills, for making connections to other aspects outside of music, and for personal transformations, related to identities and narratives. The music studies cited put forward the finding that individuals can use music for mediation.

Laurence's work as an ethnomusicologist and educator, on the other hand, has explored social and cultural listening practices for peacebuilding and community healing within a post-apartheid South African context (2009; 2015b); music education for Venezuelan youth in an orchestra (2015a); and children's school musicking in music education (2010). This work required the inclusion of histories, sociocultural factors and the analysis of music. Music stories were used to create meaning and understanding of the wider applications of music in people's lives. Studies such as those by Rimmer (2010) and Mawhinney and Petchauer (2013), on the other hand looked into how music reinforced marginalised identities, within the backdrop of large structuring factors such as gender, education, history, ethnicity,

locality and class. Rimmer's study uses a Bourdieusian framework and will be discussed further in section 2.4.

Mawhinney and Petchauer's paper draws on autoethnography in a discussion of Mawhinney's biracial /multiethnic identity, school experiences and how she used hip hop to explore her identity amidst the alienation and rejection she felt from school, family and geographical community. Mawhinney describes hip hop as a medium that allowed her to resist the norm of silence towards colour, ethnicity and rejection of the 'Other'. She describes her attempt to educate and to include herself and 'her kind' into the curriculum through hip hop that was not accepted or understood by those around her. Mawhinney's discussion of how she used music to learn about the excluded aspects of her identities, see herself represented in culture, and gain access to recordings that allowed for social expression, highlighted the significance of habitus, cultural and social capital and the historical accumulations of structures. Her use of music to insert herself into history and to learn from it highlighted (to me) the practice of borrowing various forms of capital from one community to address the lack of, or inappropriate forms of, capital and habitus in another. This unique application of Bourdieusian / Wengerian framework will be discussed further in sections 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.

Overall, Mawhinney and Petchauer's discussion is very relevant to the students in this study, who predominantly come from British Somali communities. Other students in my study also come from minority communities. They include one British Caribbean student and one British Kurdish student. The one white British female student[1] interviewed and the two other white female students that participated in the survey are the only students who were not from an 'ethnic' community. However, the two female students in the survey were still from white communities outside of the UK. Lastly, Mawhinney and Petchauer also introduced to this study the idea that recordings can be used for engaging with seemingly fixed structural conditions on a personal level, and with creativity. This appears to be the case in the analysis

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[1] Emily was the first interview. Her data was not used as she did not provide sufficient detail about listening and studying beyond completing her homework in a café that played music.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

chapters to come (4,5 and 6).   This extended the relevant literature of this study to including studies on British Somali and Black/ African minority communities; the Quran, British grime and hip hop and East Asian popular culture: K/C/J-pop.

2.2.4 Studies on identity, representation and allegiance

From a Wengerian perspective identity is the lived experience of negotiating community multimemberships, belonging, participation, trajectory and meaning. The act of identity formation and negotiation requires social and cultural practices (Wenger, 1999). From a Bourdieusian stance, identity arises from various kinds of 'habitus', forms of 'capital' and the 'agency' enacted (Bourdieu, 1984). Identity under both theories is dialectical, in tension and conflict, and needing constant negotiation and practice. For Bourdieu, identity tends to be related to the individual reproducing the status quo or transforming the self, while for Wenger, identity is usually more directly related to community belonging and negotiating an identity within or outside of one

Several other studies indicate that people with identities that are very different from the mainstream, such as those who are from minority communities or part of small sub-cultures, have lived experiences that require more negotiation and tactful navigation than those part of a cultural hegemony (Rasmussen, 2009; Sigona, 2016; Gattino et al., 2016). Edited books such as *Black Families in Britain as the Site of Struggle* (Ochieng and Hylton, 2010) and *Gender, Race, and Class in Media: A Critical Reader* (Dines and Humez, 2011) extensively discuss the experiences of marginalised people, and how particular 'intersecting' identities (Crenshaw, 2010) can contribute to educational, social and cultural struggles for autonomy, representation and power.

As discussed in 2.2.3, Mawhinney and Petchauer (2013) argued that students' engagement with so-called black culture and experiences through hip hop, is a way of 'inserting' absent cultural and social narratives. 'Insertion' implies addition and not replacement or rejection of pre-existing social and cultural narratives. Other studies

also hold the view that the relevance of black lived experiences and embodiments have been excluded from societies, making it hard for social, cultural and political visibility (Kitwana, 2002; Hendershott, 2004; Dimitriadis, 2009; Low, 2010). Greer (2007) discusses how sociocultural marginality for the young groups she talks about, can be navigated through the use of music. For Greer, community-based grime and hip hop acts as a local-level mentoring system from the ground up instead of the top down economic and political systems promoted by government and institutions.

Students' internalization of culture through listening is in line with the extensive academic research on how identities are formed as lived social and cultural experiences, and as discursive enactments within identifying parameters:

> People form senses of themselves (identities traduced by self-lived experiences) in relation to the ways they inhabit the roles, positions, and "cultural imaginaries" (Holland and Lachicotte, 2007) that matter to them. Through the mediation of others (Moll, 2001), via symbolic forms, people actively internalize self-other dialogues which develop over time (Valsiner, 2002) (cited in Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014).

The students in this study indicate that they use their recordings to help reinforce or explore a variety of identities. From such listening experiences, students also appear to gain access to the community (social capital), knowledge (cultural capital) and status (symbolic capital) they may lack during study or in learning spaces that require negotiation and management.

Some of the students in my study listen to religious scriptures from the Quran to avoid taking in ideologies and identities they perceive as incompatible with their religious beliefs. Similarly, some academic and public debates already discuss the negative influences of media and popular culture on young people, and include violence and obscenity (Gentile, 2003; Scheibe, 2007; Kellner, 2011; Kirsh, 2012; Roberts and Christenson, 2012). Pre-existing debates on the ideologies expressed in recordings and students' self-reported filtering of recordings based on sociocultural values and identities indicate that listening practices are also used by

students during study to connect to similar-minded communities. This is connected to section 2.2.3, where authors such as Greer (2007) and Mawhinney and Petchauer (2013) were cited for stating that popular cultures can offer young people access to sociocultural resources, voices, ideas and mentorship.

According to Bunglawala (2004), Harris (2004), and public discussions about the majority of the students in this study, British Somalis, there may be a lack of Muslim role models in public areas, including education, and, especially of Islamic female role models (Rasmussen, 2009). Such findings do not discount the positive strides the community is still making in, for instance, education, employment and economic wellbeing (Mohamed, 2013), but highlights the progress still to be made before the community has more equitable access and representation throughout society. According to parents at the British Somali Community (2016) there are some parents who do not understand the systems in England enough to be able to guide their children as effectively as they would in Somalia. Further to this, 'generational gaps in attitudes and cultural knowledge exist between young Somalis and their parents…' (Rasmussen, 2009: 13). These generational gaps mean young Somalis can be very different from their parents and society linguistically, socioculturally, and educationally. Social and cultural differences within families and across society highlight the differing types of habitus and the varied forms of capital young British Somali need to accrue and negotiate. This can also be said for the two students in my study from other minority communities – Afro Caribbean and Kurdish Turkish, who are both 'first generation' (see section 4.2.2 and 4.3.4 and in chapters 5 and 6).

The sociocultural music studies discussed indicate that practices such as listening to a variety of recordings from music to sacred texts can be understood as allowing users to seek the social and cultural capital they identify with, to appropriate it, and to 'reformulate it' through interpretation to form alternative meanings or to maintain 'counter-hegemonic' ideologies (Lull, 1995:4). Several music studies indicate that listeners receive positive affirmation from their recordings – whether in the form of psychological, physical, symbolical, social or cultural affordances. Affirmation and representation are already deemed to be very necessary for new generation British

Somali (Harris, 2004; Demie, Lewis, and McLean 2008; Rasmussen, 2009; British Somali Community, 2016). Mawhinney and Petchauer (2013) found racial and cultural affirmation necessary during education as a minority. Similarly, some of the meanings listeners make from their recordings include community identity and belonging, along with seeking role models for affirmation and mentorship from artists and their lived experiences.

Some of the listening strategies discussed in this thesis are also in line with the current movement of self-love, recognition and cultural empowerment of particularly women from the minority communities listed. Popular mantras such as 'if you can see it, or imagine it, or dream it – you can become it' highlight how the perceived lack of gender, ethnic and cultural representations can negatively impact a young person's potential and self-worth (Adegoke and Uviebinene, 2018). From a Bourdieusian stance, potential and self-worth are a symbolic capital that are shaped by the economic, social and cultural capital of families and communities (Bourdieu, Passeron and Nice, 1977). The popular debate on sociocultural representation and how young people need role models and mentors like them is simply another way of discussing how habitus, historical structures and the various forms of capital interact, forcing agents to act in ways that appear natural. This is, 'succeeding' because you see others like you succeeding, and the opposite being because you cannot see how to, or others like you 'making it'. Transformative agentive practices such as listening appear to help expand students' parameters by allowing them to generate amalgamated identities from the input of several communities.

> People define themselves through other people and through the artifacts
> and resources—visible and invisible—of their social and cultural worlds.
> (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014: 34).

Listening during study can, therefore, be understood as allowing for the amalgamation and rejection of particular types of social and cultural capital and habitus during education. The first two listening categories discussed in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2, also indicate that listening during study can be understood as affording students the ability to control / manage the self and their surroundings.

On a theoretical level, the music literature suggests that investigating how and why students listen to recordings during study is fundamentally an exploration of how they manage the 'structures' (Bourdieu, Passeron, and Nice, 1977) in their learning spaces and in relation to their personal contexts, such as habitus and forms of capital. This idea became evident even before the data collection phase, because during my encounters with students, they often described their listening practices as allowing them to concentrate or change the ambience of their learning spaces. This is also what initially indicated 'agency' (see for example, Bourdieu, 1990; Wenger, 1999) to me as a concept. Agency in this context referred to the freedom a student had to change or control their educational direction (trajectories) and learning spaces. The importance of the notion of agency from or within (educational) structures, came from observing students' behaviours in classrooms and hearing their accounts of how they needed to 'get through' the educational system or somehow accommodate their learning conditions. By understanding their listening practices, by investigating their listening choices and reasons for listening, and by gathering their accounts of educational and personal experiences, I was also recording how they navigated the various structures they encountered. This consideration of the relation between the empirical and theoretical is how the fundamental importance of the concepts of structure and agency became acknowledged as my study developed.

In this next section, I discuss how the music literature findings discussed and students' identities can be understood using a Wengerian frame, and how this works with Bourdieusian concepts of structure, agency, habitus and forms of capital. I adopt this approach because agency is less clearly explicated within a Bourdieusian frame, even though it recognises that each student acts agentively to either reproduce or transform subjective aspects of their field. By utilising the concept of 'habitus' a Bourdieusian approach shows that students bring their own identities and experiences to their learning spaces, and that practices and interactions are always in relation to broader contexts external to the student. Agency within a Bourdieusian frame is a given; however, it is also prone to remain an abstraction since there are no defined concepts describing the processes by which a person agentively

transforms their conditions. This agency always appears to be in the context of historical or objective contexts. To avoid this theoretical bias a Wengerian view of agency was incorporated.

2.3 Agency, communities of practice and student listening practices

As suggested in the music studies in section 2.2, listening strategies and choices can be understood as enactments of agency. Within a Wengerian frame, listening materials or recordings are 'reificative tools' (Wenger, 1999). These cultural tools can come from a variety of communities, including religious, social, cultural, geographical, and online ones. Reification makes abstractions – symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986) – concrete. It turns the ideological into tangible objects that communities use to interact, negotiate, interpret, transform and share. Reificative tools themselves are vast. They include practices, artefacts such as recordings, discourses, policy documents, the economy, politics, unrecognised projections of ourselves, and also the process that enables the creation of meaning and material objects (Wenger, 1999). As discussed in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4, the appropriation of recordings from a chosen community enables students to reinforce their own ideological, cultural, social and symbolic values, and to stay connected to practices that suit their personalised sociocultural contexts. The music studies cited earlier suggest that this is why listening during study is viewed as a demonstration of agency, and why recordings are cultural tools.

Agency under a Wengerian-Lave-Trayner framework also incorporates other concepts relevant to the students in my study, such as learning, participation, identity and practices (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014). Incorporating Wengerian concepts to explore the meanings and reasons behind students' use of recordings in learning spaces enables a deeper exploration of how agency is exercised through the adaptations of meaning, the negotiations of community boundaries, the contestation and the transformation of status. A Wengerian view of agency allows for the different listening strategies of agency through the use, creation, transformation,

reproduction and ownership of (inter)community cultural tools and the negotiation of 'positionalities' and 'trajectories' (Wenger, 2000).

Participants in this thesis discuss experiences and ideas that I find similar to particular Wengerian concepts such as: 'belonging', which in this study is cultural identification and ideological allegiances; 'positionalities', which are students' perceived status in their learning communities; and the notion of differentiated 'access' to their learning communities (Wenger, 2000).   The concept of belonging is particularly powerful as it highlights differences in educational access, participation, pathways and motivation. In addition to this, students telling stories about their learning experiences and aspirations highlights the parallels with the concept of 'trajectories'. The concept of trajectories is also important, because it helps explain why students access differing types of cultural resources and use particular agentive practices. At a broader level, the notion of communities of practices helps to explain the differing types of learning experiences and positionalities, the differing sociocultural contexts and pressures students discuss, and their learning identities. The communities of practice framework is also in keeping with the Bourdieusian view that students are always competing for access to resources and status, to change their position and to accrue capital. For example, under a Wengerian frame, 'good' students enter an educational community and work towards gaining access to resources, improving their status and other benefits or on leaving for another community with equivalent goals. Each trajectory, entering a community, leaving a community, or being on the periphery is also shaped by previous membership, and access to resources and connections from other communities. This supports Bourdieusian views of agents being shaped by their accumulated history of various capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and their ability to transform their habitus to fit in (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). 'Good' students have accrued the appropriate forms of capital and community 'insider' status to be rewarded with 'privilege': access to community resources, respect, status, belonging and choice.

The Wengerian concept of constellation is comparable to the Bourdieusian term 'field'; however, the former is made up of similar communities (as seen in Figure 1, page 42). The Wengerian breakdown of a constellation into its numerous communities means that the local and micro level interactions that occur within a community can be analysed alongside the overall nature of the entire constellation. This is an advantage over the Bourdieusian concept of 'field' which looks at the overall nature of interactions and negotiations from a national and global perspective. This Bourdieusian approach has its advantages because of the overall analysis of how structures can shape people's interactions. This will be discussed in more detail in sections 2.4 and 2.5, but for now there is one other cross-over to mention between Wengerian and Bourdieusian frames. The accumulation of habitus and various forms of capital, within a Bourdieusian frame, contributes to how agents access each field and navigate the structures in it, and determines what resources are available to agents (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). Drawing from this, listening during study can be explained through primary habitus, the conditions of existence which are produced by particular structures and the various forms of capital available under a Bourdieusian frame. Equally, listening during study can be explained and supplemented by the concepts mentioned within the Wengerian communities of practice.

Wengerian concepts are primarily focused on identities in the learning community: the sense of belonging, the access to participation and community resources, the ability to transform statuses, and the trajectories and ownership of learning spaces. Figure 1, below, indicates the types of memberships, trajectories and positionalities within a learning community. This is of relevance to students that listen to recordings during study as each of these aspects help explain how a student's position, trajectory and status are related to particular listening strategies during study.

Membership, trajectories and positionality types

Periphery members

Inbound members

Brokers

Outbound members

Insider members

Trajectories

Outbound: leaving the community to join another community (like college, HE, apprenticeship or employment)

Inbound: students trying to establish themselves in the community of learning to access reificative/ cultural tools and capital for future ventures

Periphery: Can stay marginalised, move into the community or perhaps move entirely to a different community.

Learning community – a course in a school

Figure 1. T**ypes of memberships, trajectories and positionalities within a learning community (constructed by author based on Wengerian concepts (1999) -** A learning community for a Level 2/ GCSE course in a school provides some good examples of the memberships, trajectories and positionalities in this model. A student on the periphery of the learning community may listen during study to address their discomfort about their learning conditions, experiences and interactions which are shaped by particular dynamics in their learning spaces, their lack of particular capital or inappropriate learning identities (habitus). A Bourdieusian stance understands students to feel discomfort due to intentional symbolic, social and cultural practices. Equally, another student (in the same learning space) at the centre of the learning community – an inside member, who is at ease with their learning community and with the 'right' learning identities and accumulated forms of capital – may listen in ways that reflect this position and use recordings that enhance their learning conditions and their learning experiences. They may use music to increase their enjoyment of learning. An outbound member is a student (or teacher) who has secured access to, or wishes to leave to another community or constellation (college, university, employment, training, retirement). Their community engagements may reflect their outward trajectory, or the desire for it. For instance, a student before summative assessments may become less focussed on 'insider' community participation, access and status and more focused on securing community resources that can increase membership and access to other communities. This is observed when students use their recordings to block out others in formal learning spaces so they can complete their learning tasks quickly and obtain good grades. This differs from newcomers attempting to make friends, gain more access to teachers and their time, for instance. Listening in the last scenario may be to feel more secure about the new community, to pass away the lonely moments without friends or to feel connected to those elsewhere. In each example, the position, trajectory and membership status of a student is reflected in the listening strategies they select.

Each type of membership is based on community engagement and tensions. Agency comes from continuing struggles to create new or alternative outcomes, to include what has been excluded or, vice versa, and to add new struggles while competing for particular forms of capital. With reference to the Wengerian concepts in Figure 1, a student with a membership status opposite to their desired learning trajectories may feel their learning experiences are antagonistic towards their goals. A student's trajectory may move from an inside member at Level 2, due to obtaining good grades, to a peripheral status if they failed disastrously in the next learning level and community. This change in status and trajectory limits students' options and access to courses and institutes.

In many cases grade outcomes are community resources, which are perceived to be demonstrative proof of competence or potential. Students who want continued participation in the learning community must rectify this by proving their competency and re-negotiating new access under more scrutiny and sometimes less social or institutional support. This scrutiny comes from family members, friends, neighbours, religious members in personal communities and the entire educational constellation – not just the teachers and institution concerned. Level 2 and 3 educational communities provide community resources that are used by other educational communities and constellations outside of education such as employers. In a later chapter (4) I will show how student accounts illustrate how listening to recordings while studying or in difficult learning spaces can help manage such experiences.

Further to this, drawing on the music studies already discussed, recordings may help students bridge the mismatch they perceive between their various forms of capital, statuses and positionalities. According to Wenger (1999) each community has brokers who are gatekeepers that can control and filter access to communities, and act as a bridge between communities. Brokers are able to do this as they hold multiple memberships across communities, making them powerful and able to alter communities. In this study brokers include teachers, but also the role models and mentors, who students appear to access through listening to their recordings during study. These brokers sometimes help students bridge the social and cultural

45

difficulties between the personal and learning communities students come from. Understood in this respect, teachers broker social and cultural connections between communities through the use of both professional and personal cultural tools such as institutional practices, pedagogical resources, linguistic, religious and social and cultural capital. Students broker social and cultural connections between their learning and personal communities through how they make use of cultural tools such as recordings, digital technologies, pedagogical resources, religious and social and cultural resources. Of course, students can also be social and cultural brokers, for example between younger siblings and education or between a variety of social communities. The key point is that membership statuses differ in each community based on the statuses of others, and the resources and competences of each member.

Members such as students with the most limited agency and least access to shared community cultural tools may use or borrow tools from another community with established membership and access to community resources (Wenger, 1999, 2000). Students may generally lack the capital accumulations of other agents due to age, status and power relations (Bourdieu, 1990). In this study the most widespread cultural tools accessible to young people are music, digital media and religious scriptures. Students use these tools to make socioculturally relevant learning identities, and to manage their learning by increasing their engagement. This implies that, students can agentively use their recordings from other communities to reinforce or formulate learning identities that are compatible with their allegiances, such as religion, social group or cultural values. Such reinforcements are also used to counter any lack of particular capital, status, membership or symbolic competency (such as self-belief or confidence in one's abilities) in the learning community. The practice of borrowing from and being influenced by several communities simultaneously is indicated, below, in Figure 2. Note that although communities and constellations are depicted in the figure as being neatly separate, in reality there are no tidy boundaries, only artificial abstract compartmentalisations.
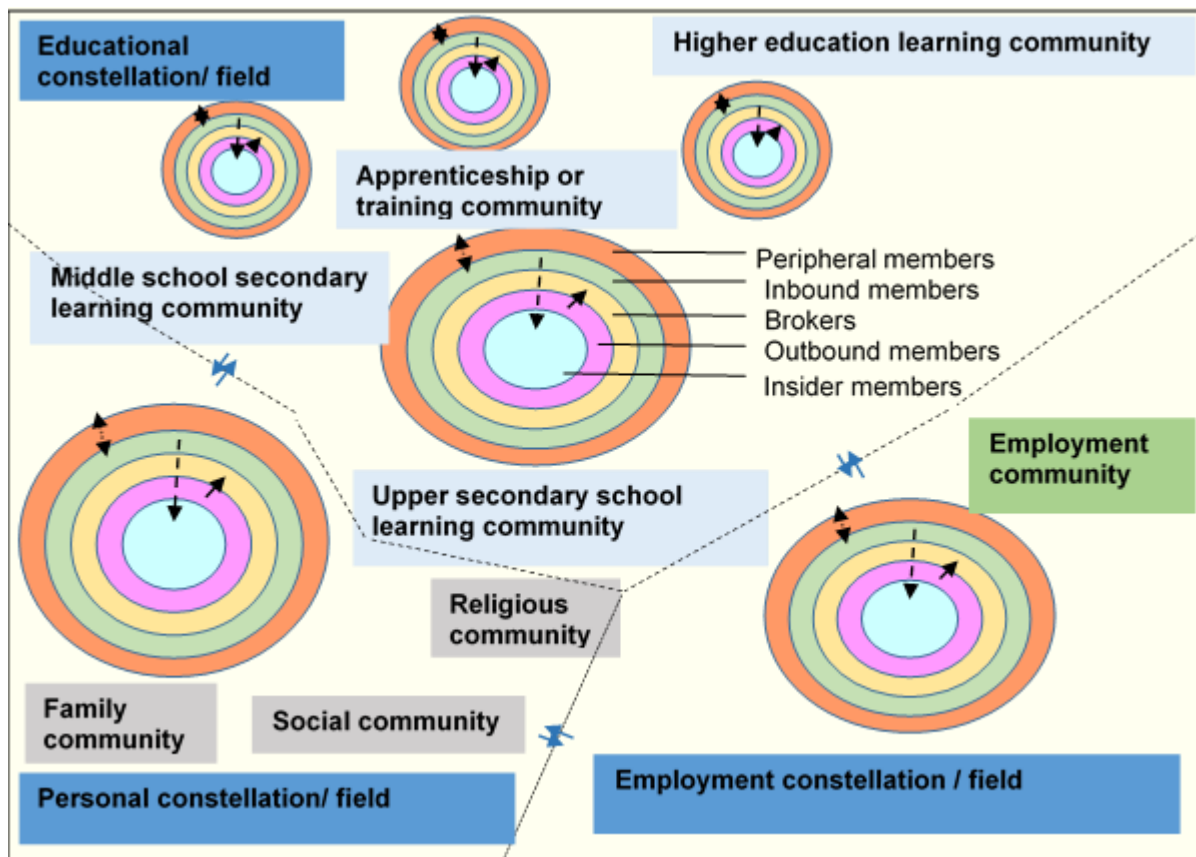
Figure 2. My 'plug and play' (Wenger, 2013) adaptation of trajectories, belonging, communities and constellations (Wenger, 2000), also adapted by author - Figure 2, depicts the 'intersectional' (Carbado, Crenshaw, Mays, and Tomlinson, 2013) and intersecting qualities of just three constellations or fields: the personal, the learning and the employment. As illustrated by the dotted lines and arrows, no field is entirely separate or unaffected by other communities and fields, just as no economic, political, class, cultural structure is separate from or entirely exclusive to a community or field. Each field, such as the personal (family, religious, social) or the educational has several communities within it. Some communities can be negotiated independently of other communities and constellations. Religious communities are not directly influenced by a student's positionality and capital in education, for example. However, a student's capital from education can directly influence their interactions socially, with family members, and their trajectories and access to communities in the employment constellation. Each circle or grey label is a community that requires negotiation for various statuses and positionalities, and some of which can be used to help bolster other communities and constellations. For instance, family pay for extra tutelage to help their children in the educational constellation, and social circles provide recommendations for and access to the employment constellation. These examples can also be applied to recordings that transfer sociocultural resources from one community or constellation to another.

The literature that has informed Figure 2 suggests that there is a great deal of interplay, movement and negotiation within every single community, amongst

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communities within the same constellation/ fields and also across them. The trajectories students take are not just entering and exiting a community but also across communities within the same constellation. This explains the varied learning experiences and trajectories shared by students as presented in the results chapters (chapters 4 to 6). Student experiences reflect their identities, which are temporal not fixed. Learning identities (perhaps like listening identities) are re-negotiated in each community, continually (Wenger, 1999; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014). Figures 1 and 2 depict how students experience differing types of belonging, identities and competences; how they do not enter or leave a community equally; and how through their agency they can change their community positions and trajectories.

Overall, a Bourdieusian-Wengerian sociocultural critical framework understands that learning communities and the constellations / fields related to them are about obtaining competences, access (Wenger, 1999) and accruing capital (Bourdieu, Passeron, and Nice, 1977), and that through agentive practices, such as listening, students use recordings that come from outside the learning community to help them navigate the interactions and dynamics in their learning spaces.

The music literature and students' narratives (as discussed in chapters 4 and 6) indicates that recordings come from the personal constellation/ field, which contains family, religious, social, geographical, cultural and other communities that are not in line with the institutional and educational spheres. This suggests that students borrow sociocultural tools and resources from a community of strength to supplement a weaker membership elsewhere - for example, in the learning community (Wenger, 2000). This becomes clearer and more evident in chapter 4, when students discuss their learning trajectories, experiences and positionalities in relation to the types of listening choices they make and the types of listening strategies they create.

To summarise, the theoretical concepts in this thesis merge and expand on Bourdieusian and Wengerian concepts. The combination of Bourdieusian and Wengerian concepts allows for the analysis of intersecting social, economic and cultural structures between educational and personal contexts. The use of sociocultural tools and practices, such as recordings and listening strategies from fields outside of education demonstrate agency. Recordings and preferences demonstrate students' choice to seek alternative communities and cultural tools. Bourdieu's grand theory of structures, agency and capital ensures that history remains a relevant and powerful structuring factor that cannot be ignored in students' day-to-day listening and learning experiences. This helps explain how listening strategies and choices are connected to learning conditions, economic pressures, competitions and struggles during study. Simultaneously, Wengerian concepts of agency and the communities of practice framework prevent macro-historical structuring factors from dominating, by providing the conceptual language that focuses on the local and everyday: for example, how some students attempt to circumnavigate access issues, learning pressures and failures, sociocultural tensions, competition, and the desire to progress to the next learning community on a daily basis.

2.4 Bourdieusian applications of agentive listening and agency in education

As discussed earlier, the music literature suggests that listening practices may afford students a variety of symbolic, social, cultural, and mental freedoms that the social, cultural and economic structures in their learning spaces may not offer. In music studies, Bourdieusian concepts have been successfully used to analyse how a specific music choice reflects the social, cultural, political and economic realities of a group of young men. Rimmer's (2010) research, which explores the musical lives of youths in Newcastle, England, looks at how and why young people listen and use a genre of music known as 'new monkey'. The researcher looks at the musical habitus of young people and explores the historical formation of their musical practices and experiences, as well as the emergence of schema that appear as natural. The ethnographic study collects participants' historical contexts and their lived experiences and conditions that are entwined with their music preferences. The

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researcher finds that the local youth centre at night becomes a nightclub where young people through 'self-directed practice' create, reproduce and participate in 'a form of cultural activity'. Rimmer finds that musical activity in this context bolsters confidence, self-esteem and communication skills and that it encourages social cohesion and a positive local identity.   This leads him to the conclusion that music provides affordances for the active construction of agency and identities.

Most of the young people in Rimmer's study have an uneasy relationship with the educational system due to poor achievement and behaviour. They have rejected school while embracing music's status-allocating and legitimizing functions. Music in Rimmer's study plays a problem-solving role in the young people's lives. His study shows that historical conditions such as mass community unemployment affect the present-day conditions of young males – socially, emotionally, economically, politically, culturally, educationally and symbolically. It also shows how the young males participating in the research form generative strategies through new monkey music to help them deal with the various structural and social conditions around them. These young men exercise reproductive, transformative and generative agency by listening to, producing and performing songs. This work is a good indicator for the types of listening that students in the current study engage with, but whereas Rimmer's participants engaged in music performance and rejected authority and institutions, students in this study engaged in listening strategies, accepted authority and tried to be part of institutions (see for example the discussion in chapter 5).

In another study exclusively focussed on education, Shim (2012) uses Bourdieusian concepts to analyse the conditions of today's intercultural education. She highlights the significance of a Bourdieusian framework when analysing education, cultural domination, multi-layered identities, and the dialectical relations between structures and human agency - through practices and the reproduction of them by agents. Shim suggests that today's intercultural education must allow for the legitimization of knowledge of self and others, instead of focusing on present-day surface attitudes, strategies and techniques. This requires agents who are conscious and possess

habitus that is generative and transformative, in order to shape practices in ways that are not pre-determined or reductive.   The accounts described in the findings chapters (see chapters 4 and 6) support this by showing how students' listening practices may allow for self-learning and knowledge of others. Accounts also indicate that listening may also be transformative by allowing students to transform their learning spaces or how they engage with them (see chapter 5). This suggests agency that is adaptive, and allows students to insert or maintain particular sociocultural values, while studying or in learning spaces.

Bourdieusian theory has been critiqued for not allowing enough personalised transformation and for seeing structures, agency and agents as only reproductions (Annamma, Boele, Moore, and Klingner, 2013). However, it has also been pointed out that Bourdieu explicitly states that social actors have choice and do not take rules or structures without exerting their own influence and agenda – however limited.

> '… the player does what the game demands of him, this does not mean that individuals are slaves to rules, since these can be manipulated to the player's advantage, bent and subverted to suit his needs' (Wolfreys, 2000)[2].

Further to this, a great deal of critique is based on Bourdieu's early affiliation with structuralism and not necessarily his later development and championing of social and political democracy. This is important to note as Bourdieu did not see his concepts under a structuralist frame. He saw structuralism as incorrect. He understood dialectical relations to exist between social structures, the mind, and nature, which cannot be deterministically managed by the unconscious or mechanistic systems. A structuralist frame would reduce the historical agent to a supporting role that reproduces the structure's power (Bourdieu, 1990). For Bourdieu, 'reproduction implies both variation and limitation' (Grenfell and Kelly, 1999: 12), not determinism. Structures are also 'dynamic and dialectical' (Grenfell and Kelly, 1999: 13) – mediating and contested, not fixed. Agents have choice and

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[2] Note: No page numbers, electronic article on html format.

there is change, which means that there is *some* determinism, but also the existence of regenerative practices and values (Grenfell and Kelly, 1999: 21).   Bourdieu (1990), by taking a historical objective stance, moves away from, or against, Sartre's 'imaginary universe' of subjectivism, whereby the individual is the sole creator of their reality in a 'universe, of interchangeable possibilities' (Bourdieu, 1990: 42) and without a history. Further to this, Bourdieu's concept of habitus escapes Saussure's structuralism while also avoiding subjectivism (Mills, 2008).

However, for some, the Bourdieusian concept of habitus does not account for the postmodern, consumerist and 'hybrid participatory culture' (Schaefer, 2011) of the digitally native students in this study. Participatory culture in this study is not modifying music/lyrics/videos, but peer-to-peer (P2P) sharing of playlists, songs, networking sites as well as educational websites, blogs, tools and other learning materials. Hybridity and participatory culture are terms that are also used for media and technology. Schaefer comments on how Foucault's 'dispositif' of a technology can allow for implicit and/or participatory cultures. Willis argues that, in this participatory culture:

> young people creatively respond to a plethora of electronic signals and cultural commodities in ways that surprise their makers, finding meanings and identities never meant to be there and defying simple nostrums that bewail the manipulation or passivity of "consumers" (Willis, 2003: 392).

Participatory culture, like habitus, is found in students' digital engagements and listening strategies which involves them using their recordings in learning spaces for solving problems and creatively negotiating agency, boundaries, levels of participation, interaction and community allegiances within their learning, social and cultural communities. Students' participation with cultural tools allows for transformation and agency as listening allows for generative practices. This study makes use of the concepts of structure and habitus because of the pragmatic power of a 'reciprocity or dialectic' rather than a 'divide' between (objective) structures and (subjective) agency (Robbins, 1998: 30).

In addition, Bourdieu's (1998) discussions concerning how individuals can be empowered and free from structural domination suggest that the theorist sees structures as malleable or negotiable so long as individuals avoid or limit how much power and control they can exert. Structures are only prophetic and deterministic when they are taken for granted, as everyday, and left unexamined or unnegotiated. Delving into how and why conditions, practices and power relations come into existence can dispel a lot of the mystery and ignorance that exists in unconscious conformist living. This means that structures in Bourdieusian terms have leeway for true transformations even if they are difficult to achieve, once an agent is either self-aware or engaged in negotiations. The students in this study recognise their role and place within their learning communities and aspire to work around or within their structures for a positive outcome. They use agentive listening practices to access sociocultural capital to transform learning conditions or to generate better ideologies.

In this study, students negotiate the structures and dynamics in their learning communities through the use of listening strategies. Bourdieusian concepts, although part of a grand theory, discuss struggles as the social, political, economic and relational structures at play within education. Structures allow for the various conflicting positions that agents in learning communities can take, which manifest themselves in practices. The grandness of the concept of structures, however, means it can be too encompassing and focused on the macro level. Grenfell (1998) describes the term structure as 'often a vague and amorphous term……with differing, differential principles' (Grenfell, 1998: 13). As, already discussed, Bourdieusian concepts may lack focus at the local level, and since there is a continuing and strong misconception of the concept of structure as overly rigid and deterministic (Grenfell and James, 1998). Drawing on concepts from Wenger and his colleagues (Lave, 1991; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014) helps focus on agency.

Wengerians discuss how individuals can manipulate, take ownership and manage access in communities. Equally, their theory tends not to face the charges of deterministic reproduction frequently levelled at Bourdieusians. However, Bourdieusian concepts move away from Sartre's 'rational actor', who has no past or

exterior as – 'a pure free-floating subject' (Bourdieu, 1990: 46). Wengerian concepts sometimes appear to exist with no mention of history beyond the present, which is problematic from a Bourdieusian perspective, where individual-to-individual relations are informed by a form of (pre)history (Bourdieu, 1977; Shim, 2012).

Merging Bourdieu's concepts of structures, habitus and capital with Wengerian concepts of agency, trajectories, positionalities, community belonging and membership allows for both history and present-day dynamics. Bourdieusian concepts are biased towards the symbolic and Wengerian concepts towards everyday practices, but both allow for generative and transformative new schema. This is important since listening practices can be reproductively transformative for some students (see chapters four and five), and productively generative for others (see chapter six).

2.5 Structures, capital, learning conditions and listening practices

The concept of structures is crucial for understanding listening strategies during study as it shows that there are underlying and interconnected conditions behind every interaction and practice (Shim, 2012). When the concept of structures is applied to this study, every listening practice, strategy and choice can be connected to, or is a contestation of, a series of structural conditions in learning spaces. Bourdieu (1977, 1990) discusses many types of (objective) structures through his writings including (social) class, motivating, mental, linguistic, and economic structures. Each is said to be a framing structure that (if unchallenged) wants to (re)produce itself and its conditions. For Bourdieu (1977), structures encourage particular types of environments – the material conditions of existence, and the types of habitus: primary and secondary (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

> Primary habitus socialisation and internalisation of the family's values and secondary habitus socialisation and internalisation of education's values and other 'life experiences' (Walther, 2014: 13).

In this study, structures influence students' learning conditions and come from their personal lives and educational communities. Structures influence (but do not determine) how students develop, think and behave – cognitively, socially, culturally, emotionally, and economically – in their learning spaces (Bourdieu, 1990). Structures can be viewed as contributing to particular types of learning experiences, and can be connected to listening strategies and choices. From this standpoint, listening practices show how a few students adapt to structures and show how they navigate the learning conditions that are encouraged by those structures.

Bourdieu (1986) discusses four types of capital, which are all relevant to students in learning spaces, as education is the pursuit of capital: cultural capital – credentials and knowledge; social capital – acceptance and inclusion; symbolic capital – prestige and pride; and economic capital – money. Learning communities, like other communities, can punish inappropriate habitus by withholding or restricting capital. This happens through a range of filtering tactics, including rejection and marginalisation. These structural, social, cultural and symbolical dynamics shape learning spaces and listening practices. Therefore, listening practices as discursive performances demonstrate an agency that is connected to the material conditions of symbolic violence, and the structural tensions or struggles that exist in students' education and their personal lives. The various forms of capital and structures Bourdieu breaks down move beyond the Marxist reductionism of class and economic capital. Bourdieu's discussion of symbolic capitalism and violence acknowledges the power of the symbolic over the body, practices, consciousness and fields (Burawoy, 2018).

Economic factors (given the economic climate pertaining at the time of this study – increased student fees, debt and austerity) nonetheless contribute to the conditions experienced in learning spaces. A Bourdieusian perspective suggests that participants take the economic conditions of education for granted, and therefore do not consciously acknowledge, but their reasons and explanations for enduring particular learning conditions or developing particular aspirations are almost always directly connected to economic factors. Discursive practices such as listening help

manage some of the conditions that exist in learning spaces, including competition, struggle and tension. The findings chapters illustrate contradictions, competing motivations, and symbolic displays of cultural allegiances while highlighting the economic structures at play in learning spaces. These chapters explore how practices and interactions are governed by structural economic competition, sociocultural struggle and the ever-present dialectical negotiation between (objective) structures and (subjective) agency (see Bourdieu, 1977).

From the exploration of theory, it can be deduced that listening practices and stories, although 'metaphorical' or symbolical, contain 'an objective meaning' (Bourdieu, 1977) that relates to much wider learning conditions outside the subjectivity of a student. When Bourdieu (1990) states that failure to enquire into the epistemological status of practices creates 'a neutralization of practical functions' and focusses only on 'symbolic effects' (Bourdieu, 1990:35) he points out that the subjective habitus of the present day needs to be related to objective structures existing over longer historical periods. By drawing on this, listening practices relate to personal, cultural, social, political, economic and educational fields. Listening strategies and choices are discursive practices that communicate subjective enactments of agency. The way in which they further negotiate the structures that shape learning conditions and spaces is discussed in the findings chapters.

Most notably in this study, there is a strong indication that students' listening practices circumnavigate a range of structural issues that produce particular interactional dynamics and hurdles. A specific example is the learning spaces referred to in my teaching experiences, discussed in chapter one, where students were attempting to shape themselves into better students or create more workable learning spaces. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) argue that structures in education act in ways that reproduce the unequal power relations and positionalities that already exist across other fields. These structures are experienced and not seen as they are part of the institutional habitus – a secondary habitus, with social relations and practices which secure 'the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence' in ways

which are concealed from view and consciousness (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 218).

In addition, the theoretical stance of structures makes students' listening choices, practices, views and attitudes subjective timely strategies. Students make listening choices based on their contexts. This demonstrates strategy and the relevance of time as different listening choices are used for different events, experiences and needs. For Bourdieu, time is a key aspect that shows conscious strategy, proves that most practices have objective meanings and shows that the meaning of a singular practice changes because of timing. He gives examples of gift giving practices (of the Berbers, Morocco) through the unspoken practice of timely reciprocity. The gift receiver insults the donor if a gift is immediately given to the giver showing ingratitude or rejection, gives offence if the gift is not acknowledged in a timely fashion or not reciprocated, and is a taboo if an identical gift is given since it implies the return of the gift (Bourdieu, 1990). Although the same practice is carried out, the manner in which a gift is given, and the time, shows the power relations which exist in the social practice and habitus of the community. The sociocultural practices of the women also exchanging gifts between families is in the hopes of maintaining marriage links for their children and producing children. The normalcy of the gift giving practice indicates the results of historical accumulations and social structuring. Simultaneously, the objective structures that produced the practice – including economic, sexual and sociocultural factors – have become forgotten or hidden through time. Nonetheless, the structures have left discursive practices and value systems that are sought through the various forms of capital that are symbolic, social, cultural and economic, (Bourdieu, 1986). In this study, some listening practices in some particular types of learning spaces are also timely strategies that give access to several forms of capital. Like gift giving practices, the underlying meanings behind listening practices during study are latent.

Students' need to accrue the various forms of capital determines how the social, cultural and economic structures they encounter in their learning spaces are

managed and navigated. This is similar to the Wengerian notion of how a member acts in accordance with their trajectory and membership status. Bourdieu's examples of how objective structures influence personal habitus also explain how subjective listening practices are in response to larger structures. Listening practices appear to help students manage the permanent material conditions of existence that produce tensions and frictions in learning spaces. Tensions in learning spaces arise from the natural inequality of structures and agents possessing differences in capital, power relations, sociocultural practices, habitus, (Bourdieu, et al., 1977) and the desire for different educational trajectories or choices (Wenger, 1999).

The Bourdieusian frame (almost always) emphasises the dominance of economic structures, which can produce social relations and learning conditions that are isolating when too competitive, individualistic and emotionally demanding (Bourdieu, 1986). Buroway (2018) observes that this is possibly because Bourdieu incorporates a Marxist economic view of capitalism while also challenging Marxism by moving away from its 'scholastic illusion' (p.8) and illogical fantasy or optimism in relation to the logic of practices and the imagined proletariat. The current neoliberal political structures within both Bourdieu and Marxist frames can be viewed as promoting 'killer capitalism' (Mitrović, 2005) – which is the product of the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1998). This economic structural condition, financial politics and management strategies place students as clients and educational outcomes become assessed through monetary gains and measurements. Further, economic structures dominate in ways that encourage mass symbolical violence and social repression to create sociocultural homogenisation in education (Bourdieu, 1977). To compete for capital, students need to restrain themselves socioculturally and symbolically to become 'harmonized' (Bourdieu, 1977: 81) with their learning communities. This is learning to play the game, even though it is competitive and therefore implicitly violent towards those who are less able to play or excluded. This structures learning spaces, creates strict sociocultural conditions, and can be viewed as the reason that students must learn to conform to fit in. This appears in tension with Wengerian notions of students working towards an insider identity to gain access to community resources and belonging. The Bourdieusian stance precedes the Wengerian

community of practice frame. It explains why students need to use other communities to 'fit into' their educational communities, while the Wengerian frame explains how students do so. Drawing from this, listening practices are adopted as a strategy during study to manage the learning spaces and the experiences in them as:

> 'The agent who "regularizes" his situation or puts himself in the right is simply beating the group at its own game; in abiding by the rules, falling into line with good form, he wins the group over to his side by ostentatiously honouring the values the group honours' (Bourdieu, 1977: 22).

If this is the case, then from a Bourdieusian perspective listening practices may help students transform themselves to accommodate the structural conditions in their learning spaces. Regularizing their learning situations may help them gain access to the various forms of 'transferrable' cultural capital (Robertson, 2007) that will later be converted to economic capital through employment. However, in relation to learning conditions, economic structures lead to the commodification and commercialisation of education, which Bourdieu states produces learning spaces that are bureaucratic, competitive, money-oriented, and with business-like dynamics (Bourdieu, 1998).

The notion of students using listening to personalise their learning on the surface appears to be in unison with current pedagogical discussions on the personalisation of learning (Dixon and Verenikina, 2007; Drake *et al.*, 2010). However, this is not the case and personalising education on a pedagogical level is viewed by some as problematic (Robertson, 2007; Baggini, 2008):

> Personalised learning is the new buzzword; a learning experience ordered over the internet and packaged up 'just for me' (OECD, 2006) (cited in Robertson, 2007).

This is a top-down initiative that is driven by economic, class and political structures and is opposite to students' approach to personalisation in learning spaces, by negotiating with structures from the ground up.

Apple (2007), who looks at policy, critical pedagogy, education and power, describes some of the learning conditions students experience. He states that education

through policies has been reduced to focusing on testing and accountability, while creating infrastructure for privatization and marketization. He also says that schools have become militarized and that shaming practices are enacted on those who fail, or do not conform, resulting in teachers and students needing to work much harder and for much longer due to the intensification of the workload. This further increases individual financial and emotional expenditures to handle the burden. Such literature provides an example of how objective economic and political structures influence the dynamics in learning conditions for students. Each point made by Apple can be linked to Bourdieusian concepts. Apple's points show how the concepts of structures, capital, habitus and symbolic violence are relevant to students' listening practices.

Other literature from seemingly different political stances shows how listening practices and structural conditions can be viewed differently. Vallet and Annetta (2014) argue that the individualisation and marketisation of education create cultures of narcissism, self-esteem and self-promotion: that is, current economic and political structures in education encourage institutional habitus that is self-focussed and hedonistic. The authors state that this manifests itself as the drive to feel good about oneself over valuations of performance, particularly for minority and low-income students. They argue that students need to internalize their successes and failure, and to be given adequate support to discover their learning strategies, strengths and identities. Several student narratives in this study reflect on failure and success, and the role of listening choices and strategies on this journey. Some students also reflect on the types of learners they are, or wish to become, through the use of listening. This suggests that students may attempt to use listening materials to help internalise their own learning experiences, alongside addressing structural conditions in their learning spaces. It also suggests that students use recordings and strategies to 'scaffold' their own learning (Dixon and Verenikina, 2007; Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2014; Vallet and Annetta, 2014).

Vallet and Annetta also argue that failure, although a real penalty, should be a temporary setback - a 'soft failure' (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2014), not a

lifelong hard failure. They recommend creating pedagogic structures that help students avoid repeating a whole academic year, as this is devastating for students; and creating courses that mobilise cooperative social environments and collective action to produce better learning outcomes and conditions. This is particularly pertinent to students in this study, some of whom attempted to make hard failures softer by repeating entire courses or pursuing new ones. Sometimes this was with the help of educational institutes and family members, but other times it was on their own. Vallet and Annetta's recognition of the need for 'cooperative social environments' and 'collective action' over individualism and competition shows that failure can be alienating or devastating, and that success is hard to achieve without collaboration. This literature further highlights the learning conditions students encounter and helps account for listening as a kind of mitigating practice. The reasons and evidence for this are part of the results and discussion chapters.

Such discussions in the literature also highlight the importance of learning structures and conditions. They suggest that failure makes a student's learning conditions difficult, and that it is much harder when it is compounded by structural, sociocultural and symbolical dynamics. Vallet and Annetta indicate that there is a host of pressures and dynamics from politics, economics and policies to course design and delivery that affect how students fail, succeed, or form learning identities and ownership. Each of these dynamics can help contribute to the understanding of students' engagement in listening practices during study and of students' learning spaces.

Apple, Vallet and Annetta's discussions provide fewer theoretical examples of how structures manifest themselves in learning spaces, how they shape learning interactions, experiences, and the social, economic and emotional voids and demands created by them. Bourdieu's concepts of economic structures (in particular), capital and exchanges through symbolic violence provide the theoretical backdrop to understand why students listen during study and what they are trying to achieve. A Bourdieusian analytical frame highlights the directional relationships of power, action and meaning and also how student agency exists (what it looks like),

as well as the negotiations and direction open to it, all of which are further discussed in the findings chapters. Vallet and Annetta's discussions are very relevant as all but one student in this study come from communities that are categorised as minorities in the UK. However, their assumption that students have no, or little accountability is not reflective of the students who are worried about transcript grades, progression, and future access to university and employment.

Rose and Agas (2016), developmental psychologists and educationists respectively, state such binary structural and learning conditions (i.e., dividing students into winners and losers) comes from the culture of pressure, conformity and creates mediocrity. Mediocrity can mean uniformity or sameness and linearity. Such conditions oppose differences in habitus, capital or practices and favour homogeneity over heterogeneity. Some students may learn to fear being different; educationally, this can be interpreted as not belonging and not being suited/ predisposed to learning. Rose and Agas argue the point that students and families are pressured by motivational structures in learning to compete, to conform and to become average / mediocre. The students that best 'succeed' at the system are the students that can best conform. This suggests that student listening is often within the context of pressure, conformity and competition for capital (see chapters four and five).

Lastly, the current changing landscape of the economy and the labour market through modernisation and the decline in industrial jobs in post-industrial societies means that the once 'meritocratic, individualistic and emancipatory stance' (Willis, 2003) education was viewed under no longer reflects the current situation. Work, secure employment and wages are no longer guaranteed for students disinterested in education (Willis, 2003), or those interested. The Recession of 2008 means students are required to prolong their education further to compete for qualifications that demonstrate 'skills development' for uncertain and limited available resources (Marr and Harvey, 2012). This has further implications on student choice and agency. The choice to continue learning, the affordability of learning, and the need to be able to compete in the labour market, are not necessarily individual choices.

All these factors are continually weighed and recalculated in students' minds during study, while engaging or not engaging with others in learning spaces, and while engaged in listening.

Overall, the educational literature discussed supports the concept of structures influencing learning dynamics, power, social, cultural, mental, motivational, political and economic factors in learning communities. Each of these, in turn, contributes to shaping student learning experiences, approaches and outcomes. The notion that students negotiate other factors beyond learning in learning spaces has been well documented. These issues are conceptualised and analysed in the work of Bourdieu (1977; 1986, 1998; Bourdieu et al., 1977) and supported by other studies (Apple, 2007; Shim, 2012; Vallet and Annetta, 2014). Accordingly, the learning communities and spaces that students discuss in this study cannot be viewed as neutral, apolitical or ahistorical. The dynamic relations and listening practices that take place in these learning spaces are not simply interpersonal and subjective, but structural.

The literature discussed thus far has demonstrated that learning spaces offer several objective competing meanings and values that must be negotiated and managed by students. This implies listening practices are discursive practices that out of necessity may promote, rather than hinder, learning. The literature also suggests that listening practices may enable timely strategies of outward cooperation and inward self-control. Bourdieu (1998) suggests that some students consciously and unconsciously struggle with conforming to the symbolic, social, political and cultural capital and structures in their education. Thus employment and economic structures lead to students being held responsible for creating their own personalised learning trajectories and goals, and held accountable for shortcomings while institutes are rewarded or punished for achieving or not meeting educational targets, and benchmarked through the regulation of financial support. This reduces the collective relations between all social groups and creates competing motivations for safeguarding or possessing capital, individualisation and strong hierarchies (Bourdieu, 1998).

To end, the Bourdieusian concept of structures indicates that there is a logic to practices, which, when used strategically by agents, can be used as 'an instrument of power' (Bourdieu, 1977:17). This is best demonstrated in Bourdieu's discussion of uncommon patrilineal parallel-cousin marriages arranged by men and more commonplace matrimonial marriages arranged by women in Algeria. The practice of a male marrying his uncle's daughter in Arab and Berber cultures is one that is usually 'a forced choice' by social, economic or symbolic circumstances. Therefore, it has the lowest ranking and has been seen as a last resort against symbolical shame (Bourdieu, 1977: 49) or financial ruin (Bourdieu, 1977: 51). Despite this, the practice is 'passed off' as a 'virtue of necessity', and a male right by the community, who participate in concealing the reality of 'biological reproduction' (Bourdieu, 1977: 53) and self-interestedness as cultural law.

Such practices uphold 'the ideology of masculinity', gives men 'superiority in all relations' with women including in marriage, and can serve to strengthen the position of some fathers and mothers within the family (Bourdieu, 1977: 46). On the other hand, women-arranged marriages use 'practical relationships' (Bourdieu, 1977: 53) which are established and maintained over generations. Such marriages reproduce social relationships and practices such as the gift that binds families in friendship. In all, structures highlight how cohesion in any community is based on the strength of power relations 'holding individual interests together' (Bourdieu, 1977: 65). These individual interests are always based on accruing various forms of capital, just like education, and are dependent on agents displaying the right habitus at the right time and playing by the rules of the field to conform, not challenge. This too is the fundamental argument which supports the way in which listening practices can be used for navigating structural learning conditions in learning spaces.

Students perhaps then contribute to the cohesion and maintenance of their learning community by reinforcing its values and 'playing by the rules'. As in the marriage customs of male Arabs and Berbers marrying their cousins, this is a forced choice

which outwardly appears virtuous and democratic. If 'played right', power relations are maintained and respected, appropriate habitus is enacted, and community competency is displayed. The appropriately self-interested student is rewarded by capital accumulation. The inappropriately self-interested student – the complainer, the rule breaker, the naïve student – experiences the opposite. Thus, if a student wishes to benefit from their education they may adopt an agency that accommodates enough of its structures and practices to be perceived as valuing the interests of the community, while reducing resistance towards their personal goals. This raises questions as to whether students use listening practices during study to achieve such goals.
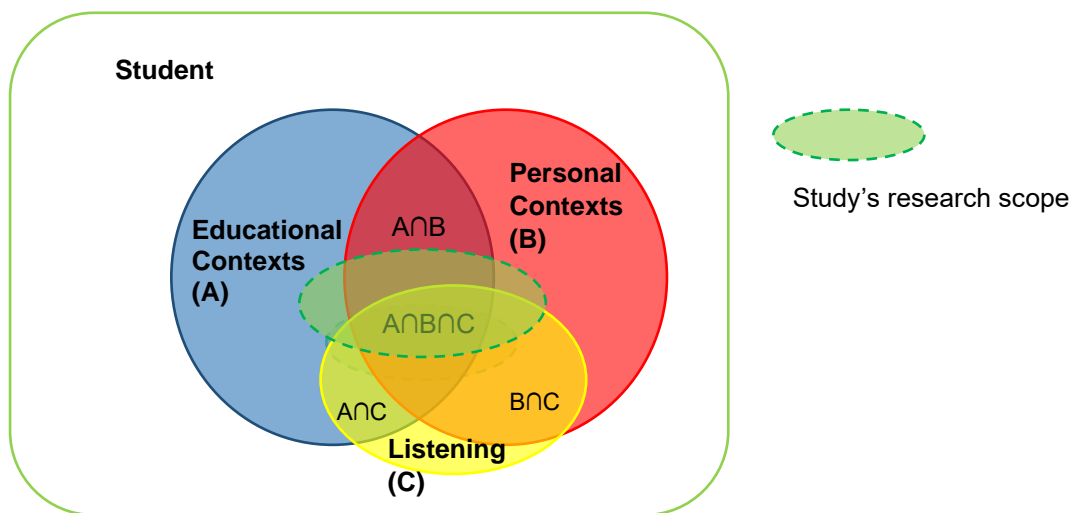
Figure 2.1: My study's scope and interrelationships

This Venn diagram represents the two main communities that this study investigates, with listening as a practice that arises from the personal and is used in learning spaces. The educational context (A) encompasses learning experiences, trajectories, membership status, communities and belonging. The personal context (B), includes students' identifications, sociocultural backgrounds, various forms of capital and sociocultural allegiances. Listening (C) represents students' recording choices, listening practices and communities, and how they relate to their personal and educational contexts. Each of the communities represented contain standalone aspects that can be studied independently. Each community also has overlap with the other communities – excluded for simplification. The interrelationships between learning, the personal and listening practices are represented in the figure with the symbol for intersection (∩). The intersection of all three aspects - A∩B∩C – represents when learning contexts relate to or are influenced by personal contexts, which are managed through listening practices. E.g.: For a student undergoing life-changing summative assessments, the oucomes from those assessments (A) impact area B. Simultaneously, that student may use listening (C) to manage learning and personal communities, either independently (A∩C or B∩C) or synchronously, A∩B∩C.

2.6 Creating key terms and meanings

Due to the inherently interdisciplinary nature of my study it has been challenging to find appropriate terms to communicate my meaning. This has meant developing new terms that have not been associated with other approaches or disciplines and that highlight the difference in approach and meanings. They should be treated or regarded under a fresh lens, and reflect my study's singular focus on listening during study / learning.

2.6.1 Listening preferences as choices and cultural tools

'Listening preferences' refers to the choices and biases students display through their daily listening habits. Cultivated listening choices show a deep bias based on cultural and ideological selections, and not on individual songs or artists. Listening choices refers to the overall listening themes: for instance, a student whose listening preferences are based around cultural or social values. The discussion around listening choices is not about students that are casual or spontaneous listeners with no attachment to their listening materials. Listening preferences in this study are intentionally cultivated listening choices that have been developed with effort over time.

Some popular cultures are generally believed to have sociocultural meaning and give power to young people (Bennett, 2000; Dimitriadis, 2009; Young, 2012). Students in this study often provide evidence of the competition between multiple discourses and their recordings, as popular cultural tools, are generally believed to provide students with alternative cultural meanings to those of the learning community:

> The popular culture of 'the street' with all its attractive associations and evil communications was seen to be another serious competitor with the school and teacher' (Soler, 2006: 18).

The educational field is also viewed as promoting particular cultures, ideologies and powers, which are in tension with popular cultures and other power systems:

> Raymond Williams, Edward Said and James Donald have highlighted the structuring of education as a social apparatus and its relationship to debates related to cultural authority, popular culture and imperial power (Soler, 2006).

As this suggests, listening communicates students' preferred cultural, authorial and ideological representations. However, as pointed out earlier, my focus is on how students utilise their listening materials and not on the materials themselves. Students assign particular qualities to recordings and obtain meanings that may not exist in reality or have multiple meanings in multiple realities; this is part of what makes them generative and transformative cultural tools. If it was not this way round, then music and sacred scriptures would have the same meaning and power for everyone. There would also be no change in meaning, value or differences in engagement – therefore no agency.

2.6.2 Students and not young people

The participants in this study are all between fifteen and twenty-one years old. The terms 'students' and 'young people' point to different fields, power relations and structures. Further, the term 'students' reminds the reader that listening discussions are always in the exclusive context of studying / learning.

2.6.3 Listeners or users

Throughout the thesis the terms 'listener' and 'user' are used somewhat interchangeably. Sometimes it is unclear which of the two – listening or using – a student is in engaged in. Calling students listeners implies they are listening during study while referring to students as users shows that they are utilising recordings as a cultural tool. This represents them as agents and not passive beings that absorb culture without question. The conflict arises from the sometimes blurred and artificial boundaries between when a student is listening to something and when a student is

using their listening choice – transforming, filtering, or interpreting the material in relation to their contextual needs. To address this issue, the terms are selected based on how students describe how they engage with their recordings, by listening to narratives or using them for a purpose.

2.6.4 Listening practices or strategies as discursive practices

Listening practices are social, cultural and symbolic enactments of agency. Listening is also an ideological choice which enables discursive practices. This is because listening practices and strategies allow for negotiation, interaction, action and interpretation to form meaning (Wetherell, 2003; Shim, 2012) The knowledge obtained, meanings generated, and sense of belonging produced through listening are examples of discursive practices (Hall, 2003). As the findings chapters in this thesis document, students' listening strategies show how the meanings in recordings have been interpreted to take action.

Listening practices, choices and strategies represent the things students enact; listening choices and materials are neutral nouns that can encompass music, religious scriptures and other auditory material. These terms allow for the emphasis to be on how and why students <u>use</u> listening.

The Bourdieusian term used in this thesis, 'strategies', cements the notion that students agentively use cultural tools to bring about particular transformations within the contexts discussed in the results chapters. Sometimes listening choices and strategies help to generate cultural meanings and values like those discussed in chapter six, meaning that listening can produce cultural ideologies, value and meaning.

2.6.5 Learning spaces not learning environments

Throughout my study, the term 'learning space' is used to highlight how the discussion of listening occurs against the backdrop of learning / studying, even if it is not explicitly stated. The term designates spaces outside educational contexts – bedrooms, lounges, kitchens and cafes – and reminds us that formal study is being conducted. Without this reminder, discussions of listening can be mixed up with other general listening activities outside the scope of this study.

2.6.7 Sociocultural context and not settings

The term 'sociocultural context' is also used instead of setting. This is to highlight that it is the sociocultural context, its dynamics, that is crucial not the setting. So, a noisy classroom or household, one institutional and the other personal, can be similar in their sonic, social, symbolic or cultural dynamics, and in the concurrent listening strategies adopted by a student. The goal is to highlight the interactions that give rise to particular listening practices, choices and strategies.

2.6.6 Management and not regulation or control

The term 'management' is used throughout the analysis chapters. It replaces terms such as regulation, control and maintenance. 'Management' acknowledges the sociocultural and interpersonal relations at play during listening; the other terms are descriptive and prescriptive. The other terms also tend to be associated with the objectivist and positivist sciences mentioned earlier in relation to the first category of music studies, including behavioural and cognitive psychology, medical therapies looking at changes in heart rates, stress levels and neurological sciences that look at brain scans. Although in this study the listening practices and reasons discussed are similar to those discussed in the disciplines just listed, the approach is very different.

The disciplines listed in the first two categories of music studies look at the standalone effects of music on emotions, cognitive processes and physiological changes. This study looks at the underlying factors of these effects, by looking at the sociocultural contexts that would give rise to a student needing to manage the aspects listed and described in the disciplines listed: for example, why a student would need to manage emotions or cognitive/ mental processes during study.

2.7 Evolution of research questions

After compiling the literature review it was evident that the research questions in this study needed to be more specific. Several studies in the literature looked at listening for specific purposes that were different from the purposes and contexts in this study, such as those discussed in category one and two. Therefore, research questions needed to consider contextual gaps in the literature and provide new research directions. The underlined parts in the research questions below represent the aspects missing or not sufficiently discussed in the literature.

2.7.1 Research questions after the literature review

Main question: How and why do students listen to music and Quranic recitations during study?

a. **What do students' listening practices tell us about them and their learning?**
   a. **In relation to their learning trajectories and experiences**
   b. **In relation to their learning spaces and environments**
   c. **In relation to their identifications**

b. **How do students use listening during study?**
   a. **In relation to listening strategies**
   b. **In relation to listening choices**

c. <u>**Why**</u> **do students listen during study?**

   a. <u>**What are they trying to achieve**</u>**?**

As seen above, I did not highlight listening experiences, choices and identifications because that is what is extensively discussed in the literature. The aspects of interest in this study – how, why and what, explored within a study context – are not commonly investigated and less represented in the literature.

2.8 Conclusions

The decision to take on a critical sociocultural stance was made after reviewing the literature and considering which stance was best suited to answering the research questions cited in chapter 1. Listening practices, strategies and choices are viewed as proof of agency. Educational, sociocultural and personal contexts are viewed as providing the structural backdrop to students' learning conditions and spaces. Students are treated as agents who contribute to the construction and reproduction of their lived experiences (to varying degrees and extents). For this approach to work, the stories constructed by students – including their lived experiences of listening, education, and religion, are understood as windows on everyday power relations, habitus and exchanges across fields. The literature shows studies that take this approach do so in conjunction with critical or social theory and ethnographic methods.

The interdisciplinary nature of researching listening practices, learning experiences and sociocultural contexts has in this study created linguistic difficulties, and competition for what should be included. The sociocultural approach to listening is an inclusive one. It is also more holistic, prioritising the meanings behind students' listening and their sociocultural contexts. This pushes my study towards a more inductive approach, which is also why it has been unimportant to stay within a singular discipline. This is why the psychological and environmental reasons for

listening are discussed alongside social and cultural reasons such as identity and ideological affirmation in the three results chapters to come. This approach is also in keeping with the ethical stance of allowing students to decide what listening means to them.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological approach, the methods and analysis employed, along with the rationale behind these choices. Extracts of raw data and visual representations of findings will be included to help explicate and make transparent my methodological tools and processes of analysis and interpretation. Detailed discussions of findings and data will be included in the next three chapters (chapters 4 to 6). This chapter (3) will, in addition, highlight the difficulties encountered during the data collection phases due to issues that arose from: the recruitment strategies used, the subject matter of my study, the sites for data collection, participant access and the varied responses to research methods. This information forms in itself part of the research findings. It is included in the 'Methods' chapter to allow a narrower focus on the data findings in the next chapter, and because it is part of the methodological approach of ethnographic research. Lastly, the methods used in this study are compatible with the critical and social theory ontological and epistemological stances which are implicit in Bourdieusian and Wengerian concepts. These concepts and the related theoretical stance were explored in depth in the literature review chapter (chapter 2) in order to address the specific research questions listed below.

3.2 Application of research questions:

1. **What do students' listening practices tell us about them and their learning?**
    a. **In relation to their learning trajectories and experiences**
    b. **In relation to their learning spaces and environments**
    c. **In relation to their identifications**

2. **How do students use listening during study?**
    d. **In relation to listening strategies**
    e. **In relation to listening choices**

3. Why are listening practices used by students during study?

f. What are they trying to achieve?

As discussed in the introduction and rationale (chapter 1), these research questions evolved from a set of assumptions and questions that arose during the early literature reviews; these questions had a greater focus in placing students and findings into set categories. The findings from the corpus of literature originally consulted considered the purpose, function and effects of music on young people from deductive criteria and reasoning, which is why they often produced binary findings that showed music listening to produce negative[3] and positive[4] effects. However, the research questions listed above, which resulted from this analysis, represent the shift towards inductive reasoning. This type of reasoning focuses on creating strong arguments and conclusions instead of attempting to produce deductive certainties that cannot capture the variability of people and society.

A deductive approach was shown to be insufficient after seeing how the questions in the pilot study with peers, friends and family produced little useful or detailed information. Therefore, fewer questions were designed to measure and quantitatively compare responses. New questions were developed which focussed on storytelling, such as: 'Tell me about your learning environment at home when you're studying and listening to music'. This replaced, 'Do you listen to music? Why?' Therefore, the main methodological aim from the start of data collection has been to allow students and teachers to give more detailed accounts, and with less direction or researcher bias. This approach enabled me to compare and contrast richer responses, find deeper meanings behind the use of listening practices during study, and understand the listening strategies being used by students according to their contexts and needs.

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[3] Such as aggression, lack of concentration and sadness.
[4] Such as cathartic listening experiences that made people feel happy or uplifted.

3.3 Methodology

The methodological approach in this study is underpinned by concepts from Bourdieusian critical theory and Wengerian social theory. This conceptual framework emphasises cultivating, representing and contesting the multiplicity of voices, narratives and critical perspectives found in the empirical data. This opposes reductionism by instead embracing '… hybridity, shifting cultural borders, composite selves, conflicting identifications, multiple belongings, and travelling identities …' (Marzagora, 2016: 165). At the same time, this stance, for me, is not synonymous with 'cultural relativism' (Brown, 2008). This thesis is not stating that all practices are equal, or that listening practices should not be judged or that every discourse and viewpoint has equal merit. By employing an ethnographic approach in conjunction with a critical and sociocultural theoretical framework, I hope to understand why and how students use listening materials in their learning spaces during study in a contextualised manner. I also seek to know what drives students to engage in such practices – what is being communicated by such practices, and the broader context of such practices in the spaces of learning and the family. These questions are complex because they are entangled, require continual recursive analysis, reflexivity and need to be kept distant from the social misconceptions and assumptions around listening practices through the debate on digital technologies and schools.

Methodologically, a critical and sociocultural conceptual framework with an ethnographic approach work to reduce bias. Each has traditionally been used to obtain a better understanding of cultures, experiences, social negotiations and groups in the context of social fields such as education (Edmond, 2005). Additionally both the conceptual frames and an ethnographic approach share the same epistemological treatment of reality – that it is a social construction (Grossberg, 2013) and that the individual is a historical agent who through dialectical relations negotiates and (re)creates their realities (Bourdieu, 1990). Ontologically, by using an ethnographic approach alongside a critical and social theory, I am also drawing upon a Wengerian social approach to research the social relations that constitute participants' realities and listening practices when studying. The social

relations account for: the interactions within participants' learning spaces, the learning spaces themselves, learning experiences, the significance of listening choices to participants, the formation of listening strategies, and the role listening practices afford in the community of learning.

By using narrative inquiry as an investigative approach, my study interrogates the 'taken-for-granted' (Agger, 1991) sociocultural assumptions which produce 'common sense … conventional wisdom, knowledge, and practices' (Rexhepi and Torres, 2011: 692) that exist on the surface. Narrative inquiry contributes to understanding the meanings behind listening practices for listeners, and their purposes across the various social spaces of learning, which are themselves filled with contestation and discrete tactics. Narrative inquiry is appropriate for this study as it:

> … follows a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data) to interim and final research texts. Commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place create a conceptual framework within which different kinds of field texts and different analyses can be used.
>
> Narrative inquiry highlights ethical matters as well as shapes new theoretical understandings of people's experiences (Clandinin and Huber, 2010: 1).

This analytical approach, in conjunction with the conceptual frames, ensures that listening practices, strategies and choices are viewed in the context of their 'temporality, sociality and place' (Clandinin and Huber, 2010: 3). Without this, listening is viewed as neutral, ahistorical and meaningless. However, as discussed in the introduction and rationale, the classrooms I encountered were filled with a variety of meanings and interactions, making listening reasons varied and responsive. Furthermore, economic structural factors, like those discussed in the literature review (chapter 2), can produce competitive or excluding environments that influence social relationships and the learning space. This is recorded in the learning and listening experiences of students and, without the recursive reflexivity of moving between data types, themes, concepts and research questions, these underlying connections, which are discussed further in the findings chapters (4,5 and 6), would not have been uncovered.

3.4 Methodological tools, analysis and issues: surveys, classroom observations/ visits and interviews

During the data collection phase, 7 classroom observations were carried out; 30 students surveys were returned; and 1 classroom discussion, 10 student interviews and 5 teacher interviews were conducted. Please refer to Appendix 5.6, Table 4 for a breakdown of the total number of students interviewed as three student discussions were group interviews.

Each methodological tool was subject to the Open University's ethics committee's approval and requirements (see Appendix 5.4), which was directed by government and research guidelines. To obtain research approval from the committee, I had to provide sufficient evidence that demonstrated that each data collection method was relevant to the aims of my study and that each research method was ethical and safe for the communities researched. I also had to explain why the research findings would be valuable for the researched communities and society at large. The university ethics committee was particularly concerned with the ethics and safety of the research due to student participants' status as young and vulnerable citizens. It also did not want my study to interfere with students' education (see Appendix 5.5). This is discussed in more detail in this section.

Methodological tools such as classroom observations, in-depth interviews and surveys each collect glimpses of students' varied listening practices, strategies and choices when studying. In some cases, one method verified the findings produced by another. Classroom observations offered a pragmatic approach when dealing with the difficulty of obtaining access to vulnerable participants. Due to issues with negotiating access (discussed later in Recruitment procedures, revisions, and issues, section 3.6) there was no set order in which data was collected. I would have preferred to introduce myself to a class, hand out the surveys, observe the class, and on separate days come in for one-to-one or group interviews. This was often not possible. At times I was able to just introduce myself and my study. Other

times I was able to observe a class and talk to students who were interested in participating after their lesson, if there was time to spare. From this, I was often able to hand out surveys to participating students and their friends during a free period or a lunch break in a communal area. Sometimes, I was just able to introduce myself and pass on surveys to teachers to hand out to students and collect them after the lesson (please see Appendix 5.6 for a breakdown of my fieldwork activities).

Not having the freedom to enter institutes and classes easily as I needed to negotiate access on a daily basis made data collection uncertain, and meant that I always needed to carry all the research tools: hand-outs, letters, consent forms for each research method, questionnaires, note pads for students to write on, laptop (for internet access), mobile phone to communicate with students and a digital recorder. My target in each visit was to gain access to a whole class, this meant carrying paper-based handouts in multiples of at least thirty. I was often anxious about how much data I would be able to collect on each given visit; how many students I would be given access to; and how much time I would be allowed (as I could not come and go as I liked). I was always dependent on a teacher to vouch for me by signing me in or granting me permission to enter their class. I also had to be sensitive to teachers that disapproved of my study by avoiding them and by not approaching students in their presence. Despite this, teachers and students who wanted to participate made themselves available to me and arranged interview times during lunch, prayer breaks, free periods and after school. Tables 4 and 5 provide a breakdown of the participants and the data collected.

Table 5. Breakdown of Teacher Data Collected

Location	Teacher Interviewees	Classroom Observation #
FE College	George	CON1
		CON2
Academy	Adnan	CON3
	Mahir	CON4 and CON5
	Atefeh	CON6
	Naima	CON7
2 institutions	**5 teachers**	**7 class visits**

Table 5 shows the total number of teachers that participated, the classroom observational notes (CON) number which relates to transcribed notes, teachers' anonymised names and the location of the interview.

Table 6. Breakdown of Student Data Collected

Location	Student Interviewees	Surveys
Other (mother's office)	Emily	1
FE College	Sana	
	Nicole	5
	Classroom discussion	
Academy	Said	
	Bilan	
	Meelaaney	
	Aisha (unscheduled conversation in the PC room and in the hour waiting for an interview with the GCSE girls)	
	Khadro, Aisha and Hani's GCSE Group (6-10 students)	
	Zahid	
	Bilqiis A Level Group (4 students: Isra, Akram and Halim)	24
3 Institutions	**10 student interviews** **1 classroom discussion**	**30 surveys returned**

Table 6, shows the number of student interviews, the anonymised names of students, the location of interviews, and the breakdown of surveys returned from each location. Further, as seen in Table 4 (Appendix 5.6), I spoke to students throughout the days I made visits to institutions, but only made recordings of interactions when I had obtained explicit permission to do so. Teachers and students were often happy to talk to me about issues related to my study, but reluctant to participate in official ways.

3.4.1 Surveys

The surveys in this study are treated as a methodological tool that can contribute to the interpretation and understanding of general listening habits, specific listening habits when learning/studying, student demographics and technologies used by students. In order to collect this information, the survey was based around five main questions, which were organized into the five categories listed below (also see Appendix 2: Music and Learning Survey):

1. General music habits
2. Music habits around learning
3. Information on what students listened to
4. Information about the participant
5. Contact details for further participation

Each section was designed to generate responses that would provide four different types of data relating to listening practices. These were (a) knowledge, (b) beliefs, (c) attitudes and opinions, and (d) behaviours and attributes; this being, 'what people

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

do, what they have, think, feel or want' (Taylor-Powell, 1998). This data was important as findings were used to map music use, listening habits, student identities, approximations in how much time is invested in listening practices and to gather musical preferences. Importantly, surveys also collected responses from students who would not have participated in face-to-face interviews because they did not engage in any listening. Through surveys I was also able to include and discover more about students' reasoning against listening practices.

To encourage students to provide as much information as possible and without becoming too time-consuming or tedious, the survey used both closed and open-ended questions (as seen in the music survey in Appendix 2). Open-ended questions were used: to highlight what is important to respondents; to bring out ideas and responses that would not have been anticipated (FAO, 2013); to allow for participant 'multivoice' (Kaun, 2010); and to provide cues to areas for further exploration during interviews. Closed questions were often tick boxes and did not allow for thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973). They were used: to provide references; compare participants; collect demographics of the students in the learning communities I came in contact with; and to collect data that was 'definite', 'measurable' and 'large' (Coombes, 2001). This would have been especially useful for mapping trends, views, identities and habits (FAO, 2013), had I collected more than thirty surveys. The data collected from the survey was not used to generate statistical results or to infer causality; instead, survey responses were used to provide additional detail and support to my observational notes and in-depth interview transcripts.

Analysis of surveys

Since surveys were paper-based, this required me to enter all survey responses onto MS Excel. The data could also have been entered onto MS Word, and it was eventually copied onto Word to create word clouds using Pro Word Cloud. These word clouds provided a visualisation of the responses collected from students. Mathews et al. (2015) states: 'Word clouds provide a novel and reader-friendly

approach for analysis and presentation of qualitative data'. In this study, word clouds enabled me to represent thirty survey participant responses and highlight the strongest or most common ideas, strands and identities as demonstrated in the word cloud 1.1, below.
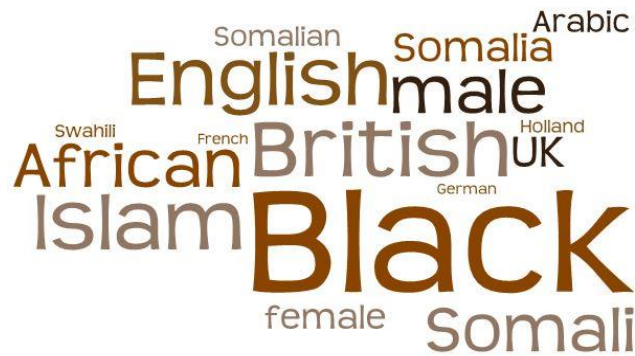
Figure 3. Word Cloud 1.1 - *Survey responses from 24 students at the Academy. The results are based on the fourth section of the survey – information about participants' ethnic and religious background, gender, country of birth and languages spoken. The word cloud shows that students strongly identified with being black, British African for ethnicity and Islamic. Students ticked various boxes; some selected the Other category and wrote Somalian, which is seen above English, instead of ticking the categories available. This word cloud shows that most students speak English and Somali, although some speak Arabic, Swahili, German and French. The cloud data shows that many students are also born in the UK, a fair few in Somalia and a couple in Holland (a brother and sister). It is interesting to point out that some students speak French or German. It is likely that they were born in French- or German-speaking countries, but selected their place of birth as UK instead. Lastly, a few more of the students that participated in the survey were also males. This is in contrast to the in-depth interviews, which were mostly females. This is not shown in the cloud, which shows the limitations of referring to clouds without fuller knowledge of the dataset.*

The above cloud visually captures some of the student community identifications at the Academy and the interrelationships between ethnicity, culture, religion and language.

In the data excerpt below is a copy of the MS Excel sheet that shows how I compiled all the responses to the questions in the survey for analysis. The table only shows a snapshot of the information that was used to create word cloud 1.1. I have included this excerpt to demonstrate what the raw data looked like after it was entered.

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Table 1. Excerpt of 10 out of 24 survey responses

Participant #	4c. Gender	4e. Ethnicity	4d. Religion	4f. CoB	4g. Languages
IA16	Male	Black/ Black British Other: Somalian	Islam	UK	English
IA17	Male	Black/ Black British Other: Somalian	Islam		English and Somali
IA18	Male	Black/ Black British African	Islam	Somalia	English, Swahili, Somali
IA19	Male	Black/ Black British Other: Somalian	Islam	UK	English, Somali, Arabic
IA20	Male	Black/ Black British African	Islam	UK	English, German, Somali
IA21	Male	Black/ Black British Other: Somalian	Islam	Somalia	Somali (and English - did not include)
IA24	Male	Black/ Black British African	Islam	Holland	English, Arabic, Somali
IA23	Female	Black/ Black British African	Islam	Somalia	Somali and English
IA10	Female	Black/ Black British African	Islam	Somalia	English
IA11	Female	Black/ Black British African	Islam	UK	English, Somalia

Data from section 4 of the survey. Responses from the same academy featured in Word Cloud 1.1. CoB = country of birth. Languages = languages spoken. Ethnic categories are those used by all government agencies in the UK. Where 'Somalian' appears in the ethnicity column, the word was written in by participants. Columns 4F and 4G were filled in by participants, whereas 4C, 4E and 4D required participants to tick a box and/or add more information in the Other blank space.

Although statistical tests and methods are very powerful and useful in large studies, they would not have been meaningful or relevant in this study because of the small number of surveys collected (30). As a whole, in-depth quantitative analysis would also not have been in keeping with the conceptual frames.

Cloud parameters were created by collecting all the relevant responses to a question, such as 'why students do not engage in listening practices during study', and deleting sentences leaving only the highlighted keywords seen in Table 2, below. By setting vocabulary parameters to include repetitions above three and include synonyms, keywords were represented by size based on frequency, in word

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

clouds. Since I had entered all the data manually for each question, as seen below in Table 2, I was very familiar with the data and could correct software omissions and mistakes, or delete irrelevant data that did not relate to the question. Used in this precise manner, clouds became useful visual tools for displaying the nuanced quality of the listening responses collected through the survey.   The visualisation of responses also enabled me to represent the interrelationships between listening and structuring values – the social, the cultural (religious), the educational and the personal. For instance, responses such as: 'I do not listen because it is forbidden', or 'I do not like music' or 'because it is not allowed in class' indicate the importance of culture/ religion for one student, the personal in one and the importance of following school protocols for another student. Yet students are in the same class and school.

Table 2. below shows the raw data of seven randomly selected student responses (each row is a student). The highlighted keywords in red show 'no' responses, and green shows 'yes' responses as reasons for or against listening practices during study.

Table 2. Raw survey data excerpt

Questions 2bc: YES and NO responses for listening during study:	Question 2g: YES responses for listening during study + any specific GENRES:	Question 2g: NO responses for not listening during study + why:	Question 2h: RECOMMEND listening to others? Why:	Question 1d: Genres:
to make it more enjoyable.	I tend to listen to the same songs for a while.	my siblings don't listen to music.	I listen to music because I like to.	K-pop, pop and R'n'B. Trap
it gets me in the mood to study.	I can only listen to grime/ trap music when I'm studying because the beat/ lyrics is harsher and it gets me in the mood.	it works for me.	to pass time and to keep up with new music. Also very calming.	Afrobeat, rap, R'n'B, grime and trap.
	No	it's haram.	No	
to distract myself from others in the room.	whatever I find.	you can lose concentration from the work.	to calm myself.	Grime and Quran.

			it's not beneficial as I don't get any advantages from it. A disadvantage is that it's a waste of time. However and it is forbidden in our religion - Islam.	
	it make me not focus with my work.	it's not beneficial as I don't want them to waste their time.		
I can't concentrate on my work if I'm listening to music.			in my culture and religion listening to music is not allowed.	
It's forbidden in Islam.	Yes		It's forbidden in our religion (culture out).	
because at school I learn not to listen to music.	because I don't listen to music in school.	because they won't learn anything at school.	because I like songs and it can calm me down.	Jazz, hiphop and rap.

This table shows students' handwritten responses to music questionnaire. Each column is a question on the questionnaire, therefore, words in red or green would have been collected from a 'Yes' or 'No' column, and put onto a separate Word document to create a cloud that visually represents the 'yes' and 'no' reasons I collected from the survey. These reasons can be seen in Word clouds 1.2 and 1.3, in this section.

Each column represents a question in the survey, and the responses in them are what students wrote. The responses in the table are a good example of how the data was collected and ordered, and how meaning was formed from the entirety of the data. As seen in the table, students sometimes wrote responses in the wrong places, contradicted themselves or responded in a fragmented way. Over each survey, however, questions were posed in ways that prompted students to give more detail or examples, thus verifying their listening responses, attitudes and behaviours. Questions 2g, 2h and 1h (on the table), for instance, provided responses that helped me understand why students listen or do not listen during study based on their own experiences and based on if they would recommend it to siblings and friends. Question 2h was a way of assessing if they wanted their friends or siblings to engage in listening during study – and a way to check if students viewed listening as positive or counterproductive. Question 1h was in comparison to 2g, a way of assessing if students changed their listening choices during study, and a way to see how broad their listening choices were, generally.

As discussed above, the benefits of including a survey in this study were sometimes unexpected. Data collected from surveys often provided supplementary and sometimes opposing data from participants who would otherwise have been excluded. See Word Clouds 1.2 and 1.3, below.

Figure 4. Word Cloud 1.2 - *Data collated from students who answered, 'Yes' to using recordings in the survey from the academy. The word cloud shows the reasons given for using recordings.*
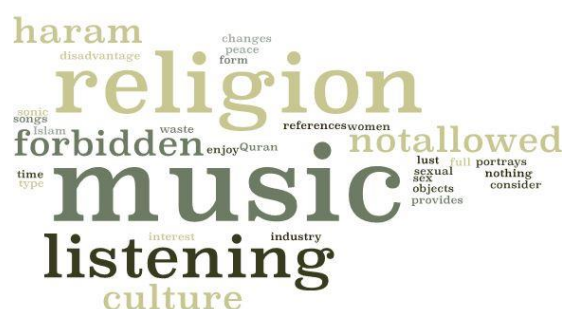
Figure 5. Word Cloud 1.3 - *Data collated from students who answered, 'No' to using recordings in the survey from the academy. The word cloud shows the reasons given for not using recordings.*

The survey was useful because it enabled me to collect data from a variety of viewpoints, which allows for comparison and contrasting arguments throughout the various data modes, analysis and interpretation. This approach helped me avoid grand narratives, biased perspectives and specious common sense, since responses were very subjective and sometimes contradictory. Engaging with complex data forced me to avoid simplistic reductions – i.e. that all students who engage in listening during study are the same or do so for the same reasons. This can be seen in the word clouds above. By ordering survey responses through word clouds, I was able to represent the multiple reasons for or against listening.

The visual representation of data though clouds was initially used in the analysis chapters (4,5 and 6), but was omitted due to its quantitative visual associations. It

nonetheless enabled me to note who was participating and who was excluded from my study. For instance, surveys and classroom observations showed greater ethnic and gender diversity, while interviews showed I interviewed females from minority backgrounds. From this, I noted that all but four of my research participants in surveys were from minority communities. Visualising survey data through clouds enabled me to compare data from survey participants and in-depth interview participants. From this complexity I created order and meaning from survey responses as seen in Appendix 2: Figures 11 and 12. These figures help explain and represent the various reasons behind students' listening practices during study, with the most common response at the base of the pyramid and the least common at the top. Also, seen from the pyramids, responses were analysed for meaning and thematically ordered according to the music listening categories in the literature review (sections 2.2.1, 2.2.2, 2.2.3 and 2.2.4).

The mode of delivery – a paper-based survey instead of an electronic survey – produced some interesting results. I opted to use a paper-based survey because it was unlikely that students would have voluntarily and independently participated on an online survey. My physical presence in conjunction with a paper-based survey during participation ensured that: willing participants completed their survey on the spot and returned it to me immediately after completion; and that I avoided technological complications such as lack of internet access, poor access to appropriate digital devices and poor digital literacy.

Yet on the other hand, a paper-based survey also came with its own setbacks. Students were often reluctant to write lengthy responses and chose to quickly jot down utterances instead of full sentences with detail and/or examples. Other times students simply skipped open-ended questions as seen in Table 2. Furthermore, my presence did not encourage more students to participate as several students simply returned blank surveys. Therefore, my presence simply ensured that surveys were returned to me. Had the survey been online I could have perhaps ensured students attempted all the questions before being able to move on to the next question.

Students may be willing to type longer responses rather than write them. In classes I kept reassuring students spelling and handwriting did not matter, and that they were not being assessed. Students seemed anxious about the colour of the pen and the quality of their writing. Had surveys been online this would have been avoided and storing and collating survey responses could have been easier and quicker.

In summary, the use of a survey was a success in terms of data amplification. The data collected was of use since it was treated qualitatively and added texture. The purpose of survey analysis and interpretation was not based on data reduction, but data amplification by finding differences, similarities, patterns and anomalous or inexplicable data. The only improvement I would have liked to make with hindsight is to have encouraged participants to take their time by considering their responses and evidencing them when responding to open-ended questions. This could be done in future studies by allocating time for surveys to be completed in, by using digital devices and by providing an ethical incentive such as a study related gift, service or a voucher to encourage or thank participation through reward and to acknowledge participants for sharing their time and experiences (Adams, 1998). This could have significantly increased the number or survey respondents, which would have provided more data and perspectives.

3.4.2 Classroom observations

Observations were conducted in classrooms as the data collected provided background data that would help me expand, contextualise and understand the stories students shared when discussing their learning, listening practices, interactions and spaces. Classroom observations gave me access to a larger number of students than approaching students and their families one-by-one outside school/college. Due to this, classroom observations 'broke the ground' by enabling me to approach students together, in a safe and trusted environment by utilising teachers as facilitators. This kept classroom observations in line with ethical research (Social Research Association , 2003; BERA, 2011, 2018) and legal

requirements when dealing with students in educational institutes, who are categorised as children and/or vulnerable adults (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006). To adhere to the safety checks required to engage with children and vulnerable adults I also requested an Enhanced Disclosure and Barred Service (DBS) check and certificate with the Open University as my employer, and as proof to schools and parents that I was officially registered at the University and that I had no criminal record.

Classroom observations were conducted overtly and with the consent of the teacher who gave me permission to enter the class. Once in the class, I introduced myself to students, explained my presence, and handed out consent forms. Observations consisted of me observing and taking notes on a notebook of: students' and teachers' interactions, actions, use of digital tools, the classroom layout, environment, the lesson or subject taught, and the sonic qualities of the classroom. Observational notes sometimes contained notes of my feelings and thoughts, for instance a slow lesson, or active engagement, a classroom that is too hot, making it uncomfortable. This combination of descriptive observations, thoughts and emotions means that my observational notes also contained theoretical notes (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). This was important for recording how I interacted or responded to the learning space, and to explain the tone or focus in notes at a later date during analysis. Depending on the layout of a classroom and the learning activities of the classroom, most times I was forced to sit at the back of a classroom and make all my observations from one point. On rare occasions, I was able to move around the class, sit with different groups and pick up a wider variety of sonic environments and interactions.

To help with the collection of observational data, during the construction of my methodological toolkit in the first year, I created an observational template which was to be used as a tick list to ensure I collected uniformed data by writing observations within the allocated space on the table or on a notebook (see Appendix 1 – Table 3). Such a template greatly reduced what was recorded, focussed on frequency, and also created a hypotheses testing framework (Dunn, 2005); therefore I opted for

'free-hand' note making. Not using a rigid observational template allowed me to note what was present with less bias, while also attempting to collect data that would answer the research questions (see Appendix 1 – Figures 6,7 and 8). As mentioned earlier, the observational process was still framed within particular parameters (sonic, classroom interactions, layout, digital tools), but the note-making itself was a looser process. This produced notes that over time were less structured. They also evolved to include myself: my actions, short conversations with students and teachers, and more detail to enable me to more accurately record and recall each classroom experience. Including myself in notes also allowed me to critically review how I contributed to the data. In this sense, there was an aspect of participant observation in the methodology, with reflexivity increasingly built into how I gathered evidence.

This shift in observational data collection was because there was a three-month gap between the first two classroom observations (at the college) and the additional five classroom observations at second institute (the academy). This allowed me time to reflect and improve observations by moving from a structured observational template to a less structured one. This reflective process encouraged me to record more broadly as, after typing up the two classroom observational notes in the FE college, I noticed the more detail I provided the easier it was to recall observations, and to link interview participants to observations. In the observations in the second institute, this meant I asked teachers and students for clarification in class when I was unclear or could not observe an event, situation, or detail. This may have also been because I felt more welcome and comfortable since I knew some of the teachers, most of the administrative staff and the owner of the institute from previous teaching encounters.

I observed no lessons from the teachers I knew. In part this was because they taught younger students or because they were much older teachers and therefore more reluctant about participating in my study. Teachers who taught subjects such as Arabic and religious education (RE) did not wish to participate as they felt their subjects made them exempt from the research. This reduced my access to students as it meant that I was not invited to classes to introduce myself and my study to

students. Teachers in the subjects named believed students could not listen to recordings during my study of their subjects, and generally that students should not listen to particular types of music for cultural/ religious reasons. These views and actions towards my study demonstrate how teachers formed incorrect assumptions and misconceptions about my study: namely that, listening was subject related or specific. It also shows how some teachers regulated practices and topics they believed to be worthy of discussion, acknowledgment or research; and it demonstrates what I interpret as 'the hysteresis effect' (Bourdieu, 1977): generational differences around particular practices, conflicts of interests and habitus. The latter point is based on the fact that Arabic and RE teachers were a generation older than me. I know this from knowing some of the teachers before my study and from conversations that showed that the female teachers had children in similar age categories to me. The notion of the hysteresis effect was also suggested by students when they told me that they had a better rapport with teachers brought up in similar contexts – culturally, socially and perhaps linguistically. This was often, but not exclusively, younger teachers who were viewed as sometimes taking a more open or understanding approach to the attitudes, language, practices, fashions and cultural expectations of the younger generation.

As an observer of students and teachers in their classroom spaces, I formed little to no relationship with students. Therefore, there was little opportunity for me to develop meaningful trust, which is crucial and develops a research relationships with participants (Edmond, 2005). This was because I was mostly unable to conduct more than one classroom observation per class due to a variety of misconceptions about my study and its nature (discussed further in section 3.6). Primarily, teachers were sceptical or reluctant towards my study topic. This often resulted in a lack of understanding, trust and synergy between myself and teachers – my gatekeepers.

Equally, once in the classroom, students themselves were often indifferent, paying little regard, or treating me with suspicion by engaging in covert behaviours, such as hiding their actions under the table, or acting with caution by asking several questions about me and my project without committing to my study. The lack of

relationship with students often meant the observations I took were of anonymous participants. Although anonymity is necessary for transcribing, discussing and reporting findings, it was sometimes problematic when trying to connect students to other datasets during analysis. An in-depth interview sometimes allowed me to connect students to the observational data I had collected, if I had observed them.

On the whole, the observations that I made from the second institute (the academy) were more reflective of 'natural' classrooms because unlike the classroom observations from the first institute (the college), the teachers who participated had no time to prepare for me, and I did not get the sense that they were selecting the best lesson or class for me to observe. In the first institute, the teacher had several months of notice as he volunteered for the project in my first year before I applied for ethics approval to do research in schools. Further to this, I could not visit the college to conduct classroom observations without the teacher notifying security to give me a visitor's pass. In the second institute, teachers had twenty-four hours' notice. This was after I had been denied research access to four other institutes directly (I was informed), and indirectly to a dozen more (communications ceased). When I posted a Facebook call for help from teachers, the owner of the academy responded by offering me access to his academy. However, there were also exam pressures on the students and teachers at the academy, which meant that I had two weeks to collect my research from the institute before the first exam.

In previous experiences with other institutes, I had no control over when teachers would allow me access to classrooms and students. Agreed appointments were often moved or cancelled overnight after weeks of communication. This lack of notice meant observations were more haphazard. I had to adapt to vague commitments from teachers by being more flexible and quick to respond to opportunities before they were rescinded or rescheduled. To compensate for this haphazardness I adopted a series of 'short-term observations' (Brockmann, 2011). This was standalone one-off classroom visits.

At the academy, as already noted, teachers and students were under exam pressures and in some cases, students were two weeks from their first exam. This made the research process difficult, but the data collected was invaluable as it recorded the impeding learning pressures some students alluded to in their interviews, and which I would not have observed for myself had the observations been conducted at the beginning of the academic term. This pressure allowed me to note and experience the type of learning, interactions and work students were expected to engage in as preparation for summative assessments. I was also able to note how some students under the pressure of exams chose to study at home or outside non-classroom environments, leading to very small classes.

On the whole however, exam pressures made classroom observations and the research topic very socially difficult. Presenting a research project on listening and in the context of studying was uncomfortable institutionally and culturally. For students without the pressure of key exams (GCSEs or A Levels), I had to negotiate different social dynamics and place myself within each classroom setting in ways that could ensure the research was taken seriously by teachers and students, but without appearing too intimidating - due to perceptions of a PhD research project. Therefore, my perceived positionality while conducting classroom observations was important.

Being too close to teachers indicated to students that I was a teacher, and they would distance themselves from me – my study. On the other hand, being too friendly with students indicated to teachers that the research was not serious or mature enough – and why should they participate in 'pointless' research? As the purpose of classroom observations was to collect data on learning spaces, give out surveys and recruit students and teachers for interviews my 'sociability' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) was important. It was often determined by how much I could 'blend in'; whether gatekeepers viewed me as an 'exploitative interloper'; and how successful I was at 'negotiating a role' (Brockmann, 2011) that appeased each research party.

By entering the classroom – a teacher's domain – to conduct observations and access participants I had to negotiate the power dynamics and hierarchies which are at the forefront of most interactions (Adams, 1998; Weiner-Levy and Popper-Giveon, 2010). Being formal was not an option since it meant I came across as authoritative. Yet being too informal resulted in teachers and students underestimating *my* competence and the seriousness or value of my study. These social aspects were difficult to manage in the field as I also had to manage the pressures of my own research goals (Adams, 1998).

During analysis such experiences, however, highlighted the active presence of the structures and interactions discussed in this study. Even as a researcher I felt the hidden power of community expectations, the directional guidance of norms and the need to fit in or comply. My research access was dependent on not only my connections in the two institutes, then, but also my conformity to expectations that allowed me the access to do this research. This highlights how important conformity according to each gatekeeper is (Adams, 1998), whether it is a student leader, teacher or head of department. It also highlights the constant need to negotiate positionalities, status and acceptance (Mercer, 2007). Therefore, during classroom observations there were several balancing acts I had to perform.

Classrooms, negotiating a role and researcher positionalities

Firstly, it was imperative that I respected the power and authority of the teacher who granted me permission to enter their class. This either came with them trying to increase my status as an 'academic' or act in confusion based on their perceptions on what my study entailed. To downplay either situation it was always necessary to reduce my own power and status with students to reduce the likelihood of them avoiding participation based on the fear of discussing their listening practices during study with a teacher or for an official report. Further to that, it was always necessary to stress that the purpose of my study was to explore and investigate listening during

study from a neutral standpoint: I was not advocating for or against the practice, simply investigating the phenomenon. Based on face-to-face reactions and comments from teachers it is likely this created a lot of confusion and frustration for teachers, who wanted actionable research on specific teaching and learning issues. Therefore, there was a 'noncongruence' (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009: 361) between my research objectives and teachers' immediate needs.

Due to the taboo nature of my research topic from an institutional and cultural perspective, I sought to reduce physical differences. Students, teachers and parents in the academy predominantly wore very conservative and/or traditional Islamic clothing, which meant that I stood out. This was never an issue while I taught there as I had the status of a teacher. Therefore, I was seen to be contributing to the community in a positive way. Once I became a researcher studying a practice traditionally discouraged in educational institutes and culturally monitored in the academy, I appeared to become an outsider and the extent of my contribution to the community was no longer visible or measurable. To access teachers, classrooms and students I needed to decrease this ambiguity, so I worked on decreasing overt differences that would inhibit my ability to interact and persuade gatekeepers to listen and participate. I was not entirely part of, or entirely outside of, the communities I studied so I worked on downplaying any differences.

At the academy I demonstrated my respect for the community's beliefs by being sensitive to male and female interactional customs. I carried a decorative large scarf to 'trendily' wear over my upper body to be in-keeping with the custom of modesty, and within my own cultural sensibilities. I was never requested to follow these customs but I chose to do so, so I could 'blend in' (Brockmann, 2011) to some extent and avoid offending conservative students, parents and teachers. Modesty was a characteristic the community valued, and which I was happy to comply with, in my own particular way. Furthermore, not adhering to this obvious community custom would have further undermined my study, my credibility, my ability to approach conservative participants and may have discouraged participants from approaching me.

I found that there was a need to 'negotiate a role' (Brockmann, 2011) within each learning community. The most successful role throughout the various classrooms, teachers and the two institutes, based on my interactions, was that of a quirky PhD student (explained shortly). This is since I did not easily fit in with expected norms or groups of a teacher or an academic. I had five years teaching experience, but I was not a teacher and I had embarked on a PhD but I was not yet an academic. However, I personally experienced the way in which the institutes and teachers, in particular, wanted specificity and accountability. My community identities, allegiances and experiences contained 'playability' – they were too elastic and I appeared to have no tangible allegiance. My playability was in that I could emphasise the teaching aspect or downplay it and emphasise the research/ PhD aspect. Each aspect, of course, came with its own pitfalls.

A teaching identity generated confusion concerning the research topic and increased suspicion towards the expectation of community loyalty. A research identity increased suspicion concerning the research topic and increased the expectation of disloyalty towards the learning community. Therefore, to conduct observations and access classrooms I had to negotiate a pragmatic role in the learning community. My role as a 'quirky' researcher – who else would do such strange research – my sociability and my ability to adapt and conform to community expectations and make accommodations was important to collecting data. Yet this positioning, according to Ellis-Sloan's (2014) research on how teenage mothers used Goffman's concepts of 'impression management', and 'audience and face-work' (Ellis-Sloan's, 2014: 4), is what I used to protect myself from the taboo nature of the research topic, the tensions it created with the learning community and the negative impressions the community formed of me based on the research. Sloan discussed this in the context of how participants manage perceptions and represent themselves in the face of stigma. I used those tactics as a researcher to manage the stigmatising effects of my research, and people's negative impressions of me based on the research topic.

This is why time and effort was dedicated to cultivating the right role, which took a lot of trial and error (error typically resulting in rejection at other institutions). I knew the wrong emphasis was generated when gatekeepers at institutes could not see how their interests would be protected if they engaged in such 'risky research' as I was no longer teaching, and not part of the community. This confusion regarding my new role of researcher was evident when I entered a common room or classroom (after being introduced) and students stopped talking, or stopped what they were doing as they expected me to discipline them as a teacher or distrusted my intentions as a stranger. The right research emphasis of openness and sociability had been generated in class when students either continued what they were doing when I entered a room or approached me willingly as they did not view me as a teacher or their teacher's informant.

Managing my impressions and sociability through the role I negotiated for teachers required the right research relationship. This was generated when teachers accepted me as having accrued enough teaching experience to understand their role and teaching contexts. Therefore, they first tested how I responded to 'insider community practices' – tracking students, preparing exams, and differentiating learners in the same class: did I understand that students were not all the same or would have the same outcomes? They also tested my 'reciprocity' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) by seeing how much I shared about my own teaching experiences. Overall, it seems that for teachers the main issue was respect, and for students it was trust.

I also shared some 'insider' qualities with all participants – by having taught, being a minority or being female – but I was still not the same as them. Participants also wanted me to be different or acknowledge that difference not hide it (Adams, 1998). It is only upon reflection that I now understand that teachers wanted me to act as a role model for students by showing how I got to where I was – a research student / a high educational level – instead of hiding it and pretending I was the same as those students. Yet it is often expected when doing ethnographic research to be aware of, and to remove or downplay social, cultural and economic capital that is different from

participants as it may be interpreted as hierarchy and power (Adams, 1998; Weiner-Levy and Popper-Giveon, 2010). Teachers and students wanted to hear of my educational experiences, teaching experiences and current educational goals. Therefore, I was an outsider with positive role-model attributes who at the same time investigated what was deemed subversive behaviour.

There were other issues during classroom observations that I also did not want to be part of, or contribute to. For instance, I did not want to reinforce the educational discourse of 'work hard, play later', when I believed that students could only work hard now if they understood what it meant and how to meaningfully go about it. This is a view I suspected was unpopular with teachers who are subject to assessment pressures, teaching obligations and a plethora of other duties. I would have preferred to have mingled more with teachers and students, to have been invited to share lunch with students or join their after-school study sessions, and to have talked with teachers during their free periods. This had been the case when I had been teaching. Perhaps because of the nature of the research sites (educational institutes) the need to show 'success stories', and the nature of my intersecting identities – black, British, African, female, and a PhD student – I was treated differently. I was expected to show and share so others could see my 'visibility' or learn from my experiences. This was my 'key attributes' which 'deemed me relevant to the field setting' (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009: 360). Had I perceived this earlier in my study, I would have ethically used it to gain rapport and better access to the learning community (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009).

Students and teachers were often interested in my educational trajectories and not my study itself. This means there was often more buzz and intrigue around me than towards my study, which highlights the key argument of role models in chapter six. Had I been able to spend more time with students and teachers, to conduct lengthy observations and interactions, it is very likely the interest or anxieties around me would have decreased. Students and teachers would have shifted their focus towards my study, not the novelty and the noncongruence of the researcher. The learning community had designated me as a 'role model'. Over time, if my rapport

and access had increased I would have been able to negotiate a better role (Mazzei and O'Brien, 2009). Despite these factors, classroom observations, on the whole, provided me with useful information, gave me direct access to teachers and students, and provided a frame of reference for both participant(s) and myself. Observations enabled me to prompt students and teachers with regard to what I had observed in interviews. Lastly, observations were the sole reason I was able to get participants for in-depth interviews.

Analysis of classroom observational notes (CON)

After classroom observations, observational notes were typed into MS Word (see Appendix 1: Figures 6,7 and 8). The lack of continuous classroom observations meant I could not use the data to look for codes and patterns, or conduct progressive focussing by using the data to help me narrow down and explore new ideas in the in-depth interviews (Prosser, n.d.). Instead, the data was used to provide information on the course, students and the institutional context, and to gain first-hand experience of the types of interactions, learning spaces and sonic environments students encountered (please refer to Figures 9 and 10, Appendix 1). This data often supported student narratives. As seen by the colour scheme on the typed notes of CON1 in Appendix 1, Figure 9, analysis where possible matched that conducted on surveys and interview transcripts (please see main headings, Appendix 4.2, Transcript Key). Matching the analysis process, by analysing observational notes for key aspects: sonic environments, interactions, learning environment, technologies, behaviours) is how data was amplified and verified. This is also how new data was found.

3.4.3 Face-to-face in-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were selected for this study because they allow us:

> …to explore in detail people's subjective experiences, meaning-making, accounting
> processes, and unspoken assumptions about life and the social world in general (Healey-
> Etten and Sharp, 2010: 157).

This is particularly important when collecting the subjective experiences and reasons behind students' listening practices and choices, and seeing how these relate to their social world. In-depth interviews also allow for more detail, flexibility and follow-up questions (Doyle, 2011) than the survey and classroom observations used in my study. Ultimately however, no interview strategy is without its limitations. Each relies on a few key interviewing strategies: probing participants, using open-ended questions, 'playing dumb', enjoying or allowing silences (Healey-Etten and Sharp, 2010). These strategies, I found, often hampered an interview under the wrong researcher-participant dynamics or with quiet participants.

Silences with naturally quiet participants, for instance, did not encourage these particular participants to speak. They simply waited for the next question. Students or teachers who did not want to elaborate on their responses were more reluctant or cautious if probed. Participants who did not want to provide detail ignored the invitation to do so when open-ended questions were used. I also had little time with participants as the interviews were conducted over a maximum of three hours, and there was no option for additional interviews. This was due to lack of access, the unwillingness of participants to have an interview, and participants only willing to volunteer for one-off interviews. In response to this, interviews had to be handled on a case-by-case basis by listening to the interviewee(s) on: how long the interview would be, how much they wanted to share, when the interview would be conducted, and how many people would be in the interview.

Regardless of the difficulties and differences in interview experiences, participant interviews in this study still provided the most detail. They were conducted face-to-face and in students' educational institutes. Interviews were conducted in classrooms, lobby spaces, common rooms, a lab room, an IT room and the reception area. The interviews themselves were conducted in a variety of surroundings on sofas, desk and chairs, lab work benches and on a cold concrete floor. This was

because I had to use any space that was available during each interview, and within the limited access that a paper day visitor's pass or signing in gave me. Such passes did not allow me to enter secured places, such as libraries, secured lobby spaces or even lavatories without a student or teacher to use their ID passes. Therefore, attempting to gain independent access to large groups of students without an introduction or direct access was not possible.

Each interview was preceded by signing consent forms and clarifying my study's objectives. Although I created two interview templates – one for teachers and one for students – with a series of open ended questions to encourage the creation of narratives (please see Appendix 3 – 3.1 Teacher and 3.2 Student Interview Templates), participants often started by themselves while we were looking for, walking to, or setting-up in a suitable location. Due to this, interview templates were often used as a tick list to ensure the participant and I had not excluded anything crucial. As a result of this, it was not uncommon for student interviews to run in reverse and end at the beginning of the interview template (see Appendix 3.2 Student Interview Templates). Also seen in the Student Interview Template in Appendix 3.1, questions were formulated based on three key areas: listening practices and reasons; identity, cultural capital and community of belonging; and learning aspects. These three areas were identified as key to helping answer the research questions. Like the survey, each question created was reflected on, explained/justified, evaluated and revised (Adams and Cox, 2008). This recursive process included my peers, family and friends responding to the questions I generated, providing feedback on their intelligibility and after seeing the quality of the responses elicited from peers.

Participant dynamics and interview types

During interviews the nature of participant-researcher dynamics and participant motivations for taking part in my study produced a varied set of interviews. Teachers and more reserved students produced predominantly structured in-depth interviews. Questions were delivered in the order of relevance by aligning them to where

participants were in relation to the interview template. These interviews relied on me using and following the prepared interview questions more closely instead of following a loose, natural or unstructured style (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). Such interviews also often relied on the use of a series of relevant sub questions listed in the interview templates to extract more information and detail from participants as shown below.

Main question: Can you tell me about your home environment when you're studying and listening to music?

- o Where do you do your school work? Who is there? What does it sound like?
- o Are you allowed to listen to music while doing school work?
- o How do you listen to music? (quietly, on speakers, mobile…)
- o How do those around you respond?

Sometimes prompted participants were able to provide more detail but reluctant or quiet students, in particular males, simply answered questions in a quick and short manner, irrespective of the question being open-ended or closed.

Teachers were altogether a different type of participant. They often delivered controlled and scripted responses with little elaboration, which felt intentional. Unlike most students, they also took greater charge over what was and could be discussed or asked. They did not want to divulge information in an uncontrolled manner or without appropriate consideration. Responses appeared to be dictated by community expectations. Only one teacher, George at the FE college, had been given a copy of the interview schedule, and his transcript is the most controlled. The teachers at the Academy were not given a copy of the interview schedule due to time constrains, but their responses are very tentative since teachers did not want to be recorded saying something wrong or advocating for an inappropriate practice. See the two teacher interview excerpts below, and how teachers attempt to 'neutralise' any potential information that can be misconstrued negatively:

> I: *So a good number of students opted for this course directly so they want*
> *to be here (this is in reference to the classroom discussion and earlier*

informal chats with the teacher) and so does that mean that the others just automatically got rolled on because they couldn't get the grades for A2 (this should be - that they failed A2)?

Teacher - George: Err, so we had/ this year was/ this is/ not just this year but since I've started running forensics here there's been a steady increase every year. Erm, to a point that when I when I started forensics was non-existent. There was one group first year, one group second year. Erm since then, we've expanded every year our group numbers and now they suddenly thought they're going to invest elsewhere. Erm, so it's a mix of people that are seeking us out to (3) people that have wanted to do (2) A Levels but they can't, but we can offer them the same options for what they want to do, erm careerwise so a lot/ a couple of them want to do psychology so they came to me cos I'm the only one/ we're the only course that teaches an element of psychology other than the A' Levels...
#00:01:52-4#

<div align="center">- - -</div>

I: Do you then have problems with phones and tablets?

Teacher - Mahir: Yeah. In this school we try to, as when they come in, we collect the phones and make sure all of that is collected so that at least while they're here they don't get distracted from class and stuff like that.

I: So they can't check Wikipedia and see if you've got a formula wrong or something. [Failed attempt at humour to lighten the mood and tension.]

Teacher - Mahir: No. They can check later on I mean if they need to, but not in the class. Sometimes they can bring erm tablets for specifically when we have exam revisions and stuff like that they can bring them. #00:02:53-0#

On the other hand, students who generated more detailed in-depth interviews needed little to no guidance and structure. Often it was enough to ask an open-ended question, such as 'tell me about this song' or 'tell me more about your background', to instigate a detailed story. These interviews had the hallmarks of narrative elicitation – a few open-ended questions which enabled the narrator from the onset to take charge of the order of the storytelling and the emphasis (Holloway and Jefferson, 2008) while still providing the indexical references required to provide context, meaning and concrete events, times and places (Bauer, 1996). My

participation and input within such an interview involved clarifying accounts, confirming my listening, returning the participant to previous accounts or keeping them in line with the research objectives. This had to be done without limiting their accounts or hindering possible unexpected findings.

In addition to the one-on-one interviews, group interviews were conducted with classmates or friendship groups. This automatically changed the interview method to focus group interviews – 'discussion groups that address a particular topic' (Vaughn and Vaughn, 1996). The benefits of conducting them were sometimes weighed down by the disadvantages (Adams and Cox, 2008). Some students would only part-take in an interview if their friends were also involved. On the outset this seemed like a reasonable accommodation because I had incorrectly assumed friendship groups would likely be engaged in the same listening practices and activities; therefore, accounts would support each other. In practice, however, group interviews were prone to a series of power dynamics that were already at play within friendships (Healey-Etten and Sharp, 2010). The most dominant students were also my unofficial gatekeepers, who collected and persuaded participants to participate.

Students from the same friendship groups actually engaged in a variety of opposing and competing listening practices. This meant interviews often became loud and incoherent. Attempts to organize group discussions meant that I was forcibly directing who spoke by moving discussions to their comments. During transcription and after reviewing transcripts I was able to note that some useful accounts were missed because I cut them short to listen to other accounts, and I did not return to them. See the excerpt below taken from the transcript Appendix 4.1. At this point (the second part of the interview after a pause in recording) I had collected a few accounts on East Asian listening choices, but I had no accounts on Arabic songs and during RE.

> *Student - P: I listen to Exo, when I want to get swotty. Cos I/ I get crazy.*
>
> *Student - Pi: She loves them. #00:04:07-3#*

I: Okay lets get back to RE. So you like to listen to Arabic love songs from Kuwait when you're doing RE, please?

Student - Py: Why? I feel like RE I can't listen to something like rap. I just need something to focus and keep calm otherwise I'm going to get up and go crazy and actually I need to focus on it because it's my first exam so at least it's something slow (1) and quiet. #00:04:28-7#

The student, Py, was interrupted. The most dominant students discussed their grime and K/C/J-pop choices. Other listening preferences such as indie and dance from quieter students were silenced. As a result of this, I did not use those accounts in the analysis chapters due to insufficient data, and I did not give students a name. From transcripts I noted that dominant students were also subtly fighting for voice or to control what could and should be shared. Other students who did not contribute by giving their own accounts still attempted to control other students by casting judgement on what was a good or bad listening practice or choice. Undoubtedly these factors combined reduced accounts and created a more judgmental environment. The several voices and discussions in addition made transcribing, following speakers and views, difficult and incomplete (see Appendix 4.1 – Group Student Transcript 1). During an impromptu class focus group interview at the FE college, trying to recall what participants were saying and whom to give voice was also challenging, since it was not always possible to maintain uninterrupted responses or to hear students. This resulted in me only hearing about the recordings and listening reasons of students who were more expressive.

In spite of this, there were some very important benefits from the three group interviews I conducted at the academy with over a dozen students in total.

   i.   They opened up discussions about listening practices even when other students showed disapproval and tried to censor choices and practices.

  ii.   I was able to listen and observe the true extent of listening practices for more students than had I not allowed group interviews.

 iii.   Some students were able to challenge, debate and even justify their views.

iv. In one focus group, which consisted of two AS level boys and two AS level girls, I was able to learn about gendered listening practices and family dynamics.

In all participant groups, dynamics such as student confidence, personality, enthusiasm to participate, the number of participants present, teacher hierarchies and views towards my study all shaped my study. The various in-depth interviews collected, on the whole, provided the most significant and meaningful data towards answering the research questions and allowed for narrative thematic analysis.

Analysis of interview transcripts

Thematic analysis (TA) was used as an analytic approach for two reasons. The first was that it was not in conflict with the epistemological and ontological paradigms of my study's conceptual frames, which are constructivism. The second was that TA was a very pragmatic approach to investigating how and why students listen to music or Quranic recitations when studying in their various learning spaces. The data collected from classroom observations and in-depth interviews lent itself to TA because it contained textual data that held manifest and latent meanings (Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas, 2013). Furthermore, textual data when using TA can be analysed for 'commonalties, relationships, overarching patterns, theoretical constructs, or explanatory principles', (Lapadat, 2010: 3), which can be coded and interpreted to help create plausible constructions of reality or theory. Thematic analysis is different from content analysis, which moves towards the continuum of quantifying data. Thematic analysis was also flexible enough to rely on the significance of a pattern and not necessarily its frequency (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This was especially important since the data collected is from a small number of participants.

Analysis was carried out following the recommended guidelines of Braun and Clarke because they provided a clear and effective way of thematically analysing,

categorising and creating meaning from complex data. The analysis process was follows:

1. Become familiar with the data through active re-reading of the entire data before selecting what to focus on.
2. During initial coding, code for as many as appear relevant and ensure the data extracts are inclusive (enough contextual data).
3. For themes, collate codes into broader themes and sub-themes.
4. Reviewing themes, clear, clarify and double-check if they are applicable to the data. This also involves re-reading the whole data set to make sure all the themes are relevant and new themes or data have not been excluded.
5. Defining, refining and naming themes. Explain why each theme is important and what story it tells. How themes relate to others, their sub-themes and any hierarchy or significance.
6. Once a thematic map has been created the themes should be analysed for meaning: what does this theme mean? What does it say about the topic? Why is it discussed in that manner?

This process listed above although represented sequentially was recursive, not rigid. In small datasets such as the dataset in this study, this process often appeared blurred (Braun and Clarke, 2016).

To facilitate coding, become more familiar with the data and create a thematic map, I also created a transcript key which grew and developed throughout transcript analysis (see Appendix 4.2 – Transcript Key). The four areas of interest found in the transcript: learning experiences, self-identifications, musicking, and learning environments, where informed by the literature and research questions. They helped me extract the most relevant parts in transcripts so I could begin analysis. These areas were linked to those already seen in classroom and survey data analysis excerpts.

During early analysis, the concept and term, 'musicking' was still being used as was 'learning environments' instead of 'listening' and 'listening practices or space'. This

is why both musicking and environment are still in the transcript key and annotations. As discussed in chapter two, the term 'musicking' was replaced by 'listening practices' during the early stage of the write-up phase, when it became apparent that several students were listening to Quranic recitations. 'Listening spaces' was adopted much later in the analysis phase when it was realised that 'space' was more in keeping with sociocultural dynamics and interactions. Therefore, 'learning spaces' was more accurate and immediately meaningful than the term 'learning environments'. The transcript key, irrespective of the changes in terminology, helped reduce fifteen pages of a transcript to five or six pages of focused responses that were colour coded and grouped in the abovementioned areas of interest. Data within these groupings was then analysed for meaning, patterns and significance. Excerpts from transcripts were also taken from these subsections of data to help support interpretations, to provide evidence and to make links to other datasets.

3.5 Justification of methodological tools and how they complement theoretical frames

Each research method used gathered different perspectives, which provided a variety of answers to why and how, some students listen to their chosen listening materials during study. Surveys in this study highlighted the differences between students who engage in listening during study, and those that did not. Surveys indicated that there is a small but distinct population that engages in listening during study for reasons outside of entertainment or 'tuning out', and for reasons including personalisation (Bull,2008). They also allowed students to provide new perspectives that were unknown before my study, such as, recordings being used to discover about entirely new people and cultures for the sake of knowing, or for creativity. Classroom observational notes provided evidence on how students interact, behave and respond differently to similar learning spaces, conditions and pressures. Observations lent credibility to students' narrative accounts, by supporting them and by providing additional detail. Observations enabled me to experience or observe some of the interactions and dynamics in students' learning spaces, and to note what was omitted or overlooked.

Face-to-face interviews enabled me to hear and see some of the recordings students discuss in their interviews. Interviews enabled me to listen to students' explanations for why they chose particular recordings as they were playing during the interview; to see how they discovered and compiled their cultivated listening choices; to see what technology and internet services they used such as mobile phones, tablets, apps and websites; and to see how they managed their listening practices and choices. Interviews were particularly helpful in highlighting how students used recordings and particular technologies during study. For instance, some students listened to music off online sites such as YouTube or Vikki, which also have music videos. Other students through mobile apps listened to Quranic recitations in Arabic, with Arabic displays of the recited text and English subtitles scrolling across the bottom of the mobile screen. I learnt that students were also able to highlight favourite parts of a text, annotate and create a favourite list of recitations and reciters. From observing this, I was able to prompt students on such practices and listen to their explanations of how they were able to study while also engaged elsewhere with auditory and visual information. I was able to ask why they needed English subtitles during Quranic recitations or Korean subtitles in the case of K-Pop, and I was able to watch the videos that accompanied songs.

Students by themselves when discussing their listening choices and practices never discussed the visuals that accompanied their listening during study or the multiple languages on a screen. Therefore, face-to-face interviews prompted new questions, provided additional data that was excluded from observations and surveys, allowed me to experience a snapshot of how students engaged in listening, and to experience some of their listening experiences. Importantly, I learnt something new from face-to-face interviews about how students multi-task. Students did not necessarily use all of the available stimulus and information available to them during study. They could prioritise by only listening to a recording during study by placing the mobile phone face down, away from them or obscured from vision to block the visual information that could be distractive. This appeared easier for students that listened to Quranic recitations as they could select recordings that lasted for the

duration of their study. Therefore, they could avoid interacting with their digital device for hours. Such information was not available from surveys and observations, alone.

3.6 Recruitment procedures, revisions and issues

Recruitment strategies were based around research guidelines on how to research vulnerable groups, such as young people. The university ethics committee, Social Research Association (SRA, 2003) and British Educational Research Association (BERA 2011, 2018) recommended researching students in open, visible, public spaces with plenty of opportunity for young participants to leave if they felt uncomfortable or wanted to discontinue participation. Equally, I had to demonstrate to the ethics committee that I had taken precautions to keep myself safe. Since it was impractical to meet students at the British Library, due to needing a chaperon for every interview; permission from parents or guardians to meet students outside of school; and, proof that students would be safe travelling to and from the meeting point, I opted to conduct interviews in schools. I also tried accessing students via youth clubs and parents, but they proved to be more difficult gatekeepers to access and convince. One parent volunteered her daughter for my study, at her workplace at a university in London, but this was not a pragmatic solution.

The first recruitment strategy consisted of:

a) Making contact with a known teacher, maintaining an open channel of communication via text, email and/or face-to-face social met-ups until I had secured an official invite to the institute.

b) Giving a PowerPoint presentation to the teacher and/or decision maker requesting for their participation and access to students; giving them a Teacher Cover Letter and answering any questions they may have had.

c) Once invited for a classroom observation, introducing myself and research project to students, answering their questions, handing out a Student Cover Letter, and if possible, a survey and collecting the contact details of students who volunteered to participate.

Out of the seven contacts I had secured from three institutes in London, one contact was fruitful. This was the Islamic institute where most of my participants were based. The other six contacts were not willing to, or could not participate. Only phases a) and part of c) were used at the Academy, while all the phases were used at the FE college.

When it became evident several months later that my (initial) contacts would not participate in my study and would not or could not introduce me to other contacts, I changed my recruitment strategy from slow, patient one-to-one communications to larger scale, faster digital forms of communications (see Appendices 5.7.1 and 5.7.2).

This second strategy involved:

1. Researching the schools and colleges in my area using their website to find out about their student cohorts and teaching practices to ensure they matched my target participants.
2. Finding the contact details of the appropriate person to contact on the website. If this was a secured site, then calling the institute and requesting either the contact details of the appropriate person or to be transferred to the person.
3. Sending a follow-up email introducing myself, how I got their details and why I was contacting them and attaching a PowerPoint presentation containing information about my study for more information.
4. Following their response, making an attempt to secure a face-to-face (f2f) meeting. However, a f2f was never achieved in any of the dozen schools contacted.
5. Following-up no responses after a week from sending the first email by sending a follow-up email or call. This was also entirely unsuccessful since it did not elicit any further response or participation from the institute.

Recruitment strategy two was wholly unsuccessful and was modified again for the third strategy to reduce the time that I spent looking for institutes and writing personalised introductory emails. I branched out onto professional and personal networks (also see Appendices 5.7.3 and 5.7.4) and become more digitally public and open by being online.

The third research strategy included:

1. Creating a university webpage to attach to emails for decision-makers to see that my project was legitimate, above board and official
   http://www.open.ac.uk/people/mmp253

2. Then posting this webpage link to my LinkedIn account and posting that I was looking for teachers, managers and heads to participate. Through this facility I was able to connect with half a dozen or so teachers and decision-makers and exchange more meaningful communications than with the previous strategy. Unfortunately, even if teachers appeared keen to participate, they seemed discouraged by the lack of value they saw in my study and/or the mention of music or mobile phones and classroom observations, which will be discussed further, shortly.

3. For the first time, I also branched out to my own personal resources via Facebook. I sent out posts requesting teachers to participate in my study. This resulted in responses from two former schoolmates, now themselves teachers; an introduction to a teacher and my post being re-posted several times on Facebook. Unfortunately, the terms 'music' and 'classroom observations' once again were unpopular as teachers told me that made my study harder to justify. Teachers suggested their managers or the parents of their students would have issue with the research topic.

4. Through social networking I was able to place an advert for my study posted on the Institute of Education UCL's Teacher Facebook page and through the same contact I was introduced to a school in an inner London borough (Appendix 5.7.3).

5. Through further social networking I was able to place an advert for my study on an educational charity's Twitter feed, which also necessitated the need to

open a Twitter account and pin that advert and contact details to my own account: @MalibhaPinchbec.

6. I also branched out to family and their connections (Appendix 5.7.4). This was useful in breaking down barriers and securing communications with teachers in a school.

7. During these exchanges my resources – webpage, PowerPoint presentation, PDFs, online posts also changed. The wording transformed from music to digital practices to listening practices to sonic landscapes and then finally sonic texts. 'Classroom observations' became 'classroom visits' (see Appendix 5.7.1).

8. Using the university's open policy I also sent out an ALL-MAILINGLIST email requesting participants or referrals and received two responses in South West England and in Northern England.

9. I also contacted a professor within my department for suggestions and contacts and was able to post information on their research team's site, which is viewed by several teachers
http://edfutures.net/The_Sonic_Landscapes_Project

Through the university's open mailing list, three people responded, but they were spread too far across the country. Thus, notwithstanding all the energy and time I invested in trying to recruit more teachers and students, the only reason I obtained access to a research site was because it was to the benefit of the person approving my access – it was reciprocity (Adams, 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and one that was spearheaded by the gatekeeper.

Recruitment based on gatekeeper-spearheaded reciprocity

My own attempts at reciprocity were rejected or felt insufficient in part because they were directed at giving talks to classes. This could have been perceived as not very useful or beneficial for the teacher in regards to their teaching. My study itself was also viewed to lack immediately actionable study outcomes and to lack relevance to common teaching problems/ struggles. The lack of acknowledgment for participation

from senior staff – during staff appraisal, for instance – also seemed to make my study less desirable.

In the college, the teacher endorsed my study because he wanted to pursue future work and research collaborations with the person that connected us. The teacher allowed me access to conduct my study as a goodwill gesture for our mutual contact. At the academy, the owner endorsed my study because he wanted to maintain future ties with me, either for his future research or for the school. This suggests that in future studies, research participation must ensure gatekeeper participants gain advantages beyond the scope of the research. There must be advantages for participants to participate, but learning what they are is difficult. Gatekeepers when asked what they wanted or needed in order to participate, did not offer any clear or pragmatic solutions, such as a different type of study. Direct questions on what they wanted of their participation did not offer up direct answers and solutions. In future studies, there is also a need for more time to be allocated to negotiating access and discovering the rewards for gatekeepers.

What reciprocity is should come from the gatekeeper, thereby ensuring that it is meaningful and useful to the person. Future research will work towards making sure that gatekeepers or participants do not feel the researcher has forced their own values onto them and benefitted from my study in a selfish and self-interested manner, by leaving the gatekeeper poorer for the experience when their time, effort and participation is factored (Adams, 1998). This of course means that reciprocity may mean different things to different gatekeepers, but by following ethical considerations it may make the research dynamic between researcher and the researched a more collaborative manner.

Recruitment issues based on the research topic

The uptake and acceptance of this study was also greatly hampered by the research topic. From the view of decision-makers and gatekeepers, the notion of students

listening to music while learning or studying or using mobile phones was simply alarming. If they did not end the phone conversation abruptly or sever email communication, it was not uncommon for following communications to have been tentative. This is because I had overlooked or was unaware of the full extent educational institutes need to at least be seen to uphold a traditional and professional code of conduct. This requirement, which is both legal and social, governed researcher-gatekeeper dynamics and affected recruitment significantly because of the underlying assumption by gatekeepers that this study looked into a taboo practice. The act of discussing the practice and attempting to study it also appears to have been seen by decision-makers and some gatekeepers as evidence that I either endorsed students' listening practices or would publicly embarrass the institute. This in part explains my experience of hostility, general suspicion and the caution towards me. Although hostility and high levels of suspicion are not uncommon reactions to ethnographic research across a variety of studies (Mapuranga, 2013), what surprised me was that no level of assurance, officially or personally, could eradicate decision-makers' anxieties. I got the distinct impression that gatekeepers and decision-makers took on a self-preservation tactic: do not invite scrutiny, let others volunteer, and wait and see the results.

To counter the friction and resistance, I self-censored, by downplaying or changing the words I used in 'an attempt to control the meaning of events' (O'Neill and Best, 2013). At the time, I believed this would reduce the likelihood of decision-makers making hasty assumptions about the nature of my study and declining to participate. This subversive tactic was not successful, I suspect because institutes are generally fearful of research. O'Neill and Best state that censorship has historically been used by the powerful to support or maintain particular habitus and discourses. During the recruitment process, however, I self-censored intentionally because I felt I was in the position of the weak and had to negotiate access with those who were in the position of the strong to allow me to conduct my study. Upon reflection, my self-censorship was also in reaction to what appeared to be decision-makers' own censorship out of fear of scrutiny from others – government and private authorities, parents, the media and society. This made conducting this research feel socio-politically precarious,

and I felt responsible for ensuring teacher participants, especially, were not exposed to scrutiny.

It seemed, therefore, that decision-makers could not acknowledge, discuss or allow a study about students listening to anything other than the teacher, even during independent study and at home. This made communicating with decision-makers to negotiate access very difficult because of the epistemic violence (Spivak, 2004) that I experienced as symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) – the shaming, shunning, ridiculing and belittling I experienced or that was directed at my study. I was often forced into a position of embarrassment and made to feel foolish or misguided for persevering with my study, when it was so evidently against accepted community norms. I found that I could not use a bold and direct approach, 'I would like to study music…'. So, I developed a soft and indirect manner to introduce the subject of my study through synonyms and euphemisms – 'musicking, listening practices, sonic landscapes, audio texts, digital practices'. I also developed tactful persuasions, compromises and justifications – 'classroom visits' not observations, institutional and participant anonymity, short-term access, no legal or official ramifications.

These research experiences are similar to what Huysamen found in her study on men who pay for sex. By default, the men in her study assumed she was biased, disapproving and held strong political motives concerning their taboo sexual practice. Huysamen states that, in her research, in an attempt to create a neutral, friendly or non-judgemental research relationship and environment, she sometimes undermined her ability to conduct my study in a more critical and direct manner. Huysamen's study resulted in the reproduction of dominant relations and discourses because she did not challenge them (Huysamen, 2016). However, during analysis upon the discovery of this, she was able to use this data and her experiences for critical study. Huysamen states that such research experiences, although undesirable, can actually allow for more natural relations to be co-constructed and recorded. In her case, she is referring to the male and female gender relations of domination and submissiveness, which her in-depth interviews reproduced between herself and her

male participants. At the same time Huysamen is not advocating for 'cultural relativism' (Brown, 2008). She simply wanted to uncover and explain her research through 'open dialogue and scrupulous attention to evidence' (Brown, 2008: 364). This is the same position I hold in this study, I do not advocate for or against listening during study, but I simply attempt to 'see within' (Brown, 2008: 365) the practice, and to understand its relevance during study. This is at odds with gatekeepers, participants, decision-makers and the public whom have their own views towards the practice, but which are not always supported by evidence.

In this study the challenges, negotiations and tensions I encountered with gatekeepers and decision-makers and the changes I had to adopt through speech, image control, interview content and recruitment practices also reflect the natural order, priorities and nested power systems at play which govern the learning institutes I contacted and the persons within them. These difficulties further support the view that learning communities are intensive sites of political, cultural, social, professional and public scrutiny. They have very strong norms and pressures. Not conforming is, and can be, punished by restricting access to resources or communities, and socially through alienation or rejection. As a researcher, I became acutely aware of this rejection, and the implications it had for my own educational progress as a research student. As a direct result from the challenges that I experienced, I became better able to hear and listen to students' accounts of rejection, ridicule, alienation or struggle with more perspective. My own experiences of feeling intellectually, morally and socially insecure and foolish about conducting this study during the recruitment phase attests to the power of community practices and interactions. From such experiences I also gained empathy and began to see why discourses, community acceptance, positionality and membership status were important for students in their learning communities.

In summary, I was not seen as a neutral or detached researcher as a consequence of three intersecting factors: 1. my ambiguous community positionality, intersecting identities and membership statuses; 2. my recruitment strategies, which made institutes and the decision-makers in them feel scrutinised; and 3. the taboo nature

of my topic made my study 'a risk'. Further to this, during recruitment I could not approach institutes directly. Teachers, my gatekeepers, were also hidden behind private and secure intranet because they hosted vulnerable persons. Decision-makers were not always visible, accessible or open to any research, let-alone this study. By August of my second year, it was evident that teachers were disinterested in endorsing and participating in a study they did not see the value of, or saw no benefit to them, and I saw no other solution but to continue with the limited access that was available to me. I stopped looking for other research sites and focused on collecting as much data as possible from the academy and under the pressure of impending exams. There was also no option for returning to students after the exams, due to the summer holidays, students leaving the institute and the unpopularity of my study topic.

The series of difficulties and setbacks that I encountered during research forced me to reflect and adapt by working flexibly, creatively and opportunistically. Had my study been aimed at primary school teachers and students, I would not have had the same issues with decision-makers and gatekeepers. Introductions from my personal networks showed that primary school teachers were always interested in participating in my study but disappointed to discover it was for an older cohort. This is interesting as it supports the music studies that look at the use of music in lessons under the control or supervision of teachers (Bennington, 2004; White, 2007). It also highlights the current areas of research on listening practices and learning, the negative shift on the subject as students progress through to their middle and upper education, and the increased levels of sociocultural pressure and scrutiny. Music is generally perceived as distracting to older students and as a form of counterculture.

Similarly, had I approached university students, I would have had little resistance from institutes since students are adults and universities are not accountable for them to the same degree with younger students. This is also seen through research on the music listening of university students (Khalfa *et al.*, 2003; Jacobsen and Forste, 2010; Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham, 2010). The studies cited approach listening practices from a psychological perspective (category one in the literature

review). They have no interest or mention of how listening is viewed as problematic from a social or teaching point of view. They highlight how learning practices and communities are governed and viewed differently across educational levels. Secondary education appears to be a very self-guarded learning community, which explains the difficulties I encountered in recruiting institutes, and their reluctance to give me access to students.

Overall, this study probably clashed less with particular decision-makers and gatekeepers and more with political and public debates, and current policy and legislative pressures. Every Child Matters (UK Government, 2003), which educational institutes have to uphold, stipulates five requirements: to be healthy, to stay safe, to enjoy and achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic well-being. This is legislatively underpinned by the Children's Act of 2004 (UK Government, 2004). Further to this, additional policies on 'safeguarding children' (Department for Education, 2018) and laws such as the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, indicate that schools were possibly reluctant to allow a researcher to enter their institute and interview students that could be labelled as disenfranchised socially, culturally, religiously and academically.

Politically and publicly other key educational discussions were also taking place during my recruitment phase and overall project, such as: government announcing the distractive impact of mobile phones in classrooms (Department for Education and Gibb, 2015); schools, teachers and academics debating the benefits and setbacks of mobile phones in classrooms (Parker, 2017); France banning mobile phones, tablets and smart watches in classrooms for students up to the age of fifteen (BBC, 2018a); and Ofsted head, Amanda Spielman (BBC, 2018b) and the Culture Secretary, Matt Hancock publicly criticising the use of mobile phones in classrooms and encouraging schools, teachers and headteachers to stop their use in institutes: 'I admire headteachers who do not allow mobile phones. More school should follow their lead' (Busby, 2018). In this socio-political climate, decision-makers would have understood the attitudes in discourses, legislations and policies relevant to them as prohibiting (Braun et al., 2011) the listening practices I attempted to investigate.

Allowing a researcher to enter an institute to conduct research on a practice that was deemed inappropriate legally, publicly and professionally was unwise.

This was directly demonstrated by the head teacher in a secondary school, in an authority in the south of England, who had a lengthy phone conversation with me to first find out what my study entailed and why. She refused to allow her school to participate in my study based on the grounds that, after the school's restructuring to come into line with current policies, they were in the process of removing all student-owned digital technologies in classrooms to ensure such practices stopped. This, she explained, would be widespread, therefore making my study both redundant and difficult. Yet three of her teachers, moments after my phone conversation with the head teacher, responded to an email request I had sent earlier in the week requesting teachers to participate in my study. They had been interested in discussing my study and perhaps participating. The misfortune of making contact with the head teacher before her potentially willing teachers is obvious, but what is more important is how true and pronounced the following statement is: '…schools are complex and sometimes incoherent assemblages…' (Ball et al., 2012: 2).

It became more apparent to me throughout the recruitment process that agents (managers, teachers and students) were perpetually at odds with each other, my study, or me, the researcher. I, in turn, needed to approach the right person to negotiate the minefield of objections on my behalf. This is evident with the two institutes that allowed me to conduct my research. In the college, the teacher had attempted to negotiate official access with his managers, but opted to by-pass them once it became evident they had no interest in research or rewarding the teacher for it. At the academy the owner instructed his members of staff to allow me to do my research. In each case both contacts had trust either in me or our mutual contact, and took it upon themselves to negotiate obstacles or instruct others to allow me access. Therefore, future recruitment strategies will aim to by-pass difficult decision-makers, if gatekeepers are on board, and vice versa if they are not. This means that each research site will need to be treated case-by-case from the onset. This would

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

also mean investing more time ascertaining the best person to approach, and understanding the dynamics that would stop research approval in each site.

3.7 Student participants and sampling

My study's target student participants were secondary academic years 10, 11, 12 and 13, also known (within FE) as Levels 2 and 3. Students within these academic years would typically be aged between 14 and 19. I also interviewed two students who were 20 and 21 because they had changed institutes, moved to a new country and/or were re-starting entire two or three-year courses. Student participants were also undertaking a variety of qualifications: General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSEs), Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), Advanced Subsidiary Level of education (AS Levels) and Advanced Levels of education (A Levels), across a variety of subjects. AS, A Levels and Level 3 BTEC courses are not legally compulsory, but they are required to gain access to additional study at university.

At the beginning of the research I focused on students who listened to music; however, over time, I had to change the focus from music (and musicking) to audio texts, then eventually to listening materials and sound environments, to encourage participation from students who listened to Quranic recitations or tonal sounds when studying. A few students referred to classmates or siblings who listen to what can be described as tones. I recall a student showing me an app that consisted of tonal sounds and white noise, but since it was in passing and no other students elaborated on the practice, I did not investigate this further or include it in the analysis chapters.

Due to my difficulties in recruiting participants, and in line with Braun and Clarke and Hammersley's views on sampling being more significant than size, I focused on collecting interview data from students who engaged in listening from the two

institutes that allowed me access (see Appendix 5.7). The data collected was less than expected due to the issues already discussed. Equally, bigger datasets are not synonymous with better data because researchers can still fail to do justice to transcripts when coding complex data (Braun and Clarke, 2016).

Hammersley (2015) in a short paper, also argues that sampling and size are entirely separate and different. He highlights the fallacy of quantifying qualitative data through the notion of size. He states that specifying size in qualitative studies is more often due to the pressures of external factors such as ethics committees and funding bodies. He also points out that what is more important is: '…*whether particular data segments allow a fruitful analytic argument to be developed and tested*' (the quoted author's emphasis, Hammersley, 2015: 688). Also, there is a greater significance in *which* cases are studied rather than how many cases are studied (own emphasis). After all, '… the whole point of theoretical sampling, for instance, is to select cases that are similar, or that contrast, in ways which maximize fruitful development of the emerging theory' (Hammersley, 2015: 688). The data collected in this study has been relevant to understanding why students engage in listening practices. It has also added new findings and theoretical perspectives to the literature. Based on this, I am assured that the data collected in my study is both sufficient and reliable.

Throughout my study, student participants were predominantly self-selected. They volunteered to participate by providing their contact details on the back page of the survey, giving me their contact details face-to-face, or through chance meetings during free periods and break times. Participation was not always based on students' interest in my study. Sometimes I got the strong impression it was based on the notion that they were helping me because it was the right thing to do – to help a fellow minority and potential role model. Nonetheless, I was very grateful for this participation and their time.

3.8 Data collection sites

The two institutes where data was collected had very different demographics. The FE college was a large institute that offered numerous courses across a number of campuses and partnership colleges and universities. It offered predominantly post-compulsory education to learners aged sixteen and above – or 'school leavers'. Courses began at level one and continued up to the first two preparatory years of undergraduate study. They covered academic, apprentice and vocational qualifications such as A levels, BTECs, NVQs, Access courses, university certificates and diplomas, short courses and courses for employers and employees. As a whole the college catered for a large number of communities and backgrounds. The institute was a security conscious, well established, publicly funded learning centre.

The academy, as an Islamic faith school, catered specifically for British Muslim students who were born in England, Somali, Kenya or European countries such as Germany, Netherlands and Sweden. This means that students often spoke different languages from one other, as well as from siblings and parents. Some students had experienced a migratory life before settling in the UK. It was not uncommon to have students enrolled late on a course either because they had just arrived in the country, or moved into the area, or because parents and students were unhappy with their education or progress at other institutes. The academy offered courses for learners from primary school up to level three courses – AS and A levels. All courses offered could be designated as academic and focused towards university entry. In the evenings, the academy catered as a tutorial centre for other students in the community who either attended day school elsewhere or had completed their education with insufficient grades to pursue courses at college and university or to enter employment.

The academy was significantly smaller than the FE college, but it was nonetheless oversubscribed, with the owner looking for more buildings and recreational spaces to accommodate the school's needs. At the time of the research, the academy was

privately funded by parents and community donations. This was insufficient and the centre was seeking funding and registration to become a full academy. Parental or community involvement was constant since parents, neighbours or other family members regularly attended prayers throughout the day in the prayer hall, upstairs for men, and downstairs for women. This created, for me, a very strong sense of a religious community as students were also expected to engage in prayers throughout the day. Several mothers brought in Somali home cooked or baked foods to sell during break times at cost. Fathers and mothers acted as security officers at entrances. Mothers also chaperoned primary school learners to play spaces, alongside teachers outside of the centre.

Many students spent entire days at the centre, starting with schooling and continuing after classes with clubs and religious instruction; many students also attended activities at weekends. Several students came from medium (three to four siblings) or large families (five or more siblings), meaning that entire families could be at the academy or in education generally – primary school, secondary school, undergraduate and postgraduate studies. Large families often consisted of several half-siblings, often described as 'cousins', from second or third wives, often described as 'aunties'. Despite having familiarity this academy, I was only made aware of these relationships by a student who referred to her father's wives during an interview, and by a social worker who helped the community at my local hairdresser, during an afternoon visit. These conversations helped me contextualise some of the responses students had given me. That said, there was a lot of variety within the community. Although all students were Muslim, they and their families engaged with the religion in different ways. Polygamy was generational and typically only found among much older parents. Parents born in England and most teachers, especially female teachers, of any age generally disapproved of the practice and preferred not to discuss it. The relevance of these family set-ups to my study is in the interactional dynamics it creates, and the learning spaces shaped in such contexts.

Four out of the five teachers who participated in my study were from minority communities. George[5], a white male teacher with a teaching qualification and eight years' teaching experience, is the fifth teacher at the FE college. The other three teachers at the academy, Atefeh, Mahir and Hamid, are also with full teaching status. The fifth teacher at the academy, Adhira, was a temporary teacher waiting for her degree results to embark on a medical degree. Adhira and Hamid's interview data was not used in the analysis chapters, but they gave me access to their students.

3.9 Consent, ethics and other considerations

First and foremost, all the participants in this thesis were given pseudonyms. Names of institutions, identifying locations and specific course names were also removed to maintain anonymity.

Throughout the various modes of data collection, I sought informed consent from student participants, particularly for in-depth interviews. However, independent informed consent sometimes turned into informed assent when a teacher volunteered his students instead of himself for a group interview. To counteract this and to ensure students wanted to participate I allowed for informed dissent (Morrow and Richards, 1996) by offering students the opportunity to withdraw from participation once their teacher had left the classroom, and by assuring them non-participation would not be reported to their teacher. Surprisingly no students ever declined to participate. At other times, students indirectly or passively refused to participate after volunteering themselves through informed consent.

At the college, out of the eleven students who volunteered to participate in the in-depth interviews by providing me their email address and/or mobile number, two actually participated. Beforehand, I handed out surveys in class and while I collected them back I allowed students to remove the last page containing their details. I

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[5] All names in this thesis are pseudonyms.

made it very clear that only students who wanted to participate in in-depth interviews should provide their contact details on the last page. When emails and/or text messages were sent out to students, six of the eleven students responded and arranged a date and time for an interview. Yet only one of these six students made the arrangement. The students who did not attend were sent reminder emails and/or texts to re-schedule, which they ignored. I took this as a sign that students no longer wished to participate in my study and discontinued communication to avoid harassing them.

At the academy I was able to be more direct and to communicate with students more freely. This could have been because some of the students knew me, or of me through their older siblings or cousins. Once I was accounted for by signing in, teachers gave me the space to approach different groups of students outside of classes. As a result, I openly negotiated with students for their time and they often approached me face-to-face to reschedule. Some students were noncommittal about their participation and changed appointments on a whim by saying: 'because something better has come along Miss' – like playing football with friends after school' or 'If you don't do it now Miss, I won't be bothered after school.' Other students wanted to get my study out of the way and wanted the interview immediately after their lesson.

There were distinct differences in regards to how students treated my study and me. Often as the only adult present (as teachers were teaching in classrooms), legal along with cultural considerations and risk assessments were foremost in my considerations. I had to adapt to accommodate the unpredictability of my young participants. Some students treated me and my research with great reverence, and they acted very formally, self-censoring to the extent that they withheld or downplayed their listening practices and choices. Others were very free in sharing their listening materials and voicing their views. Male students, in particular, were very polite and treated me with the same regard as a teacher. Female students moved between the spectrum of treating me as a teacher and a (girl)friend. The latter created ethical problems as participants would divulge too much information or

used the interview to voice, or vent their personal frustrations. At the beginning of interviews, I informed students that their conversation was recorded and that if they reported anything concerning, I was obliged to pass that information on.

Cultural, research and legal considerations also involved taking into account a variety of factors, by making decisions based on the best cultural practice and the safest outcome at any given moment. Each time I interacted with student participants the following was played out.

a) Are all my interactions with students in a public space? This meant keeping classroom doors open when interviewing a student and/or requesting a classmate or a lone student to be present at the back of the classroom if the door had to be closed on the account of the noise. This is standard procedure in schools and was also recommended by the university ethics committee. Not following this procedure would have been a questionable practice and/or created unnecessary problems – as discussed next.

b) Do I provide confidentiality? Having another student present during an interview, even at the back, could be interpreted as a breach of confidentiality. To remedy this, I either asked the student to invite a student or asked them if they had any issue with the student I selected. If a student became upset during the interview or reported that I behaved inappropriately, not having another student present as a 'witness' could have placed my integrity at risk along with the institute in which I was conducting the research and the ethics committee that allowed me to conduct the research.

c) Sometimes interviews were conducted in public spaces such as a lobby or a student common area. These were prone to be noisy, full of interruptions, with non-participating students staring at the student participant, me, and/or the digital recorder. This was often during changeovers, so to compensate, I refrained from asking personal questions until the spaces were emptied.

d) Some students volunteered their friends or tried to make them participate and I had to ensure that during group interviews each student was voluntarily participating and not buckling to peer pressure. As the researcher I had to '…take into account ... intra-group power dynamics' and the reality that

'…young people may feel compelled to allow a researcher to become part of their group as a result of the feelings of the other group members' (Edmond, 2005: 131). To avoid this peer pressure without drawing attention to reluctant students, I allowed students to remain quiet by not directing any questions to them. At times it was also necessary to defend or leave unchallenged a student's right to leave during a group interview since it was not easy for them to refuse their friends. This often occurred when students left a classroom for the lavatory and did not return.

e) Some students were expected to return home immediately after school or had a long commute home. To avoid interfering with their obligations or safety, I moved interviews forward to lunch times. This resulted in students and me occasionally conducting an interview whilst eating. It also meant that I avoided becoming entangled with angry parents if students did not return home at the allocated times. Also, students could not use me and my study as a cover story.

f) Despite the disclosure that everything participants shared was recorded and would be transcribed for analysis and publication, students and occasionally teachers still provided information that was either of a personal nature, not directly relevant to my study, or simply alarming. On one occasion, I inquired about a student's wellbeing and passed on personal information that needed further attention as I was uncertain if the student was receiving support.

Factor f) helped me fully comprehend the reasons behind 'increased governance' and 'intensified risk assessments' (Daniel, Ivan, and Aimar, 2015) when interacting with vulnerable persons, and why the university ethics committee gave detailed scrutiny to the research. With this in mind, I decided I did not want to pursue research with students outside the haven of educational institutes. I did not want to tackle, soften or negotiate access with a new set of stakeholders, decision-makers and gatekeepers at the start of my third year. Furthermore, I did not want to encounter a new source of unpleasant dynamics. Undoubtedly this decision in conjunction with ethical considerations and the sensitive nature of my study limited its scope. However, since I have thoroughly explained why I opted to focus my research on the data I could collect, within limiting institutional settings, there should

be a clear understanding of the nature of the research field, and how it shaped this study.

3.10   Methodological conclusions and future improvements

Under ideal conditions, I would have improved my study by increasing my interactions with students to share and experience their learning spaces more extensively, and invested more time listening to their sonic learningscapes, and cultivating better researcher-participant dynamics and relationships. Taking pictures or screenshots of their recordings would also have enabled me to download their apps, visit their online communities and listen to and watch some of their recordings. This was not possible, partly due to the sensitive nature of my research. Nevertheless, the data I gathered and the interactions I shared with students and teachers still produced meaningful and relevant findings. On the whole, the difficult experiences have provided me with more data and an experiential understanding of the structures and material conditions of learning communities. The mixed methods approach, incorporating surveys, observations and interviews, has resulted in the strengthening of narrative data.

On the issue of participants and sampling, in the future I will encourage reluctant participants to be interviewed in a group and then invite participants of interest for a one-to-one or paired interview. Participation would be based on responses and a participant's relevance to my study. This would help reduce anxiety, highlight target participants and also help me generate more data than beginning with one-off one-to-one interviews. I would also attach clip-on microphones to speakers in a group so I can hear all speakers more clearly. Video recording would also have helped me identify speakers more quickly and captured interactions and behaviours more accurately. In group interviews, I could not record for instance which students were rolling their eyes or sighing at one another's responses, or which students were passing notes or texting one other during the interview, and at which points. During interviews, I was aware such interactions and behaviours were happening, but I focused on writing down key details in case the digital recorder did not pick up

student's responses clearly. I also focused on managing group interviews and trying to absorb as much as I could, and asked questions to encourage students to keep talking. A video recorder would have reduced the pressure on me to recall as much as I could during interviews, but greatly increased the time analysing data. Filming students would also make future ethics approval much more difficult to obtain, but my experiences during this research project suggest such tools would have greatly enhanced the quality and accuracy of transcription and analysis. After data analysis and write-up, videos could have been deleted, removing the security and confidentiality issues they pose.

To increase the uptake of future studies, I now know from my experiences that young people need to be engaged persistently over a longer period of time until they have acclimatised to the researcher and the project. In future, research with young people will offer ethical rewards such as prizes or vouchers, related to the research project. Teachers on the other hand appear to have wanted to be rewarded for their participation through a reciprocity that was outside of their teaching role. For instance, in ways that would improve their careers and networks. Had I known this during my study, then I would have worked on recruiting more schools and teachers by acting as a broker and networker. I would also have asked what teachers or schools wanted to enable them to participate in my study. From this study I have come to understand that reciprocity needs to allow for 'a fair and ethical exchange' of risks and benefits. From the gatekeepers' perspective it seems likely that they perceived themselves to be taking all the 'risks' by participating in research, while I, the researcher, took all the 'benefits.' By appreciating the pressures on and the concerns of gatekeepers I no longer believe that gatekeepers should simply value the research conducted or view it as rewarding in itself. Such an approach appears to me a one-sided exchange that overwhelmingly favours the researcher and the academic community. Therefore, it seems fair to me that gatekeepers should also benefit in ways that are meaningful or useful to them.

In regards to negotiating for access, I now know through experience that it is almost always better to start at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder and negotiate my way

upwards, if I cannot be connected to the decision-maker by a contact they trust, and that is willing to argue for my 'cause.' From my own encounters, I need to access decision-makers through gatekeepers that trust me or value the research. In future, I will also need to learn what decision-makers need to participate in a project as they can be very useful and powerful gatekeepers that could introduce me to a community. Future research will in addition need to incorporate alternative data collection sites, if my study cannot be carried out within the institute. Lastly, due to my experiences in this study, forming networks and connections with gatekeepers and participants is very important to gaining access to sites and to gaining permission from top decision-makers. Networks and connections take time and disengaging with them, even to research and design a study, changed my access and position in the learning community. In future, research I will need to address this issue by perhaps maintaining membership to the communities researched.

Chapter 4: Listening, Reflexivity and Managing Positionalities for Narrative Construction

4.1 Introduction

There are two interconnected findings in this chapter in relation to why and how students use listening practices while studying. The first is that students cultivate certain listening choices that reflect and respond to the tensions in their educational and personal fields; this is the 'reflexivity' in the title of this chapter. The second finding is that some students use listening strategies to manage external pressures such as institutional, economic, social and cultural issues.

Regarding the first finding, students select recordings based on their cultural and ideological values, which allows for reflexivity that is reflective and expressive. Such listening practices and choices are not passive and coincidental but rather agentive. Some students also use specific recordings to resolve their experiences within themselves, which is a form of (self) management. The tensions that students attempt to resolve through the two listening strategies arise from the struggles that exist between their goals and opportunities. Therefore, this chapter's two main findings point to a struggle between the pressure of external structures (which are institutional, economic, cultural and social) and students' attempts at personal agency (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu et al., 1977) with the aid of recordings.

The external structures, above, produce very personal and internalised learning conditions that encourage specific agentive listening practices for the sole purpose of crafting alternative learning narratives. These alternative narratives help students to internally manage their learning and personal struggles as a form of agency. From this Wengerian perspective (Lave, 1991; Wenger, 1999, 2000, 2013), a student's experience of educational 'trajectories', 'positionalities', senses of 'belonging' and 'status' is positive or negative depending on whether the student is happy with her/his positions, access, status and trajectories. How a student feels about these issues is explored in this chapter through the analyses of why, and how, they listen to recordings during study; what they are trying to achieve by doing so; what their listening strategies and choices tell us about their learning experiences and trajectories; and how the external dynamics in their learning and personal

communities shape a student's internal sense of belonging and ownership of the learning space.

4.2 Reflexivity: reflections and expressions of positionalities, struggles and experiences

The findings in this first section show that cultivated listening choices appear to be closely connected to the positions students occupy vis-à-vis the educational system. In some instances, listening appears to reflect tensions in students' personal lives. This is demonstrated through narratives concerning how teachers, family and friends treat a student based on their learning positionalities, and/or how a student perceives teachers, friends and family due to their learning positions. In each case, students' listening choices contain themes that reflect and express similar experiences and narratives. This is especially evident in the case of Bilan, a 19-year-old British Somali A Level student at the Academy. Her trap[6] and hip hop listening choices reflect her position at the periphery of her learning community, and her perceptions of being left further behind than other family members and peers. Her case shows how economic, cultural and social expectations shape learning identity, aspirations and interactions.

4.2.1 Bilan's learning experiences and positionalities

Bilan's learning positionalities have been varied. She started as an established inside member of the learning community, at lower and middle secondary school, Levels 1 and 2 / O levels, and then experienced a series of negative learning experiences, which began at Level 3 / A Levels after not achieving the grades required for progression. Bilan's reaction to this was to leave the institute in which she failed and to re-sit the course at another institute. However, she soon found the second institute unsatisfactory as she doubted they could offer her the support she

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[6] Trap is stated to be: '… an electronic dance music adaptation of crunk' (Bledsoe, 2013). In this case, 'crunk' is a mixture of British urban hip-hop, in place of the southern American version (Adaso, 2015).

needed to guarantee a pass, and left the college after or within the semester to attend the academy. This last institute is a fee-paying academy, which requires money for tuition, practicals, and exams. At the time of the interview, Bilan was re-sitting failed courses or modules and attempting to enter a new learning community (university).

Bilan's movement across three educational institutes suggests she has been unsuccessfully seeking particular learning criteria, spaces, ethos or dynamics. Her parents paying for education that can be obtained 'free'[7] elsewhere indicates that her family is very serious about her attending university. This also suggests that Bilan is a very active student, who is keen to take control of her education. Her movement from previous institutes also implies that she may not place much trust in educational institutions, and the agents within them – namely the teachers and managers.

In the excerpt below, Bilan starts by talking about her varied learning experiences, her unexpected change in progress, and friends who have successfully moved on. She also explains that as a result of her learning failures, she is detached from her classmates and classrooms because she is the only student in this situation. Her sense of isolation and urgency is further exacerbated by former classmates and friends who have either continued their education at university, moved on to employment or ended their formal learning altogether. This has resulted in Bilan conducting most of her learning alone or in very small classroom sessions with one teacher and up to two other Year 13 students. This is the peripheral learning context that needs to be included in the reading of Bilan's case. This context helps explain why Bilan listens to music while studying and helps us understand how she feels in her learning spaces. It also helps explain what she wishes to achieve educationally and through listening.

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[7] All universal state services in the UK are paid for through taxes collected from citizens, therefore it is inaccurate and incorrect to call services free.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

Bilan: Erm (2) I'm not an education person like I think if you think of someone who likes education, I'm like not it. Cos ... I was really good like when I was in secondary school. I did my maths GCSE in like Year 9. I got an A star. Like I loved school and then I hit A' Levels. It's like one of those comedy [stories]. Girl thinks that she's on top of the world. She does her GCSEs and she gets As and A stars then she does her A' Levels and it's like I can still do what I was doing before, but it doesn't work. You have to put more work in so yeah, A' Levels wasn't good to me and then I just hated school (laughs).

I: So now you just want to get out? [Much earlier during the interview and again just before this excerpt, Bilan mentions hating this current learning phase and expresses a variety of conflicting feelings that I can describe as frustration, anxiety, tiredness alongside feelings of defiance and hopefulness for an optimistic resolution.]

Bilan: I just want to get out. I just want to go to uni. It's like I see uni and then it's so far and everyone is enjoying themselves and then I have to get over this gate but then I want to jump the gate, but you have to open the door and then I don't want to open the door cos it's hard (laughs).

I: I love the metaphors there.

Bilan: I use metaphors to describe things I don't know why. Like I see maths as a person. Like me and maths we have a relationship. Maths broke up with me but didn't really tell me and then I failed (we both laugh). Now I'm sort of here trying to get back with maths but maths doesn't want me. It's just a mess. (interview, Bilan, London, 4 May 2016

In the excerpt above, Bilan shows that in her current learning community she is unable to use the knowledge, skills and status that she has accrued from her previous learning experiences ('…then I hit A Levels'). She is grappling to come to terms with her change in status, which is why she now 'hate[s] school'. Bilan's experiences of failure during her A Levels outwardly change her academic status, how she engages with the learning community and how others, including peers, teachers and family, interact with her. Bilan's claims about 'hating school' contrast with her actions. Her choice to extend her post-compulsory study suggests that she is aware of the benefits of formal learning, and chooses to continue to struggle to pass her assessments, irrespective of what other agents may do or recommend.

Bilan experiences social and educational pressures. She feels excluded from her peers, who are happy 'enjoying themselves' at university, while she is left alone behind struggling: '…I want to jump the gate, but you have to open the door'. Her education is difficult: 'Maths broke up with me but didn't really tell me and then I failed...' and a one-sided relationship with learning: '…I'm sort of here trying to get back with maths but maths doesn't want me. It's just a mess' and needing to decipher how to 'open the door' instead of 'jump[ing] the gate'. Bilan also perceives her learning struggle as a heavy burden. This is certainly true financially for her family, and socially for her by being the child / sibling / niece and friend that has failed.

A lot of the shame that Bilan experiences is caused by the unexpected outcome of academic failure, 'Maths broke up with me but didn't really tell me…'. Her account explains why 'students are more likely to blame themselves for not doing well' (Mijs, 2016). Equally, success can also be viewed as down to luck (Windle, 2010). Bilan's transcript reflects her feelings of disappointment and narrative reconstructions. This includes feelings of frustration and humiliation, and the desire to reverse a hard failure, by turning it into a soft failure. Bilan's unawareness of potential failure and her sense of powerlessness in the learning environment, implies she was also unaware of how to navigate her learning. The humorous metaphors evident in her transcript can be viewed as a coping mechanism. Humour allows Bilan to reflect on her struggles and to soften the harshness of failure. This enables the student to accept failure, control how she perceives herself and create an alternative learning narrative. This control and ownership of the narrative is only internal. It does not shape or change how family, peers or teachers, who naturally have their own views and expectations, perceive or treat Bilan.

Bilan's description of her personal life shows that there is growing impatience regarding her learning. She is expected to 'Just do it' as her family have provided the best support they can offer. For Bilan it is not that simple. Bilan's peripheral status as a student appears to stem from her lack of understanding on how to progress, changing institutes and the uncertainty she feels about her competency.

Furthermore, any discussions about her learning difficulties or perceived lack of support are discounted as excuses for academic inadequacy or laziness. After all, 'why can't she do what others have?' This, and other contextual factors already discussed, make Bilan 'angry' towards her studies and defiant.

Anger is what Bilan herself says is reflected through the music she listens to.

> *Bilan: I listen to a lot of trap music, rap, a lot of angry music (laughs) when I'm doing my work. [This is exclusively while studying maths a subject she previously excelled at.] (interview, Bilan, London, 4 May 2016)*

The anger she feels is not violent in nature (even though the songs contain violent lyrics). Bilan's anger, alongside her humorous metaphors, is directed towards her personal tensions and learning positionalities. This can be said to be reflected in, if not projected on to, some of the songs that she listens to, which discuss engaging and retaliating instead of retreating and accepting 'defeat' or failure.

> *Bilan: … Cos maths is just like if you don't defeat it it's going to defeat you (laughs). Someone has to win and you can't let it win… You can't do it half-heartedly and then if you do a question and then you just get stuck and then you stop you're going to fail. (interview, Bilan, London, 4 May 2016)*

Bilan wishes to 'win' and 'get stuck in'.

Bilan's 'angry' listening choices can be said to reflect her learning and personal experiences, and how she chooses to engage with them.   Perhaps as a genre requirement, many of the songs Bilan selects reflect her determination and peripheral status generally. Bilan relates lyrics to her feelings and experiences within the learning community. Many of the songs Bilan plays for me, or lists, contain narratives about underdogs and outsiders attempting to undo 'unjust' experiences and outcomes by succeeding (often against the odds). Others are about getting recognition ('respect'), or about figures who are overlooked and/or underestimated. The singers and songs she engages with will be discussed in more

detail in section 4.3.2, when I analyse how she uses her recordings to manage her experiences.

Overall, Bilan's use of music both to reflect and to express her learning conditions and experiences suggests reflexivity. She is relating her experiences in ways that are more socioculturally meaningful and actionable, or empowering to her. This is why she likes to listen to young, black local artists. She can relate to them, and finds their songs on triumphing over adversity uplifting and empowering. Bilan sees herself in the songs, which express views and feelings she cannot share with others, or which others are tired of hearing. Bilan's use of recordings is supported by another student, Sana. Sana, a student at an FE college, listens to Quranic recitations. As discussed in the literature review chapter, Quranic recitations are not viewed as music or singing by their listeners. This is important to remember, since student narratives often blur the categories between recitation and music through descriptions that discuss the melodic or the tonal qualities of a reciter and the tempo or rhythmic qualities of a recitation. Sana also listens to Kurdish folk/ traditional music. This genre can be loosely defined as Kurdish because of the language used and how the performers and Sana categorise it. The music features Kurdish legends and histories. Sana remembers coming from a small farm in a rural village in Turkey and appears to listen to traditional folk or rural songs and religious Kurdish music exclusively. She does not incorporate the more modern popular Kurdish music that uses modern instruments and technologies. Sana uses her recordings to reflect on the cultural tensions in her personal life, as well as her peripheral membership status in the learning community. Like Bilan, Sana uses recordings that reflect ideologies she finds comforting, reflective, expressive and culturally inclusive.

4.2.2 Sana's learning experiences and positionalities

Sana is a 19-year-old British Kurdish Turk student undertaking a science course at a FE college. She is in the first year of a two-year course aimed at preparation for university and/or employment. Sana underachieved at her A Levels in the same institute, and is now starting afresh on an entirely different course. Her classes

consist of up to thirty students, typically aged sixteen to eighteen years. Sana emigrated to London, England from rural Turkey. She remembers parts of that previous life, and feels on the periphery in both England and Turkey. This is why she has an affinity for the imagined Kurdish community in songs. During the interview, Sana discusses some of the tensions that exist between her personal and learning lives and describes how her recordings helps her navigate these contexts. The reasons why she feels this in the context of her learning will become clearer.

Most of Sana's recordings are mostly based around encouragement and struggle. The Kurdish folk songs she chose to play for me during the interview sounded like lamentations. Later I learnt that this is since they contained 'phrases with a sobbing sound' (Reigle, 2013: 4) cites (Reinhard, 2000: 29). Therefore, this lamentation was deliberate and triggered the desired emotional responses, even to uninitiated listeners such as myself. Sana also provided me with a short list of the artists that she listens to but the obscurity of the songs, artists or dialects, and perhaps her phonetic spelling or misspelling, meant that I could not find them on Google, SoundCloud or YouTube, to listen to and to translate.

After several failures and career goal changes Sana portrays her family as becoming tired, detached or disinterested in her learning:

> *Sana: They just gave up on knowing what I want to do. I haven't a clue on what I want to do. "Just like do whatever you can. We don't care anymore" (laughs). (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

Sana maintains artificial 'pressure' so she excels and stays motivated instead of becoming bored by her situation (she mentions this on five separate occasions).

> *Sana:… I need to, you know, rely on myself a lot so I don't get bored. I always got that pressure on myself so I/ it kinda helps me out to be on my own. (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

For Sana, there is pressure to prove she can 'achieve'. This is evident in the way 'achieve' is cited nineteen times in her thirty-four-page transcript.

Sana uses Quranic recitations and Kurdish folk songs, solemn recordings, to reflect the seriousness of her goals. The quote below best reflects her academic determination, alongside her peripheral positionalities in both the learning community and her personal life.

> *Sana: I would give anything to be able to get to the goal I was aiming for. I mean (2) I don't wanna give up on something that I've worked on so hard. I've gave [given] up on so many other things I don't want to be/ have another failure in my life. I want to achieve this and I want to show it to myself nobody else, but to myself that I can actually achieve something… (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

The account alludes to the disappointing experiences Sana has encountered. This includes what it means for her to be on the periphery of the learning community and what is at stake for her on a personal level. She stops herself from becoming 'distracted' by external issues (c. 24:27, 48:33), by using recordings to keep the 'struggle' ever present and imminent.

Like Bilan, Sana feels desperate and needs to succeed at her current learning venture. Also, like Bilan, Sana wants to gain recognition through education; 'I want to show it' (c. 27:28). Although Sana states she wishes to 'achieve' for herself and 'nobody else' (c.27:28), in her transcript there are several comments that suggest she feels that she needs to dispel other people's inhibiting beliefs about her, her abilities and prospects.

> *Sana: I've had to go through the part of where I wasn't accepted at GCSE and then later on when we did … an extended version of the exams, they found that I can actually do the exams. And I can actually cope under it. And it's how I got into the GCSEs (c.19:27).*
>
> *Sana: … yes I've achieved a lot of things that I was more than [predicted] I would fail, but you know [I've] shown myself that I can achieve something [educationally]… (c. 27:28).*
>
> *Sana: Maybe even going further than university, you know, would give me that sense of accomplishment, you know (c. 27:28).*
>
> *(Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

The 'sense of accomplishment' that stems from achieving 'something as big as going to university' would positively boost Sana's status and cultural capital in several of the communities she belongs to. Accruing the various types of cultural capital would validate her as a person of worth and accomplishment.

Sana's listening choices reflect and express her need for emotional support and guidance amidst the tensions that exist in both her learning community and personal life.

> *Sana: ...to be honest not even in just my studies in life generally I use (3) ethics and lyrics that I know, you know, I can relate to myself ... I know that I need that push. I don't get it from people [around me] because if I was to look at people [around me], they'd be like, "just give up," you know. "Whatever you're doing is just rubbish. Just give up". I don't want to give up on myself... (c. 01:07:32).*

> *Sana: ... I mean the music I listen to, it tends to express how I feel 'bout life. How I, what I've experienced in life and you know if it's something to do with just giving me hope... I think it should reflect yourself ... (c. 01:16:27).*

> *(Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016*

Sana directly tells us that she uses listening choices during study and in her personal life that 'relate[s]' to her experiences, feelings and 'ethics'. She also tells us what she looks for in her music or religious scriptures – 'I need that push'/ 'hope', 'it should reflect yourself' – and why – 'I don't get it from people'. She is using 'People' in this statement to refer to her teachers, friends and family. Sana's listening reasons and choices also strongly suggest she uses listening to help reflect and express a narrative of 'hope', struggle and 'suffering', while reconstructing a narrative of strength and perseverance against adversity. Sana does this by using the poetic stories about Kurdish histories, legends and religious scriptures as building blocks to generate 'hope' and 'the push'. 'The push' is a term she uses to refer to both social encouragement and religious instruction. Sana uses the idea that, 'God says it is your duty'.

Sana selects culturally specific recordings to reflect her ideological views and to address her shortage of social and cultural capital. This is of interest for two reasons. The first is that, although Sana speaks fluent Turkish, she can no longer speak Kurdish, so she relies on her parents and an older brother to translate her favourite songs. She also cannot fully understand Arabic when listening to Quranic recitations. The second reason of interest relates to how meaning is formulated from such listening engagements. The language barriers mentioned imply that recordings first attract attention through sound qualities such as the melody and tempo, followed by how it makes the student feel or what she imagines, then followed by seeking a translation. It is only after translation that Sana is certain that songs or scriptures discuss particular emotions or ideas, but she does not translate all the recordings she listens to. Sana listens to Quranic recitations through a mobile app, therefore translations, depending on the app, run synchronously with the reciter. She also does not understand the majority of the Kurdish songs she listens to and explicitly makes her own meaning to reflect and express her needs, which change according to circumstance.

> *Sana: … most of the time it should be based on your experience; on how you are ... in a way it's like art. It expresses you, you, your personality, yourself… what I've experienced in life … maybe I don't understand what it's saying, maybe I have, maybe there's no lyrics to it (2) but what I hear is what I like … your type of music taste kind of should suit your personality as well (c.01:16:27) (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016).*

The quote above suggests that what matters is that the material being listened to is perceived to be meaningful and useful to the student. Stated more controversially, Sana connects the 'jihad'/ effort or struggle in recordings to her personal, educational and religious struggles. Sana talks about her faith being a source of strength for her and how she struggles daily to keep her faith, ethnic culture and educational obligations. Through the listening strategies during study, Sana reflects and expresses the social and cultural tensions and competitions in her learning and in her personal life.

Overall, Bilan and Sana's examples suggest how listening can reflect and express the positionalities of a student in a learning community and the tensions in their personal life. Both students select very specific recordings that reflect key elements of their situations as peripheral members of the learning community, and their desire to improve their personal status in the process. For these students, listening choices are a reflection because the students have taken seemingly unconnected narratives from songs or religious texts and pragmatically applied them to their personal situation. They have only used what is usable to them and disregarded what cannot be used. In doing so, they create connections or parallels. Equally, recordings allow for expression by allowing students' emotions and thoughts such as fear, anger or frustration, determination, hope and defiance against adversity to be voiced.

> *Sana*: *… the one I first showed you is talking about the death of these many people [Kurdish-Turkish conflict] who were trying to you know live the life of Islam and then at the same time it's saying keep your hope up … let's be sad, let's cry about … yes… keep your hope up you never know what's going to happen … (c. 01:13:22).*
>
> *(Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016).*

4.3 Managing positionalities, tensions and experiences

In this section, I will discuss how students use listening strategies and recordings to manage their peripheral status in their learning communities and the tensions in their personal lives. Whereas management helps students form strategies to deal with experiences, reflection and expression (in section 4.2) are strategies that simply acknowledge and communicate experiences.

Students such as Bilan, Sana and Nicole use recordings to access particular types of narratives and with different ideological perspectives from their spaces. George, a teacher, believes this is an essential strategy that enables students to focus on their education. For this reason, I begin with George, a science teacher at the FE college that Sana and Nicole attend. George's account helps explain how narratives and ways of thinking need to be managed while learning; what students are attempting to

achieve by listening; and how learning spaces and trajectories need to be managed and navigated.

4.3.1 Teacher - George and learning management strategies

George's account suggests that listening can be used as a deliberate management strategy to enable students such as Bilan, Sana and Nicole to shift the value judgements implicit in their personal narratives and discourses about learning. George does not openly advocate for students to listen to music or religious texts during study. As a Form Tutor he actively encourages students, who seek advice and support from him, to learn to manage their learning struggles, to deal with their positionalities, and to reduce any negativity that stems from interactions in the learning community and a student's personal life.

> Teacher - George: [With particular reference to some students failing previously and feeling they will fail again.] You don't want to put them in a position where it's a battle and a confrontation but sometimes the best advice to give them is prove them wrong [referring to a variety of people: previous or current teachers, family members, partners, etc.]. Prove that you can do it. Yes it's going to be a fight. (c. 49:03) (interview, George, London, 10th March 2018)

George openly recommends thinking differently about learning struggles and failure by (re)viewing failure or ridicule as opportunities to excel. For George these are a motivational spur to 'prove them wrong' instead of an indicator of one's true potential or abilities. From such comments it is apparent that he believes students should create their own positive and alternative narrative. This is an ideological shift that also alters behaviour. The teacher encourages students to produce narratives that counter those that may be undermining their sense of agency and self-esteem. George does not mention how students can do this, or what resources they can use to build a new pattern of thoughts and behaviour, but from the student interviews (Bilan, Sana, Nicole, Meelaaney) it is clear that the students view listening as key resource to achieve this.

George states that through his teaching and pastoral support he attempts to create learning 'structures' for students that can help them 'filter' problems and 'force them to think differently'.

> *Teacher - George: Having a structure put in place and one that is dependable and reliable will help in some form. Erm cos you are giving them that structure it's pulling them out of any issue. Forcing them to think in a potentially entirely different way so that (2) the chaos that might be going on outside of the building… it [the structure] kind of acts as a filter. It can filter out some of that background hassle. (c. 45:33) (Interview, George, London, 10th March 2018)*

George also states that students can 'filter out some of that background hassle', if they 'segregate' and 'compartmentalise' themselves to stop the 'bleed through' that contaminates their learning community and spaces. This 'bleed through' is 'the individual issues of the student'.

> *Teacher - George: ... More than anything. Getting them [students] either to forget about it [their personal problems] for a little while or find a way to push through it to carry on with what they're studying, that is one of the biggest boundaries to education. It's the individual issues of the student. (c. 44:46) (Interview, George, London, 10th March 2018)*

From this viewpoint, formulating management strategies may help students segregate 'parts of themselves', allowing them to 'compartmentalise' the messy experiences, feelings, expectations and tensions that exist in their learning spaces and lives. Such self-management practices directly link to Bourdieu's notion of students harmonising with their learning community and using particular practices as timely strategies to obtain the best outcome.

George's teaching accounts also indicate that students enter learning spaces with a great deal of 'background hassle' that needs to be managed for learning to occur. The teacher's accounts also capture the struggle between students' internal agency and external structural pressures. George, through his own teaching approach and the pastoral support he offers students, appears to be encouraging such self-

reflection, expression and management. However, he would like students to reflect on their learning and what they can achieve, instead of focussing on issues in the past and 'outside' of learning. Students such as Bilan, Nicole and Sana suggest all these issues are entangled and not easily compartmentalised.

4.3.2 Bilan's listening management strategies

Bilan's listening allows her to manage external issues and pressures and to continue learning.   Bilan uses listening strategies as a management tool when studying; listening provides 'inspirational' and motivational boosts that enable her to construct 'self-empowering' learning narratives. Her recordings do not change her circumstances but help her to manage them so she can continue with the task of learning. This is indicated during the interview, when Bilan shows that she is learning to manage her education, her family's and her own expectations, and her interactions with teachers. Listening practices in Bilan's context appear to help confront experiences and use direct agency to target issues. This is demonstrated when Bilan uses recordings to externalise her desire to 'kill', 'conquer' and 'defeat maths' – as otherwise it will defeat her. She does not feel this way towards the rest of her studies in biology, chemistry and psychology, because she is not struggling with them.

In the excerpt below, Bilan demonstrates the pragmatic way she manages the learning conditions she experiences: either through reproduction (continuation) or transformation (change).

> *Bilan: … I changed the course I wanna do at uni. Cos I don't want to have to like struggle with biology for two years and then that go like no way; and I feel like, if I do psychology I could have just done any subjects at A Levels. I would have gone into that course, but I killed myself doing biology and maths and I kind of want to show something for that.*
>
> *I: Yeah, so I take it your mother is quite supportive of that? [I ask specifically about her mother because Bilan had previously mentioned her mother and siblings. I choose the word supportive because Bilan talks*

about changing her degree choice from psychology to radiology based on her sister's masters in oncology and an 'aunt'[8] that she accompanied for diagnosis.]

Bilan: Yeah my mum is at the point now I think where me getting to uni has been such a long struggle where she's just like from psychology/ I think most Somali mums would be like, " psychology is not a subject don't do that". My mum is like, "as long as you get to uni X just do like. Even if you're doing ballet just do that and enjoy it. Just do it". So yeah she's been very supportive.

I: Now teachers, what's your rapport with your teachers like?

Bilan: … Erm, my maths teacher, we're really cool. I really like my maths teacher. Erm, my psychology teacher is right through there (points to her and lowers her voice). I don't know, her style of teaching and me just it's very different so I don't have her as a teacher anymore. I have someone else. And then my biology teacher me and him are cool. But then I feel like I get on with my maths teacher more because of his style of teaching. It's very like (1) lets/ he's very inspirational. … If you spoke to him he's an extremely inspirational person so you can never find yourself just going no I can't be bothered. He'd be like, "No you have to do it. We're in this together. It's me and you". It's like/ I don't know it's like the same feeling you get from rap music I think. It's like you and me. We're in this together. I win, you win. You win, I win.

I: So it's kind of like a collective comradery.

Bilan: Yeah.

I: Do you need that when you're learning?

Bilan: I think so.

I: Why?

Bilan: Erm, I don't/ I feel like it motivates me and then with him I feel like with psychology and biology like I don't really have that relationship with my teachers. So if I was to not do well it's just like I let myself down. If I wasn't to do well in maths, it's like I let myself down. I let him down. I think I would

---

[8] Most likely a family friend or step mother.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

let him down more than I let myself down (laughs). So I think with that it's
like it motivates you more. (Interview, Bilan, London, 4 May 2016)

Bilan, by adapting to her learning situation, shows that she is neither weak, nor without options nor victimised. Her resolve is especially evident in her rejection of studying psychology at university, despite it being the trajectory with the least resistance for her. This rejection could also be due to cultural and economic pressures: psychology and arts and humanities subjects are often viewed as less desirable than vocational subjects like accounting, engineering, law and medicine. Subjects such as pyschology are frequently perceived to offer no concrete employment prospects, no concrete way of avoiding discrimination, and no economic stability (Connor, Tyers, Modood, and Hillage, 2004). If this is the case, then Bilan is attempting to manage her present-day learning conditions while also increasing her employability or employment prospects.

By appropriating rap songs from artists such as Nines and Mover, Bilan appears to find ideological and emotional ways of overcoming her learning struggles and the pressures around her. She also appears to be confronting and taking ownership of her peripheral positionality in the learning community due to her previous failures. 'Killing' or 'defeating' maths can be understood as using her disappointment and frustrations to overcome and resolve her difficulties and insecurities.   The rhetoric in the songs selected makes Bilan, 'feel on top of the world' (interview, Bilan). She states that listening makes her feel as though she can tackle anything and accomplish everything.   This is essential since the alternative is failure.

> *I: Okay so you said that it makes you feel powerful, like on top of the world and you listen to*
> *than when you're doing mathematics.*
>
> *Bilan: Yeah, I think you need it. …. That's the only thing you can do or you're going to fail*
> *(laughs). (c.13:49)*

Bilan uses recordings to increase the sense that she can excel educationally, thereby 'open[ing] the door' to university. She uses recordings to reinforce her agency and resolve, while separating herself from the 'domestic space' (Bull, 2000)

and its associated pressures. The domestic space in this study is encapsulated in excerpts and manifests itself as the pressure to get ahead, catch up with peers, create a successful career, obtain status, and resolve the conflict that exists between teachers and family. Recordings help vocalise and internally manage these external struggles.

4.3.3 Sana's listening management strategies

In Sana's example, listening also manages the day-to-day conflicts created by a peripheral positionality in the learning community and in personal life. Sana, unlike Bilan, uses listening as a form of indirect agency that is accommodative and circumvents issues. Sana uses Kurdish folk music and Quranic recitations for support and affirmation to manage difficult past and present learning experiences. This is why Sana says earlier (in 4.2.2), 'I need that push. I don't get it from people [around me].' Sana appears to need more management strategies during study and while learning in class than Bilan because she has experienced a peripheral positionality throughout her education.

> *Sana: … I mean from what I've been through in the past it's always shown me that I can't achieve anything, I can't do that, I can't do this. But what if I can? You know. (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

Sana sees her learning communities as obstacles with antagonistic people that thwart her progression. This manifests itself as distrust towards the whole learning community. Her frequent comments suggest she feels she is fighting for access to learning communities, to progress, and to be treated fairly or equally. Sana's comments such as 'they found that I can actually do the [GCSE] exams' (c. 19:27) and descriptions of her difficult experiences at primary school and during her A Levels all demonstrate how she perceives the educational system as possessing social, institutional and cultural structures that undermine or relegate her to inferior learning opportunities.

> *Sana: … learning the [English] language from all by myself because let's face it my*
> *school didn't help me at all even the teachers…. (Interview, Sana, London, 8*
> *February 2016)*

Listening practices appear to divert Sana from focusing on the negative aspects of her educational and personal experiences.

> Sana*: … you tend to listen to things that … get your head off your problem. Your*
> *own school educational problem[s] … or your … normal social life, your*
> *environmental problems… (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

Getting oneself 'off problems' is especially necessary when we recall that Sana perceives herself as alone and fighting for everything. Elsewhere, Sana says her mind has the tendency to, 'go to way extreme places' (c.1:01:20), such as depression. This explains why she uses positive religious affirmations (Quranic recitations), to help her manage her problems.

Sana uses recordings to manage her spaces by inhibiting herself from falling into cycles of unpleasant interactions and negative thoughts. This can be seen when she discusses the frustrations she felt in the past when she perceived a teacher as 'not teach[ing] [effectively]' in a lesson.

> *Sana: … usually there's this weird thing with me and my teachers. If they annoy me*
> *slightly even if it's just the teaching ... I can't keep it in… and when I show it*
> *(laughing tone) they get more annoyed with me. So they get mad at me. I get mad*
> *at them. And then you know, it just turns to bickering in class… (Interview, Sana,*
> *London, 8 February 2016)*

Sana's accounts throughout her transcript suggest that the 'weird' scenarios that result in 'annoyance' and 'bickering' with teachers stem from her distrust of their genuine dedication to teaching properly. Sana's distrust towards teachers and the learning community affects how she interprets and experiences many of her learning interactions and difficulties. Recordings in her case are also used to manage

experiences by providing context. For instance, dealing with educational failure and conflict, although difficult, is less disastrous than losing one's life, family and land through religious and political persecution.

In the interview Sana states that, in the past, listening helped her avoid the negative interactional problems that can result from questioning/ challenging a teacher in class.

> *I: Do you ever listen to music when you're in class?*
>
> *Sana: No. I used to (laughs). I'll be honest. I used to when I was in erm last year in maths class when my teacher would get on my nerves and I would have a (2) / I would just be like, you. What?! What?! I'm ignoring you from now on. Sorry, but you're just not my type [of teacher] (laughs). (Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

The excerpt suggests that listening allows Sana to side-step the (unresolved) interactional conflict in her lessons by 'ignoring' them. Through the affirmation and perspectives recordings have provided her, Sana attempts to resolve her learning difficulties for herself instead of relying on the teacher. Listening strategies, however, do not eradicate Sana's initial problem(s) – confusion and lack of understanding regarding the material taught 'What?! What?!' or her inability to communicate this problem to teachers without creating conflict. It nonetheless stops spontaneous conflict between the student and teachers with incompatible teaching styles.

Listening appears to help Sana to stop and realise, 'You're not my type [of teacher]', which is crucial as this recognition stops her from 'bickering' and encourages Sana to teach herself: 'What if I can [achieve it on my own]? You know' (c. 28:34). Sana's transcript has over thirty references of relying on one's self, being alone, having to manage independently and so forth.

> *Sana: …I'd show it to myself that I actually did this me, myself, without having to*
> *rely on someone else so much. I managed. I can get hold of myself, you know.*
> *(Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

However, at the top of Sana's concerns is always the pressure and fear of failure.

> *Sana: … there's still that fear of what if I fail? What if I do this wrong? What if there's a*
> *question I don't know? What if the answers I have are not the right ones? What if the answers*
> *are corre/ erm (2) you know easy but I find it hard? You know there's always that worry, but*
> *then when you're five minutes, ten minutes before the exam you listen to that music or five*
> *minutes, ten minutes before you study when you listen to it. It kind of just takes it away. You*
> *know you just lose yourself in the music then you just, there's no pressure. (c.07:03)*
> *(Interview, Sana, London, 8 February 2016)*

Sana uses recordings to create a narrative of hope to manage her learning fears, educational aspirations and personal tensions. To succeed educationally and have 'a good place in life' (c.42:46), Sana uses listening to draw parallels from the struggles depicted in her recordings that encourage her to continue striving. Like Bilan and those people represented in recordings who have overcome greater adversities and inequalities, Sana is the heroine of her own narrative.

4.3.4 Nicole and her listening management strategies

Nicole is a twenty-year-old student who is in the same FE course and class as Sana. She is from the English and French Caribbean island of Dominica, and has lived in London for three years at the time of the interview. Nicole shows that listening can be used to manage one's own positionality, connection to others, behaviour and narrative through practising a form of accommodative agency that is indirect and discreet. Nicole engages in management practices such as keeping negative aspects from interfering with learning and constructing new patterns of thought and behaviour to focus on learning. This is also similar to what Bilan and Sana attempt through their respective listening practices

Nicole, during her interview, is in the first year of a two-year science course, but she changed course midway through a three-year health and social care course from another college. She resents this decision as it has lengthened her college period:

> Nicole: This should have been my last year but then I changed to do science and it just made me have an extra year that I didn't need…. (Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016)

She finds her learning spaces and experiences on the new course 'hard and stressful' (c. 01:45), and listens to music from her Dominican community for an 'extra boost' (c.06:01) that is both social and cultural.

Nicole differs educationally and culturally from those around her, which creates uncertainty and occasionally frustration regarding changes in teaching approaches and classroom exchanges:

> Nicole: all my days some teachers don't teach…. (Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016
>
> Nicole: … I'm quite older than the young the younger ones it's very stressful because they don't want to pay attention. They're rude and they're always talking … and sometimes the teachers they don't stop them. And it's quite disruptive …
>
> I: What do you do when that happens?
>
> Nicole: What do I do? Sometimes I just feel like going, leaving the lesson but I can't/ the thing is I try to zone out but it's really hard to zone out but because in that moment I might zone out anything could happen because then I might just zone out throughout the whole lesson and then not get anything myself so I try to just avoid and ignore it. (Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016)

The tensions and difficulties in Nicole's learning contexts are to varying degrees non-negotiable. Nicole, like Sana, manages her difficult spaces by inhibiting herself through adopting an accommodative and indirect agency that requires avoidance and ignoring issues – '[zoning] out.'

music offers her a sense of affirmation and inspiration to be herself within the backdrop of social and cultural tension. Her recordings allow her the space to manage her migratory trauma and to remain connected to those in Dominica. They also give her a sense of comradery, and an awareness of other issues in the world:

Nicole: I do listen to other songs but particularly erm Caribbean songs and you know cos you don't want to forget where you come from, where you been and what you've been through to get to where you are and it's like it gives you that inspiration to yourself and makes you feel good about yourself. Coming up from one place and coming to another place and how the growth that you've gotten and everything else with it actually. (*Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016*)

Nicole: Er the thing is I don't forget my roots. I don't forget where I come from. It [listening] just gives me that extra boost though where I just feel that (2) if I can't deal with something here I could question someone from back home and they will either give me advice to help me throughout whatever [I'm] going through; (c. 06:01)

Nicole: Some of them [songs] just tells you about what the world is like today and reality. What happens around you and what you should be aware of and what you just have in your life and stuff. (c.21:01)

(Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016)

Nicole explains that listening to the carnival song 'Do something crazy' while studying allows her to manage the emotions and actions that cannot be expressed. She gives her 'craziness' (c. 23:56) expression through listening instead of either complaining about teaching or reprimanding a student. Nicole applies the self-management strategy that George recommends to enable herself to transform her thinking and behaviour.

Nicole: … I'm not confident in doing it to the best of my abilities cos then I['m] thinking I'm doing it wrong or I'll then listen to something to get that edge off and make me think differently and try to do the work better. (Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016)

Listening during difficult moments allows Nicole the 'mind space' to manage the tensions and frustrations she feels towards her learning experiences and the people in them.

Nicole: What do I like about that song in particular? The video will just give you that feel like if you know you just. If someone upset you or anything rather than you attack them you just listen to it (inc.) your own mind space. At first you have I'm going to hurt them or anything you just go in to your own mind and do your craziness. (Interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016)

Overall, Nicole sculpts a better learningscape for herself, using recordings to help her ignore problematic elements around her; to work on transforming herself to 'work better' (c. 28:45); and to feel connected to those who are 'back home' (since the new home is still confusing and frustrating). Nicole uses listening to create a sonic filter from the cultural and social issues around her. Like Bilan and Sana, this is both essential and necessary, since leaving education would stop her access to higher education and to new or better employment prospects. Nicole has already experienced one year of employment as a care worker while studying a health and social care course at a previous institute. Her sense of educational opportunities and employment prospects is thus grounded in the experience of leaving a readily available career and learning trajectory because she wants better and more from her education, from herself and for herself.

4.4. Discussion

The two interconnected arguments of reflexivity and management, in this chapter, are based on how listening helps students deal with a variety of experiences, trajectories, positionalities and tensions in their educational and personal lives. The listening strategy for students like Nicole, Bilan and Sana in this chapter focuses on separating students from unpleasant pressures, interactions and experiences, and from the negative emotional responses they produce. Listening enables them to engage with their learning or studying in a less distressed manner. Listening practices can be said to help these students segregate themselves from negativity through the use of 'sonic bubbles' that create a protective barrier, 'cocoon' (Prior, 2014) or 'aesthetic sonic wall paper' (Rimmer, 2010) between them and the rest of the world.   This strategy allows them to engage in management strategies that enable them to 'think differently' towards their learning (interview, George, London, 10th March 2018; interview, Nicole, London, 9 February 2016). In some cases, students listen to restrain themselves from acting instinctively, or to construct alternative narratives around themselves and their learning experiences that enables them to behave differently. As discussed in the literature review (sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4) this social and cultural change is necessary for students who find themselves

excluded or in antagonism with their learning community; for students who want to access the community's resources (section 2.3); and for students who want to be able to compete for economic capital, and accrue other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; 1977; 1998 – sections 2.4 and 2.5).

Listening strategies can allow students to take ownership of their learning narratives and identities, to internalise their success and failure (Vallet and Annetta, 2014), to conform to the social and cultural etiquette of their learning communities (Bourdieu, 1977), and (through reflexivity) to reflect on and express their feelings and desires. These strategies were discussed in the literature review (section 2.4 and 2.5 on other literatures supporting a Bourdieusian frame). Listening during study also suggests that some students do not know how to form the alternative learning strategies they need, and that they need better strategies to 'scaffold' their learning (Dixon and Verenikina, 2007; Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2014). Student accounts, like Sana's, indicate that listening may be a strategy that is used simply because it is available and accessible, and works in the absence of other coping strategies. The accounts in this chapter also suggest that students need to be able to talk to others (peers, teachers) who can understand their learning experiences and anxieties. Students need to feel secure through affirmation and guidance, in conjunction with excellent educational instruction. This security may help peripheral students from perceiving themselves as struggling alone, and help them avoid reinforcing negative learning identities, and behaviours so they can fully engage with learning.

The examples discussed in this chapter directly deal with the notion of agentive reflexive management and storytelling through listening. This management of the narrative is usually in response to social tensions and structural restrictions in a student's learning or personal life. In the current chapter, this has been discussed by students who felt a need to get a hold of themselves in order or make sense of their spaces and experiences to manage the external pressures.

Sana's internalisation of external pressures and expectations has resulted in her becoming more content to work alone, isolated from students and teachers alike. This segregation appears to reinforce her sense of alienation from the learning community, while creating the illusion of self-reliance and independence. Given that formal learning is a communal activity, there is no such thing as individualism, only the illusion. Equally, her segregation appears in part due to her learning membership status and trajectories not being viewed or treated positively by other people, both inside and outside the learning community and her fear of apathy. Sana failed her A Levels at the institute with several other peers. There is no favourable spin that can change that reality. Her Kurdish and Quranic listening choices soothe the tense interplay between her agentive desires/aspirations, her difficult learning position and her personal conditions. She uses her recordings as a tool that eases the tensions in her day-to-day learning experiences without conflict and create 'hope'. Her tensions and disappointments, if not managed (through sonic segregation), appear to overwhelm her, and she says, 'You need your brain to be relaxed so you can (ward off?) things. It can come up with ideas...' (interview, Sana, c. 01:20:33). Her social and cultural clutter can further reduce the agency she possesses in the learning community and make her disengaged or apathetic (Lopes, 2007; Chartier et al., 2008; Basch, 2013; Watson and Gable, 2013). Listening in Sana's context is an exercised self-care through psychological management (Rudd, 2013; Lilliestam, 2013; McFerran and Saarikallio, 2014), which is also used to craft a unique and adaptive sphere for learning. This is shown through how she generates 'hope,' an important and recurring need in her interview.

Sana needs 'hope' since she feels alone, fearful of failure and unfairly judged: 'make an environment for yourself where you can actually feel comfortable enough to work in and you know encourage us or push us off to work' (interview, Sana, c. 01:20:33). Recordings help Sana reconstruct her own coping narrative that enables her to manage the 'hardships' in her own learning and personal life. This can also be said of Nicole, whose listening strategies involve listening to 'comforting' and 'calming' music from her 'back home', to help manage her acclimatisation process, and the learning tensions in her 'new home'.

For the three students discussed in this chapter – Bilan, Nicole and Sana – listening helps manufacture symbolic, social and cultural capital. This is capital that they discover is missing or that they possess at low levels because of their learning status, positionalities and identities. Students' interviews collectively show how their low levels of symbolic capital – for example, low self-esteem and belief in academic competency – are compounded by low social and cultural capital, which they manage by listening that addresses their lack of capital. This is seen in the way that students use listening to help affirm their pre-existing views, and to provide guidance on how to manage their learning, in culturally specific ways. Nicole's Dominican music, for instance, helps her remain grounded and connected in the face of sociocultural alienation and confusion. Nicole states that listening practices are a calming influence on her as they help her keep cool, focused, and help her to manage each problem through the filtered lens of listening. Such practices are associated with Bourdieu's notion of conformity through repression – socially, culturally and by altering one's habitus to gain access to the hegemony's cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977).

Bilan, who also transforms some of her learning experiences with recordings, uses a more direct form of agency towards the aspects she can influence, such as who teaches her, the institution, the subjects she re-takes and the ones she applies for at university. However, her access to a fee-paying institute could indicate that she has more agency.

4.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, each student case suggests that listening materials are internally adopted from a sociocultural community of similarity and strength to manage a different community, such as the learning community – where the student feels less secure. Recordings appear to be used to enable reflexivity and for management. They allow students to reflect, express and help construct an empowering or

inspiring learning narrative that helps them navigate their learning and personal life. Reflexivity allows students in this study to acknowledge their experiences, emotions, desires and to deal with their positionalities. Narrative reconstruction shapes students' learning identities and practices by allowing them to reinforce or suppress aspects of themselves.

Engaging in listening practices and strategies by using cultivated listening choices is an attempt to reduce the sociocultural and symbolic obstacles and tensions that exist and persist in learning spaces and life. Students listen against the structural backdrop of the institutional, economic, political, social and cultural pressures inherent in education, and in the hopes of securing the capital gains education offers. Students allude to the expectations and pressures they experience from family, education and society, which is why a successful educational trajectory is important, and why some students will adopt any strategy to increase their chances of success, while reducing obstacles and friction. This requires timely management strategies that can compensate and accommodate structural conditions. The students in this chapter appear to use listening practices for such purposes.

Chapter 5: Listening, Managing the Self and Spaces for Learning

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focusses on how students use listening practices to manage the internal self while learning or studying. This discussion adds to and complements the previous chapter, which reported how students managed their reactions and responses to the tensions that were created by others, their learning experiences and positionalities. The findings presented in this chapter concern how students use three types of listening management strategies to manage themselves, study spaces and learning spaces. The first finding is that listening can be used to manage a student's expedient approach to their education. This management practice is evidenced by teacher interview data. Both listening and the expedient approach to education are agentive responses to students' internal conflicts. They indicate that students possess the desire to progress and enjoy the benefits of education, but that this is undermined by the dislike of formal education or the curriculum. The second finding is that students use listening to manage their emotions and increase their ability to focus on their studies. The third finding is that students use listening to create their own internal learning space that is separate and different from their physical learning spaces.

Each of the internal management strategies stands in tension with and responds to the learning structures (institutional, cultural, social, economic) and conditions (failure, peripheral positionality, lack of options, progression pressures and expectations) discussed in the literature review (see section 2.5) and chapter four. This is suggested, for instance, through the use of listening and an expedient approach to education to gain cultural and social capital (credentials and status) or to manage emotions and regularise one's habitus with that of the learning community.

5.2 Educational expediency and listening to manage reduced agency

Some of the students in this study take an expedient approach to education, by responding conveniently and advantageously to the demands of gaining credentials: for instance, when a student is forced to undertake a course they have little to no interest in completing. A student in this situation may have no other educational options open to them, and in order to obtain access to future courses of their choice, they resign themselves to complete the course. A student in this situation simply wants to rush through studies.

If students treat their individual courses or education on the whole as vehicles for progression and without any commitment or connection to the learning itself, learning, learning spaces and the interactions within them can become valueless. Teachers' accounts highlight such problematic attitudes and behaviours in classrooms, but without understanding or being explicitly aware of the causes. This is why some teacher accounts refer to students who are enrolled on courses with no apparent interest in engaging with the learning involved. Students who demonstrate an expedient educational approach while engaging in listening are viewed as using recordings to help them cope with, and to adhere to, learning obligations and, sometimes, expectations that are not their own.

The teachers cited, Atefeh, George and Mahir, suggest that a variety of students populate learning spaces: a few students who simply do not want to be there, some who wish to be in another learning space, those who have opted out of full engagement and those who want to progress and complete a course to gain access to university or other communities. In this study, I only interviewed students who stated that they wanted to go to university, but classroom observations, survey responses and narratives indicate that the way in which students present themselves does not always reflect what they feel or think. Teachers offer different suggestions as to what it is that students need to manage during learning, which offers different perspectives on what it is that students want to achieve through listening strategies.

The accounts from teachers rarely contradict the accounts from students because each perceives the learning community from their own vantage point. The data from survey responses and classroom observations suggest that students who engage in listening to hasten their learning may have a forced relationship with formal education as a whole. Some students are enrolled onto courses by teachers, heads or parents, and accommodating students who have not put enough consideration into their choices or find themselves limited in choice and time simply accept what is offered. Student and teacher accounts show this is for a variety of structural reasons and conditions, such as: if a student does not have sufficient points/ grades for other course(s); if the student wishes to be on a different course, but the course is oversubscribed or they are too late or the course is cancelled or the student cannot travel to the course; if a student has nowhere else to be; or if the student is under parental obligation to attend school. These factors arise from political, social, cultural, institutional and economic structures and conditions, which can act as positive or negative pressure depending on the student's agenda. Atefeh is the first teacher I interviewed who discussed this issue directly.

5.2.1 Teacher – Atefeh: Grades and percentages

Atefeh is a newly qualified teacher of social science and is based at the academy. Her newness makes her less guarded and more willing to discuss what she perceives as occurring with students. Atefeh has not yet learnt to use the 'sophisticated' discourses and responses that more experienced teachers such as George and Mahir give me. The teacher's accounts reveals why an expedient approach to education and the use of listening may be forms of agentive management strategies. Atefeh teaches Years 10 to 13, O and A Level courses, for students aged fourteen to nineteen years old. The students she teaches are across two very crucial learning stages – middle school, which is compulsory (Level 2), and upper middle school (Level 3), which is post-compulsory. Both learning stages produce learning outcomes that affect students' careers.

In the extract below, Atefeh discusses her concerns about some students' real reasons for enrolling on her course; their apparent lack of understanding of study and career planning; and their apparent low levels of motivation. This is illuminating as it suggests reasons why and how students may use listening during study. Atefeh's account suggests listening practices are helpful for students who do not enjoy learning or studying, or for those who are demotivated as a result of not having a guiding plan.

> Teacher - Atefeh: … how do I get them motivated? That's the main thing that I find a bit difficult. How do I // (call to prayer over the speaker starts) // boost that (1) goal in them, the end goal, the result? Erm the process of learning because at the same time there's a process that you have to enjoy. Are they enjoying it or is it just "get your result and go home?" That's just kinda/ that's what I find a bit. How do I tackle that? I think that's quite challenging.

> I: Why do you think that's come about actually because someone else has mentioned that in a different school? The whole idea of "get the grade"? What have you observed?

> Teacher – Atefeh: Yeah. I think if the students understood the process (1) and erm (1) the purpose they'd enjoy it more and work towards their end goal which is the result. Whereas I think, I'm challenging/ I'm finding it a bit hard to (1) make them realise that this is a purposeful subject. There are erm (1) options that you can [take]. … rather than just focusing on the results. Because if you just have the percentage in your mind the process isn't/ doesn't become interesting. Erm, I want to try and make this lesson interesting, but I'm not sure if I'm able to do that. I think I need a bit more support or erm (1) external input, I don't know.

>   [A little further along] …

> I: So how do you think they came to choose this subject?

> Teacher – Atefeh: I don't think that was a choice. I'm not sure. I think, erm, there were allocated to do this subject.

> I: Because of their previous grades?

> Teacher – Atefeh: Perhaps, erm, previous grades, other subjects. Erm, I'm not sure about previous grades. But (1) as far as I know, they were allocated to come to this. But at the same time I know some students dropped out because [of that] so I'm assuming that they also had a choice.   (c.07:25)

Atefeh does not recruit or select students for her courses. In the excerpt above, she shares her concerns about what can be interpreted as some students' exclusive focus on final grades – 'get your result and go home'. This seems to be the response from a few students who are not wholeheartedly engaged with learning and their learning spaces. In the excerpt, Atefeh suggests that there are a range of reasons for such a lack of engagement. These include not understanding the learning process, not realising the purpose and/or function of a subject, being allocated onto the course, and not connecting a subject to real life opportunities. In the extended transcript, Atefeh says that she wants students to learn for personal (intrinsic) reasons with final grades as the demonstrative conclusion of their learning that allows for other avenues.

> *Teacher – Atefeh: Well I'd love them to understand the benefits… Rather than just focusing on one thing [grades /percentage]. I hope it will just give them different routes. Erm to go to university, explore the world, erm find different jobs, erm so. (c.10:57)*

Atefeh's teaching experiences introduce the idea that studying can become dull if final grades take primacy over learning:

> *Teacher- Atefeh: Because if you just have the percentage in your mind the [learning] process isn't/ doesn't become interesting. (c. 06:42)*

Furthermore, Atefeh suggests that factors such as the (sometimes) unclear process by which some students are enrolled on a course can create an 'ambiguous learning space' for students and teachers.

> *I: So, do they need the A Level for university, is that what they are doing it for? Or has the school decided that it enriches them?*

> *Teacher – Atefeh: Erm, as far as I know some of the students erm (1) I'm not sure if they've even applied to go to university. Erm it's just (2) I see it as an extra subject. To fill in the timetable (laughs). Erm, but then (1) are the students using this subject and following this as a choice/ a career choice to do further studies I'm not too aware of that. (c.9:45)*

For students, an 'ambiguous learning space' means that they are unaware of why they are in a class, having no known plans or options for future ventures, and no clear trajectory. These students seem to lack an intrinsic reason or motivation to engage in learning. Survey respondents indicate that listening can help occupy students in, or distract them from, such 'ambiguous spaces', and hasten learning or studying by 'pass[ing] time' (survey respondents #11 and #30), and 'add[ing] something nice to boring and annoying study' (#25). Such listening strategies manage learning that appears removed from, or in conflict with, a student's own actual desires. Atefeh's concerns about some students' lack of intrinsic learning motivations and engagements indicate that such students may use listening to buffer the laborious learning process and the unwanted learning space.

At the same time, Atefeh's views towards the expedient approach to education above are in contrast to those of another teacher, George. He shows that the focus on grades can be crucial for progression and access to university for students who would otherwise be more focussed on personal problems. George indicates that an expedient approach to education that results in course completion and university access is a pragmatic strategy that allows for greater access and inclusion for disadvantaged students. This is better than the alternative: no access to university, no improved employment prospects and restricted future opportunities. The two teachers' different views come from their different vantage points and present opposing ways of understanding listening during study and expedient approaches to education. The teachers' views do not form a dichotomy as they are part of a larger mosaic of perspectives. Mahir, another teacher, adds his own different views to these, which changes students' agency and motivations for using recordings while studying. His accounts are so different that they will be discussed later in section 5.2.4.

5.2.2 Teacher – George: Managing expectations and choices

George's accounts partly explain the narratives of students who appear to be uncertain about course choices and learning trajectories. His accounts also support Atefeh's experiences. George's comments support the interpretation that some students adopt an expedient approach to education to help them focus and complete a course with the least discomfort. George suggests that this approach can be found when students find themselves on unexpected or inappropriate learning trajectories.

> *Teacher - George: We're just starting to do the whole managing expectations for the most part this year it's been different again because we're more robust with our enrolment. Previously there's been some quite fanciful ideas about where they want to go and what they want to do but erm then saying that since I've been teaching here every single … student has got through and got a place at university. (c. 19:41)*

Interview, George, London, 10th March 2016

The teacher refers to cultural factors such as a lack of prior educational experience on the part of students and their families that may lead to the selection or recommendation of the wrong courses. Atefeh and George's accounts indicate that students who end up on a wrong course focus on grades out of necessity. Therefore, such an approach can be viewed as an agentive response to particular learning conditions and not the cause of such conditions. Listening during study is also an additional strategic and agentive response towards the same conditions.

George's accounts suggest that an expedient approach to education through the focus on grade outcomes is important as it opens further opportunities for the student and their family. He explains why students adopt such a strategic approach, what they are trying to achieve and indicates how listening can be used in unison with such strategies.

> *I: … one of the things which I'm curious about is how do students stay motivated er to learn when it gets really hard and so from what I'm gathering having a clear goal helps//*
>
> *Teacher - George: Mmh that's the most important thing that I think a lot of them have / because a number of them based on their socioeconomic backgrounds, a*

large number of them in here especially the group you've just seen they'll be the first
member of their family, if not first or second to go to university so they see it as a
massive life changing, not just for them but their families as well. So not only is it for
their own personal development but some of them can provide for other people so
Abdi [a male student] when you mentioned about helping where he can in
Somalia… (c.21:37)

Interview, George, London, 10th March 2016

As discussed in the literature review chapter, educational expectations are structured by a variety of factors outside of the student. Nicole makes a similar observation of some of the students in her class. She states,

Nicole: I mean everybody come[s] here to learn but some people, they feel that their parents
force them. Rather than [it being of] their own free will.

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

There are also political factors and community expectations that prevent students from leaving a course, even if a learning space or curriculum is undesirable. In a classroom discussion with George present, a female student explains that learning or education is also legally enforced.

I: (Student speaks faintly so I repeat what she says) Okay so we have to come to
school by force.

Student 1: No literally, cos I think it's the year you (laughing) can't leave education
until you're eighteen so you get fined basically. You're forced to come to school, but
I like school as it's alright.

As this statement as well as others from students and teachers suggests, there are tensions between what a student wants and what is offered to them by an institute (based on previous grade outcomes and course access); what is mandated legally (based on age and educational benchmarks); and what can be realistically obtained or achieved to meet family and societal expectations. What a student wants, can accomplish, and has access to are not always connected to the reality of their situation. The learning desires and trajectories of Nicole, Sana and Bilan have already shown this.

Simultaneously, knowing and wanting the long-term benefits of education does not in itself transform a student's disposition towards study. Enthusiasm for a subject does not necessarily include enjoying education. Students who want to be in education but find themselves in courses they have little interest in agentively respond in kind. They view such courses expediently while also strategically trying to create 'massive life changing' opportunities (interview, George). Savvy students are aware that they need to focus on the grades. The possibilities of being the 'first or second to go to university', and this being 'massive [and] life changing… for [students and] their families' (interview, George, c.21:37), mean the stakes are high. Leaving a course which offers access for progression to higher education because of boredom or resentment towards study is not an option. This indicates that the ultimate goal of education is not always *for* education but for skills and knowledge to be used in life and work. Therefore, an expedient approach to education is a strategic attempt to increase access. It is not strategy for the sake of it, but a response to the realities of reducing opportunities. This also explains why and how some students use listening strategies to stop a variety of the issues already discussed in chapter four (failure, self-pity, frustration) from keeping them from getting the grades.

Atefeh and George's accounts indicate that students who have made a personal learning plan and who have preliminary career goals may not experience the internal tensions and conflict some students experience without the guidance of a goal or a clear understanding of the types of opportunities available. Further to this, when learning is without a student's 'own free will' (interview, Nicole) because they perceive themselves as acting out of the interest of others, the curriculum and the learning space must be endured for up two or three years. Both George and Atefeh's accounts indicate that an optimum learning space is when a student embraces pressures or expectations. Atefeh extends this to enjoying and valuing learning rather than just 'the percentage' at the end. From an agentive point of view, 'the percentage' response is strategic management, and allows the student to fulfil learning expectations while also regulating their habitus through listening – by for example, ensuring they do no act inappropriately due to boredom or out of a lack of interest with the curriculum, which increases their likelihood of progression.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

Listening during study may also play a bigger role for the few students who are experiencing the confining nature of the limited choices available to them. Student accounts suggest that listening strategies make the experience of learning and its spaces more tolerable, and provide a more filtered, focussed form of engagement and involvement. This is the case for Nicole. Students with a focus on relatively distant grade outcomes – a year or two away – may find working in the here and now difficult, especially when learning becomes 'challenging'.

> *Nicole: … in the future I want to be successful and if I can have my own business have my own business and for now I just want to get good grades and basically… (c. 37:12)*

Nicole's case further explains why an expedient approach to education by focussing on grades is used, and how listening helps the student manage studying.

5.2.3 Nicole – Managing the reality of conditions beyond your control

Nicole's account suggests that she uses listening to help her focus on getting the grades. This intentionally reductive approach is an alternative to focussing on course disappointment, disruptive classmates, changes to teachers and their teaching style. As discussed in chapter four, Nicole left a social care course from another institute to discover that she was unable to enrol onto the course she wanted, and thus she settled for her current science course.

> *Nicole: It's my first year actually erm (3). I applied for science last year, and then I had to choo/ well the teacher didn't allow me to do choose between medical and he was like do sciences and I was like alright then. (2) It's okay but not what I expected it to be. (c.01:11)*
>
> > *Elsewhere, much later…*
>
> *Nicole: Some people I don't think they come to learn…. it can be quite frustrating.*
>
> *I: Why?*
>
> *Nicole: Because they disrupt other people in classes…(c.32:33)*

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

Despite ending up on a course other than what she wanted to take, Nicole's account indicates that an expedient approach to education is not necessarily connected to a lack of appreciation for education. This is relevant since it indicates that Nicole enjoys or would like to enjoy her education – if given the opportunity.

> *Nicole: Education is good cos we need it you know, every day you learn something new. You know there's loads of things to learn. You're never too old to learn. You're never too young to learn. You learn in your fifties, sixties. I've learnt that you can learn anytime in life and it's fascinating when you know something new and you know something else, different and you view something else different. … Education is just beautiful. (c.38:23)*

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

Education is conceptually 'beautiful' for Nicole, but she still uses agentive listening in conjunction with an expedient approach to her education to deal with the reality of finding herself on a course that is not altogether satisfactory. From the outside, Nicole's expedient approach (focussing on grades and using music to get her through the experience) may appear a little reductive and ambivalent towards education. However, it is an agentive strategy that is responsive and triggered by unpleasant conditions*.*

In the two excerpts below, Nicole discusses expectations, and how listening is an attempt to manage the chasm between educational expectations, realities and some of the conflict she encounters.

> *Nicole: …. they [teachers] expect you to get good grades and get (1) but it don't work like that. (c.04:51)*

> > *Later, elsewhere …*

> *Nicole: Yeah I've always listened to music. Being here I've listened to music more than being back at home (2) cos like I said to you teachers that teach … [teaching styles]*

> *I: Why do you think that's the case?*

> *Nicole: Erm (3) like I said probably I think it's of (1) of the age group that I'm in and erm you feel a bit frustrated because you know where you're going to go; you know where you're going*

to head; and where you've come up from. A place where education is the most important thing and you never have that fact of erm abusing education … [educational costs, student attitudes and behaviours] (c. 31:29)

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

In the two excerpts above, Nicole also describes the educational conflict she feels within herself and with others. She describes students who seem more focussed on being registered on the course than on learning, and students who do not 'grasp/ understand' how they should engage in the course. No teacher or student in this study explicitly states this, but in my own teaching encounters and office jokes with teaching staff, such students were nicknamed 'hedgehogs' because they were in class for the winter months and out for the warmer months, and solely focussed on 'getting the grades' through shortcut tactics. Mahir, a teacher at the academy, comes very close to discussing and describing what appears to be similar students in subsection 5.2.4.

Nicole's learning experiences, overall feelings towards her studies, and recorded responses indicate that she takes on an expedient approach towards her learning because she is unhappy with the course. After a lengthy discussion during which Nicole expressed what appeared to be frustration and disappointment regarding her learning space and some of the students and teacher, I asked:

> *I: So what is the most important thing right now concerning your studies?*

> *Nicole: The most important thing right now is getting my grades. (c.10:43)*

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

Her account below suggests that she uses this approach to escape her learning spaces, some teachers and some of the difficult students in class, but not her education.

> *Nicole: Erm, all my days if I'm home alone oohh! I feel excited because then erm I'm on my own I can listen to it full blast and I get on. If I have to do my work, I get on with my work. If I*

have to do cleaning it just (1) takes my mind off of everything and I get things done and I will do a lot without realising I do a lot cos it clears your mind and it gives you that boost to do more because you don't feel tired or sluggish or lazy. None of that…

I: Now I want to ask you again erm why have you selec/ why do you listen to those particular songs when you want to do work or feel motivated and not let's say (2) quieter songs?

Nicole: I do erm it depen/ if I know what I'm if I know the work and I want to get it out the way I will listen to that, but if I don't know the work and I'm concentrating and I'm playing about I either listen to RnB erm for a soothing, more melody, high, and for relaxing, and calming (mostly? inc.).

I: Okay. Now you mentioned that sometimes you may not feel that you're confident that you're doing it right and erm er where does that anxiety come from?

Nicole: I think it's a lack of believing in myself where I know the work then I doubt myself that I don't know it and I like basically challenge myself and think all my days is it right de de de de da that lack of belief in yourself.

I: Do you know where that comes from?

Nicole: Erm (3) only started recently it's not something I literally had into me. It only started recently where I just felt I'm not there or I'm not in it, or I'm not enjoying it like I used to.

I: How recent is recent?

Nicole: All my days erm (2) I would say just the beginning of this course actually so last year. (c.30:04)

Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016

Nicole's earlier comments about her 'rude' classmates suggest that there are other more stereotypical types of expedient educational approaches. In her accounts, these appear to be used when students simply do not wish to be there, do not value education itself, or feel powerless about their learning situation and are uncertain as to why they are there.

Nicole: … they don't want to pay attention. They're rude and they're always talking…

In the literature review, I provide suggestions as to why such students are still in education, referring to economic, political and social structures (see 2.5). Irrespective of why they are there, these students act disruptively and influence Nicole's approach to education. Her attitude changes from 'education is beautiful' to

'ignore', 'stay calm' and 'just get the grades'. This indicates educational frustration and confusion, and her transcript is filled with 'rants'.

Overall, listening to music during study is a responsive coping strategy for Nicole that alleviates her confusion and stress. Evidence can be seen in Nicole's explanation of why she listens to the songs she plays for me:

> Nicole: *Most of the songs are very soothing and calming.*

Nicole's 'soothing and calming' sonic bubble is in contrast with the difficult learning spaces she describes, and how she feels in them. This is why it is conceivable that taking an expedient approach to education helps Nicole to focus on completing her course rather than on its dynamics. Listening also seems to help Nicole engage with her studies in a depersonalised manner – without getting too emotionally or personally involved. Listening strategies help Nicole alleviate the tensions and boredom of learning a curriculum that is either not valued (by classmates) or calculatedly treated as a mandatory prerequisite for more meaningful and relevant future studies, training or employment.

Mahir, a science teacher at the academy, provides additional explanations of how students deal with the 'here and now' of learning – and with expedient approaches. He critiques the external or impersonal reasons students use for course enrolment, and supports the notion that an expedient approach to education is what keeps students enrolled when they do not enjoy a course or want to leave it. The teacher touches on the expediency of education, without explicitly attributing students' difficult learning behaviours and attitudes to it. Mahir also discusses student disengagement in learning as the result of technological advances creating new educational expectations, learning experiences and spaces. This is a very important perspective that is different, but complements what Atefeh and George say about students' approaches to learning. Mahir's teaching accounts indicate that an expedient approach to education can also be arrived at through other circumstances, but still impact students' learning engagements similarly. His teaching experiences help contextualise the way in which some students approach their learning, the difficulties they experience, and their use of listening strategies to manage them.

5.2.4 Teacher – Mahir: Managing the drawback of technological affordances

For Mahir, a lack of learning choices or plans is not the reason that students adopt an expedient approach towards their education. Instead, the teacher believes students to be distracted and spoilt by technology. Mahir believes many students lack self-discipline as a result of technological dependency, which, in conjunction with compounding factors in students' lives, can lead to shallow learning engagements. Mahir describes students who are too focused on leisure; who procrastinate and defer learning for outside the classroom (if at all); and who refuse to engage with the teacher. This suggests that he believes some of the students he encounters have too much freedom and not enough discipline and structure, which can also give rise to expedient approaches to education – through short-cut learning strategies. Mahir's views suggest that listening practices are a technological side effect or by-product.

> *Mahir: One of the things that I've noticed is that there's a shift [in] students' interest so students nowadays in comparison to when I was in my A Levels, they've got a lot more distraction[s]. Easily, they can be distracted … even though the student is still interested in the subject you're trying to teach. The fact that he knows there's an [external] source. He can get other resources … [to] whatever you're teaching in class. He takes [it] very lightly in the class. Whereas back in our, when I was doing my A Levels, … Back [then] it was a bit harder even to have internet at home … You'd value coming to the class, whereas now the value [is] just coming to class just to please the attendance [record]; to please what the parents want from you or what the school expects from you, but not (2) [to be] self-motivated to learn what you're meant to be learning. So. (c.01:13)*

Interview, Mahir, London, 5th May 2016

At the beginning of the excerpt above, Mahir suggests that students belong to a 'digitally native' generation (Prensky, 2001a, 2001b). This means that mobile and internet technologies are themselves factors that shape students' learning, studying and engagements in learning spaces (Thomas, 2011), which partly explains why students engage in listening during study after school hours. The academy, being a religious school, is culturally biased against music and musicking (performance,

listening, singing, dancing or tapping to music) and these are strictly managed. The excerpt also highlights that students are always actively engaged in some form of digital practice as a comfortable generational norm (Thomas, 2011).

At the end of the excerpt above, Mahir, like Atefeh, shows that he believes factors such as the 'attendance [record]' and parental and school expectations form the motivational basis for student course enrolment and attendance rather than intrinsic personal reasons, such as self-motivation or determination. This view is in line with the discussion about external structures shaping students' sense of choice, and other teachers worried about students with a minimalistic approach to their education. To Mahir, expedient educational approaches create a complex problem. They produce students who are disinterested in classrooms and need coaxing to learn. Expedient approaches to education make the need for consistent or in-depth engagement with learning outside of recorded or official assessments redundant because grades are the only commodities of value at the end.

Mahir, like George, suggests that personal backgrounds shape students' learning experiences. For Mahir, personal backgrounds are students' living conditions and dietary habits. The teachers suggests that too many students lead unhealthy lifestyles, which result in pent-up students who erupt in learning spaces when they should be focussed on learning. For Mahir a lack of healthy lifestyle and ill-disciplined technological practices (gaming, social media, texting, streaming entertainment throughout the night) results in students who attend classes drained.

In such situations, listening can appear to be a bad practice. This is the case if it used to stop learning. Student accounts and surveys, however, indicate that listening is used to counter the conditions Mahir describes.

5.3 Managing emotions and focus for study

The three teachers interviewed introduced the view that emotional wellbeing needs to be maintained for students to be able to learn. Students added to this view by stating that they use listening to be able to manage their emotions and to focus on studying. Students' claims that listening aided study were supported by survey responses, classroom observations and student interviewees. Both the teachers' and students' views fall in line with the music studies discussed in chapter two, section 2.2.1, which state that listeners use music to control their psychological processes - moods for emotional wellbeing and cognitive faculties, for concentration. This management allows them to become focused and to persevere with their learning, in spite of what is happening internally and externally.

5.3.1 Teacher – Mahir: students and the 'wow buzz'

Mahir explores the types of emotions and focus students need in their learning spaces. Mahir's comments about students displaying inappropriate emotional and mental processes also helps explain why some students listen during study and what it is they hope to gain and achieve through listening strategies. In the excerpt below, Mahir discusses his experiences teaching students who, in order to remain engaged, need to feel perpetually excited or enticed by their learning. He believes students' (over)reliance on technology – 'the SnapChat, the this, the that…' has changed how students interact with learning, and what they expect from their learning experiences – which is a 'wow buzz'.

> I: Wow. So really you're saying you've lost value as a teacher?
>
> Mahir: You do (stutters). You try your best to make sure you encourage … You inspire them. I work in different, other areas just making sure that all this is like the wow buzz. But every lesson is not a wow buzz. Like you kind of try to make a wow buzz but it's not/ there's times where they need to be doing tasks and stuff like that. And, "Oh Sir can we do this little bit later, you know," can I make sure I do a lot of that and that. I found/ I think partially it's to do with the distraction they have and I

> *just don't completely blame [it] on them because they're tech savvy, ... they have*
> *the SnapChat, the this, the that, the that, the that, the this. (c.02:17)*

> *Interview, Mahir, London, 5th May 2016*

Mahir points out 'every lesson is not a wow buzz' and either argues that students, being 'tech savvy', become distracted by social digital practices or have become accustomed to a tech-induced 'wow buzz'. To the teacher, 'tech' activities provide the 'wow buzz' lessons do not always contain as they are instantly gratifying and are easier to engage as they require less effort than formal learning. It is possible that the students Mahir observes and discusses still approach their education expediently and treat learning as an unpleasant task that is reserved for formal assessments. It is also possible that the students Mahir discusses simply find their lessons dull or too difficult.

In the two classes I observed, Mahir used a variety of teaching resources such as class handouts, PowerPoint presentations, internet images and videos of a beating heart off a Smartboard; he also wrote on a whiteboard. Students copied notes and avoided answering questions (as they did not appear to know the answers) but filled in the handouts he provided after he provided the answers. On the basis of his teaching experience Mahir explained that despite his attempts to engage students and make lessons exciting, some students simply enter classes emotionally and mentally drained or unprepared to learn.

> *Mahir: … are those basic necessities fulfilled, …? … so you're mentally, psychologically,*
> *physically prepared to come and learn. Now all of that adds up to even be more motivated to*
> *learn, whereas when all those things are missing it's very difficult to be enthusiastic and, you*
> *know, burning for erm learning ... (c.04:27).*

Listening practices could explain why students who seek a 'wow buzz' while learning or studying use recordings as their way of addressing the emotional and mental drain they feel, and, it may partly explain what students are trying to achieve by listening during study.

5.3.2 Survey responses – Managing the Self

Student survey responses suggest that students attempt to manage emotions and the ability to concentrate by listening. The thirty students who responded to the small-scale explorative survey for this study understood emotions as a factor that determined whether or not they listened to recordings during study. This in turn suggests the importance of emotions during study. Emotions, more generally, influence how students feel about their learning, which shapes how they engage with learning – their ability to focus and think, and their perceptions about their learning abilities and competences (Kabir, 2012; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014; Mijs, 2016). Students appear to make the relationship they have with their learning more positive by managing their emotions and their ability to concentrate through selecting 'suitable' listening materials. At the same time, inappropriate listening choices have a negative on students' ability to study by hindering learning. Students report in surveys feeling 'irritated', 'distracted', 'frustrated' or even overwhelmed as they cannot 'multi-task'. These two opposing reactions indicate the power of listening practices; the importance of selecting appropriate recordings; and the subjective results produced by listening strategies.

Survey respondents suggest that their listening enables students to conduct the necessary self-help therapies required for learning or studying to take place. This self-help comes from students' ability to manage their psychological state instead of being at its mercy. Survey respondents support the suggestion that listening practices can be used to encourage studying by making changes to themselves, emotionally and cognitively (mentally).

> ***Emotional reasons for listening:*** *block out unpleasant thoughts and problems (#4), to create mind peace and relaxation (#29), mind off other worries in life (#29), to be happy or makes me happy, therefore I can get on with my work positively (#26, #27), because it is enjoyable (#4, #8, #10), feel better (# 26), calming or easing (#13, #17, #21, #27, #26), peace (#20), relax the mind (#29), harsher beats for mood (#11), keep positive when struggling with tasks (# 26) it can add something nice to boring and annoying study (#25).*

Survey respondents also indicate that they attempt to remedy their negative emotions and the inability to concentrate through the listening choices they select. Listening seems to help students manage emotions in two ways. The first is to alter emotions by enhancing their moods: to be 'happy', 'feel better', 'calming', 'relaxation' and 'keep positive'. The second is to protect themselves, per George's remarks, by 'segregating' and 'compartmentalising' themselves from unpleasant thoughts and emotions. Survey respondents mention to, 'block out unpleasant thoughts and problems', 'to create mind peace…', and to keep one's 'mind off other worries in life' and protect oneself from 'boring and annoying study'. Both altering emotions and protecting oneself from negative ones remind us of George's idea that students need to prevent 'bleed-through' from other spheres of life. Survey respondents indicate that emotions are powerful factors that inhibit or encourage learning. The students who attempted to alter or protect themselves from their emotions by using recordings indicated that they are trying to craft emotional spaces appropriate for learning and studying. If they cannot escape negative emotions, then perhaps they can artificially construct temporary learningscapes that allow them to feel positive or unburdened enough to learn and study.

The reasons given for listening in two interview cases (Meelaaney and Zahid), suggests that these students believe listening increases 'productiveness'[9] and 'productivity'[10]. The students engaged in listening also appear to be attempting to increase their perceptions of learning competency. Productivity seems to be in reference to the amount of work completed or learnt, the ability to study for longer due to listening, and how efficient at learning a student becomes (as it stops distractions and negative thoughts interfering with learning). Productivity also appears to be increased when survey respondents use listening to help stimulate their mental processes, making learning or studying both possible and effective. Data from survey respondents and student interview examples also suggests that productivity is perceived to increase when recordings are used, activating 'concentration and focus', helping memory, and developing mental strength through

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[9] Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016.
[10] Interview, Zahid, London, 6th May 2016.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

perseverance and 'motivation'. Students state that listening to appropriate recordings helps them 'to stimulate the brain' and to encourage 'creativity'.

> ***Mental processes as reasons for listening:*** *concentration and focus (#8, #26, #27, #29), motivation (#23), not giving up (#27), stimulate my brain in order to remember information (#29), for creativity (#28) get on easier with things (#21), getting work done (#26), it helps me zone out and get on with things (#30), I can block out other noise that is distracting and moving me away from what I am supposed to be doing (#29) or stops other distractions (#26, #13,21, #22), it keeps me from giving up (#27).*

Overall, survey responses suggest that listening allows students to lighten the burden of negative emotional and mental states. Both states represent different or differing 'mind spaces'[11]. This includes the students who were trying to cope with the emotional aspects of their studies and life's problems, to students simply trying to maximise their learning potential.

5.3.3 Classroom Observation 2 (CON2) – Managing interactions

Listening strategies appear to help the students in this study promote emotional and mental states that can be conducive for learning to achieve 'the normal teachy stuff' that teachers already work on to create learning spaces for students that are 'comfortable', 'safe, secure and all that'[12].   Feeling safe, secure and comfortable also appears to be an important part of managing emotional and mental states (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009; Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson, 2015). However, feeling engaged – 'switched on' – is, equally, an important result of managing emotions and the ability to focus. Interview and observational data have indicated that some students experience severe demotivation even when they want to study, or engage in procrastinating behaviours due to lack of focus. Without the seven classroom visits conducted between the college and the academy, I would not have observed

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[11] Interview, Nicole, London, 9th February 2016
[12] Interview, George, London, 10th March 2016 (c.13:24)

the students and classrooms where such negotiation occurs, or understood how students use listening for internal management.

The lesson observed in CON2[13], below, provides data on the dynamics of student engagement, the teacher's role as a motivator and the use of digital tools. Students appeared less enthusiastic and less engaged than in an earlier classroom visit (CON1) which focussed on practical skills (please refer to 5.4.2). Some students displayed behaviours that appeared to evidence boredom and lack of engagement – silence even when prompted, a lack of interaction, lazy texting, doodling and note-taking. The teacher in the lesson tried very hard to get students to engage with their notes by making them read them so they could answer his questions. At the beginning of the session the teacher reminded students that their assessment would be the following week and that everything in this session could be assessed. After the session, the teacher explained to me that he did not give handouts to students since they could lose them and/or leave the session never reading them. The teacher explained that making students copy down material (however time consuming and laborious for everyone involved this may be) increased the likelihood of them engaging with the taught material as it encouraged them to ask questions. Ultimately the teacher wanted to encourage students to have a dialogue (through discussion, debate or to see some students explaining the material to others). In the interview, the teacher said that this was to encourage students to be active note-takers by forcing them to read what he has written so they discover what they do not understand in the lesson sooner, and, while he is there to help explain it to them. An extract from my notes on CON2 follows.

> *Theoretical lesson on colorimetry, spectroscopy and analysing data through graphs. Students are engaged in drawing calibration curves on graphs, working out wave lengths, concentration percentages and absorption rates. Students are not responsive to the teacher's questions and prompts even though they have the answers in their notes. I don't get the sense that students are engaged with the knowledge but more so taking down notes for assessment purposes.[14] There is one lone boy who is visibly working alone. There clearly is boredom and some gentle*

[13] FE college, London,10th March 2016

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negotiations with the teacher[15]. Teacher also moves from table to table to different groups and offers one-to-one with those that engage and ask him questions. Students at the end of the session, hand in their notebooks to the teacher for him to sign off their notes. This helps reinforce scientific procedures and allows the teacher to keep a note on what students are doing. The signed notebooks also works to keep a record on who taught what[16]. The teacher can choose not to sign a student's notebook if it is not up to standard or enough – so it's also motivational. Sana (student interviewee) is texting a lot towards the end of the lesson.[17] Four laptops, two mobiles hidden under the table used for texting and/or social media. By the end of the lesson this increases to four phones on the table being used for social media and two more inside pockets.

In CON2 the classroom learning space required continual negotiation and motivation from the teacher to keep students engaged. The teacher was preparing the students for assessment and transmitting material that could be learnt by rote (it was facts or formulae). The students appeared to want simply to copy down the information. During independent study, learning spaces are also either quiet or noisy, and the memorisation of content continued though without the teacher who, in CON2, was the sole motivating force for learning. My fieldnotes indicate that there are always a few students that need prompting to learn or who appear to disengage when left to their own devices. When studying alone without the guidance of a teacher, those same students may perhaps listen to recordings that help them feel more motivated.

Overall, the observational, survey and interview data suggests that if students wish to remain or become engaged with their learning, they must manage their emotions and thoughts appropriately. Not taking responsibility for engagement, or being too distracted, can result in a poorly motivated or emotionally burdened student who becomes disinterested in learning, especially when the 'wow buzz' (interview, Mahir)

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[15] The room itself is particularly warm due to the temperature being controlled from an external central source and the added combination of the glass wall which traps heat in, several students are perhaps also feeling lethargic and yawning a great deal due to the environmental conditions described.
[16] This very pragmatic tactic is the teacher's own creative strategy. It alludes to the tensions in learning spaces that both students and teachers have to manage.

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ends and learning becomes more unavoidably rote, labour intensive or difficult. The lesson observed in CON2 possessed little 'wow buzz' because it was a final revision class before an assessment. It was a teacher driven lesson with a variety of teaching methods to keep students engaged. During independent study, students need to keep themselves motivated to study. For some of the students in this study, recordings seem the ideal tool to help craft a motivating learning space, to lighten the emotional load, and to adjust their thoughts for learning. Listening, therefore, may act as a management tool that helps these students organise and segregate themselves from negative emotions. These same students may also use listening to stop themselves from procrastinating and engaging in social practices that stop learning and studying.

5.4 Managing spaces for learning

Along with using an expedient educational approach and managing emotions and focus, students have also stated that they use listening to help manage learning spaces. Students appear to respond subjectively to learning settings. Learning spaces can be too noisy (Meelaaney, Bilan and Sana's interviews), too aggressive and tense (Nicole's interview) or too formal (GCSE Female Group interview in chapter six), to give a few examples from student interviews. In each example, listening appears to manage learning spaces by changing the auditory, social and cultural qualities of the space. These learning spaces include the geographical space and the physical place where learning or studying is occurring as well as the sonic and the interactional qualities of that space. As mentioned earlier, learning spaces can include locations in institutions (classrooms, libraries, lobby spaces, common rooms), homes (bedrooms, kitchens, dining, lounge areas) and any other public places students conduct their formal education (buses, trains, cafes and local libraries).

5.4.1 Bilan – Managing the cultural sonic learningscape

Bilan, an A Level student at the academy, manages her learning space every day after school by changing her sonic environment. She retaliates against the 'foreign' 'sound of her house' by listening to her own London music loudly on speakers that are connected to the TV in the lounge. Bilan also uses its widescreen to read her work.

> Bilan: I plug my laptop into the TV. I like to have everything big I don't know why so I plug the laptop into the TV and listen to it from the surround sound from the TV so it's just carrying through the whole house. (c.03:37)

> Bilan: My mum will like play Somali music around the house and it's basically foreign to me because I don't understand what they're saying but then I don't listen to that by myself. It's just like the sound of my house basically (laughs). (c.05:41)

> [To clarify, Bilan understands and speaks Somali. During the interview, a parent and staff members interrupt us several times and she converses with them fluently in Somali. What she is saying is that her mother's Somali music is old/older, almost classical, and that she does not understand the old dialects and/or cultural references. In the full interview, she explains that she is only fluent in a dialect of Somali, from the north and not the south or other regions. The language barrier is partly why her mother's music is foreign to her].

Interview, Bilan, London, 4th May 2018

Bilan's response to the cultural 'soundscape' (Camilleri, 2010) created by her mother's music is to counter her by using her own music – London trap and grime – very loudly. Her sonic dominance ensures no one sits in the room with her even if they are quiet while she is studying. This sound war forces several family members to retreat into their rooms and ensures that she has ownership of the audible, physical and the cultural space in which she engages in her learning – the lounge and all the equipment in it. According to Bilan, her family is very accommodating and naturally very loud so they let her do as she pleases. Clearly there is no negotiation or competition for the learning space because Bilan has total control, but there is conflict from the student's point of view in terms of what she wants her learningscape to sound like, who she wants present in it, and how she wishes to

engage with her learning. In chapter four, Bilan also discussed how she used the lyrics in songs to help her shape her learning narrative and identity.

The sonic learningscape Bilan creates while studying at home through her listening also appears to reflect what she says she wants from her learning spaces in the classroom in relation to interactions.

> Bilan: My classes are very small so it's like me and one other person so it's very quiet. … I don't like quiet environments so with me… I have to like have a break and talk to someone so I miss that distracting person that talks all the time.

Interview, Bilan, London, 4th May 2018

At home, she has the opportunity to talk to her sibling or mother to break up her studying, but she chooses not to. Equally, in the interview Bilan informs me that she only interacts with classmates during meal times. Bilan's listening does more than produce noise and filter or block out others and the sounds they create. It also carves out a new learningscape that is entirely personalised and singularly dominated by the individual agent. In this space, there is no sharing or compromise, just the student and their work in a soundscape that reflects her emotional, cultural and social needs.

Bilan's listening is perhaps comparable to the two female students observed listening during a classroom visit (CON1), next. The students observed, however, listen discreetly with headphones under their forensic gowns' hoods. The similarities between the two cases are that the two students appear to listen to limit interactions with peers, while Bilan also uses loud music to stop interaction. Listening in both examples seems aimed at managing the sound of the learning spaces and the interactions within them.

5.4.2 Classroom Observation 1 (CON1) – Managing classroom spaces

Notes collected during the first classroom observation at the FE college showed that the practical lesson observed gave evidence of many interactions and action-based

learning. The lesson was also a practice session for an exam the following week. The listening practices observed in such learning spaces further suggest that listening during learning is not always resistive or subversive. The students who continued to listen in this setting did so while engaged in their science activities. This indicates that, possibly, they were using listening to avoid interacting with their peers, as well as to continue their learning. CON1 also highlights how the students engaged in listening are different from the students engaged in texting or other social media.

> *Students are gowned-up in forensics overalls. Half of the class is sectioned off for scientific activities. The other half has grouped tables and chairs to work on. Students have notebooks, handouts and procedures. Students using smartphones for selfies with tasks or poses of themselves and team in forensics gear; for videos and for checking the time for record keeping purposes on their paperwork. Some students have headphones and their mobiles in their gowns. There are friendly interactions between teacher and students. Jokes and banter exchanged between teacher and students. Student: 'Is that your bottle of wine?' Teacher - George: 'I have better taste.' A lot of questions asked to the teacher. There's also one-to-one guidance. Some students are also engaged in texting and their phones are on the table. Approximately 4 students and the teacher use their phone visibly throughout the session. Teacher uses phone to read out email from colleague or manager. Conversations and mobile use increases towards the end of the lesson with an additional two users also using them (brings that up to 7 people I know of). The phone use is open. After the demonstration has ended, the students conducting the forensics tasks in the crime scene area are engaged in a lot of discussions. The talking is of moderate pitch and there are a number of interactions and conversations between students and groups on the given tasks. The environment is jovial and relaxed. A student who is part of a group is entirely engaged in her phone and not participating in the group's playful discussion about how they would have committed the crime and when they challenge her she says: 'I'm looking at selfies.' A couple other students in another group are also working without interaction and only copying down what is written by others. This is for the entire duration of the lesson.*

Observation, FE college, London, 4th February 2016

During the session, practical forensics tasks were specific: take pictures of the crime scene and each piece of evidence; fill in several forms; collect, bag and label each

piece of evidence; sketch, label and annotate the crime scene. Students could, theoretically, work alone under their assigned role. This was not the case for the table-based work that required practising procedures such as fingerprinting, watching teacher demonstrations, listening to the teacher and notetaking or making. Students who chose to work alone during the forensic crime scene tasks by listening to music avoided helping others, working at the pace of the group or engaging in general conversations outside the task at hand. They appeared more self-sufficient as working alone required them to work independently by using previous class notes and the resources given to them for that session. These students also appeared less irritating to their peers than those who disengaged entirely by focusing on texting or looking at personal pictures. Peers asked students engaged in listening questions casually without appearing displeased or annoyed at their listening.

At least two students in a group observed had headphones inside their gowns, and their team only spoke to them to confirm their work status. Survey responses (#27, #29 and #30) suggest that that the two female students were the British and British Australian students who listened to R'n'B, pop, rap and with one possibly having a preference for dubstep. The participants in the survey, who were possibly the same two students observed, stated in the survey that they listen to music to 'block', 'zone out' or 'focus' on their work instead of the 'noises' and 'distractions' around them from others. 'Zone out' here appears to refer to the learning space rather than the task of learning. 'Block' appears to refer to the intentional use of recordings to shut out others sonically and socially, by signifying one's own unavailability or unwillingness to interact on a conversational basis.

During the teacher-led practical demonstrations, when all questions were directed at the teacher, all students listened to and/or observed the teacher. Since all in the class except two students (Nicole and Sana) refused an interview, interpretations had to be based on the classroom observations and survey data. These indicated that students who used recordings during the practical part of the session did so to avoid interacting with distracting or struggling classmates. Their peers who did not listen to recordings were visibly available and helped other students complete tasks

or answer questions. Further to this, the sonic space itself during student-led tasks was noisy and I overheard several students discussing unrelated topics. Students who listened to recordings during the lesson completed their practice tasks quicker and left the classroom sooner.

5.4.3 Meelaaney – Managing sounds

In the case of Meelaaney, an A Level student at the academy, listening helps manage the chaotic sonic learning space at home. Her listening is discreet and not conducted as forcefully as Bilan's. Meelaaney begins each study session by locking herself in her bedroom, tidying her space, putting on her headphones and listening to Quranic recitations. She uses listening to manage her learning space by reducing the distracting noises caused by her younger siblings at play.

> *Meelaaney: I have five siblings that are younger than me. Five. There's/ they're always knocking on the door for something and it's, it's the most stupid of things so as you said that music and erm or Quranic verses they come in cos I block them out. Oh, they're too rowdy but that's what I do, I just block them out. That's how I study (claps her hands). (c.03:37)*

> *Meelaaney: And with my siblings around, and all that distraction, all [those] things that are basically becoming obstacles (clicks fingers). You become stressed (laughs and claps hands). And that's how it is. Yeah. It [listening] basically focuses you. Pushes you. Yep. Wow. (c.05:47)*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Meelaaney's listening materials create a new sonic learningscape that is more suited to her needs. Listening separates Meelaaney from the noises of others ('block them out') while promoting positive thinking processes ('Focuses you'. 'Pushes you'). Meelaaney does not rely on listening alone to separate herself from others as she physically locks herself in her room to prohibit siblings from bursting in and disturbing her. Meelaaney, like Bilan, also takes full ownership of her learning space.

Through listening, Meelaaney brings about a change in herself and to some extent to her surroundings, even if it is not to those around her. This is necessary since, for her, noises and interactions that are left unmanaged turn into learning 'obstacles' and create a 'stressed' learning space. Listening is 'calming' and (re) 'focusing' because it eliminates other noises. Listening for Meelaaney works in conjunction with her physical rituals of locking her room and clearing her learning spaces. Together these practices combat Meelaaney's reluctance to learn and help prevent procrastination.

Meelaaney uses Quranic recitations for more than the creation of a sonic barrier. In the past, Meelaaney listened to a wide variety of popular English and American genres such as pop, dance, hip hop and rock, but found them to encourage 'musicking' (Small, 1998) – singing, dancing, tapping, humming – instead of studying. In experimenting with other listening materials she discovered that some Quranic recitations reflected her views and reaffirmed her culturally and religiously. Those same Quranic verses provide Meelaaney a 'calming' and 'focusing' learningscape.

> *Meelaaney: … now it's just Qur'anic verses and I feel like when you listen to them it calms me down. Right? And it blocks out everything so I'm easily able to focus on what I'm doing even though it's playing (2) it's playing and I'm not hearing word for word like how it's supposed to be. It's background noise that is calming. That is, I'm focusing, that's what it is. (c.04:23)*

Her specific listening choices indicate that she blocks out unwanted noises with wanted discourses. At the same time, above, Meelaaney states: 'I'm not hearing word for word like how it's supposed to be'. This is because she only selects chapters / surahs she already knows and finds positive. Secondly, she does not give her full attention to her recordings, but she is aware of the content in each surah. This strategy shows how recordings are used to support study and the importance of sounds in learning spaces. Overall, Meelaaney describes her listening as providing a motivational boost. Recordings are multi-purposed tools that act as a sonic filter, stop her engaging in procrastinating practices (texting, social media) and help her prepare her mind for study.

5.4.5 GCSE Group Female Interviewees – Personalising a formal setting

Listening is also used by the students in my opportunistic selection to personalise a formal setting. This is the case for three students who study together in a local library in London, after school each day. In this example, one student listens to English/American rock, another listens to Asian music (K-pop, C-pop and J-pop) and another listens to London grime. Students personalise the space of the public library by means of the recordings they select. The listening materials in turn reflect and reinforce each student's soundscape and learning space. The three friends are pre-GCSE assessment. Their accounts show that these students can use listening in everyday ways to personalise and manage the learning space without negative learning experiences.

The three female students, Faduma, Hani and Khadro, go to a lot of trouble to personalise their study space (Hani: 'We don't like listening to each other's music'), and to restrict the social interactions between them: Hani, 'when I listen… I'm kinda quiet'. They do this through sitting arrangements and by choosing a quiet section in the library. Silence is enforced by library staff and other visitors, and then by each student listening to their own music, using headphones, while they study. The students also use listening to 'focus' and 'concentrate', despite not having distractions.

> *Faduma: // She won't keep quiet, this one.*
>
> *I: What do you mean?*
>
> *Faduma: No, basically we go together (inc.). I try and make it quiet, but (inc. it's/she's?) so loud you can't concentrate//.*
>
> *(// General chatter and laughter: she's very loud. You're very loud...) I: So you're saying she's loud when she's not listening to her music? Faduma: Yeah. She's loud.*
>
> *Hani: But when I listen to it I'm kinda quiet I guess cos I'm focused. I'm trying to take in what I'm learning but at the same time. I can multi-task.*

I: So… that means you're listening to your music on your headphones with your friends around while you're doing your work.

Hani: Yeah. No. We do our separate work and then when we're done like // (overlapping voices) we can either all // (overlapping voices)

Faduma: // We don't like sit next to each other. Like everyone sits in their own complete//

Khadro: // We sit on like one table, but we sit separately and if she doesn't like get something (inc.)//

Hani: // Then we help each other.

I: Okay so what I'm interested in is that you three have your own music while you're sat next to each other//

Hani: // We don't like listening to each other's music// (c.13:43)

Interview, GCSE Group Female Students, London, 9th May 2016

The personalised listening of each student makes their formal learning spaces more familiar or less intimidating. The three students inhibit casual and distractive social interactions through listening, but also stop their listening to help each other with their studies, when required. Their listening strategies, like those of Meelaaney, Nicole and Bilan, evidence multitasking, which further supports the notion that listening practices are multipurposed cultural tools that adapt to each user's needs.

5.5 Discussion

The foregoing examples suggest that the students in this study listened during study to bring about psychological changes and to manage their learning realities and learning spaces.

5.5.1 Listening practices and the structures students navigate

Teacher accounts suggested that some students may treat their curriculum in a depersonalised manner because it holds little meaning for them, creating confusing learning spaces and resulting in a variety of expedient approaches to education. Such learning spaces have been found in academic literature to produce students that have little 'appreciation' for and 'connection' to their learning or the learning process, and who have difficulty maintaining 'self-sustained engagement or persistence' (Faircloth and Miller, 2011). In this study, students who use recordings may be implicated to some extent in the disconnection they feel towards their education, but the key finding is that an expedient approach to education is itself an agentive response. It is an approach that students utilise alongside strategic listening practices to help them manage the dissatisfaction they feel towards specific aspects of their education.

An expedient approach focuses on negotiating and acquiring capital: symbolic capital (prestige), social capital across personal and institutional fields, and cultural capital such as academic qualifications and knowledge (Bourdieu, Passeron, and Nice, 1977; Bourdieu, 1986). An expedient approach for some students is a strategic tactic to turn 'losses' into 'winning outcomes.' The approach can be outwardly successful if the desired outcomes are achieved. Simultaneously, if a student detrimentally focuses on the outcomes of grades rather than focussing on learning itself, then there can be unpleasant challenges for the student and the learning community, as discussed by Atefeh and Mahir.

Atefeh and Mahir perceived some students to be either aimlessly rushing through education or reducing education to 'percentages' – final grade outcomes. These teachers viewed such student behaviour as the cause of educational confusion; however, student accounts indicate such behaviours are agentive responses, just like listening strategies, to specific contexts. This is related to the literature review on education and motivational structures that include family expectations and rules as well as institutional approaches (inevitably shaped by national mandates) that can

encourage students to narrow their educational focus by focussing on grades and speed (Rose and Agas, 2016), or to act strategically (Bourdieu et al., 1977; Bourdieu, 1998).

The narrow approaches which some students take towards their education, as suggested by the teachers (Atefeh, George and Mahir), highlights how the students studied respond to several pressures such as family expectations and rules (at the individual level) and the admissions systems that arise from institutes (at the local level) and government mandates (at the national level). There are some students who also talk about their motivations and dispositions being shaped by (macro) global factors. For instance, Nicole discusses Dominica, Sana discusses Turkey and Meelaaney discusses Somalia. All students compare their learning conditions and aspirations to students and/or family in the listed countries, and this kind of reflection changes how they engage with their education, their views and their aspirations. These individual, local, national and global pressures encourage students to narrow their educational focus and engagements (Braun et al., 2011; Farris, 2015; Bethune, 2016). 'Structuring structures' (Lizardo, 2011) and 'structured structures' (Bourdieu, 1990) create the learning spaces students act within, and shape students' agentive listening and learning habitus. More specifically, students' learning behaviours and their dispositions are agentive strategies that respond to conditions. This is why their learning and listening practices are both transformative and reproductive (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

According to the teachers cited, students' learning agency and goals, their parental input/guidance and family situations all create complex learning tensions. Students respond to such tensions in a variety of ways, some by acting disruptively, others by disengaging from learning itself (if they do not or cannot conform), and still others by conforming and adopting 'tunnel vision' by focussing on grades. Focussing on the grades is an agentive game playing strategy that reinforces learning conditions and allows students to transform their status and prospects. Rose and Agas (2016) describes this as 'an averagarian system' with:

getting in to university a game of averages that is played by students, parents, universities and employers. This means not playing at it when so many big players are could mean losing out. So, students and their families make significant sacrifices to conform to a narrow and ruthless system.

George's teaching accounts indicate his closeness to his students and the fact that he is proud of the challenges they have faced together, and are a reminder that final learning outcomes are an important factor. They determine university access, especially for potential first-generation university students. His teaching experiences and Nicole's classroom examples help explain why some students choose the creative strategy of listening to help them get through what they perceive as the tedium of day-to-day learning, to by-pass institutional conflict, and to focus on 'the end game'. Neglecting grades can result in not focussing during learning or study and inappropriately 'zoning out' (Nicole) of learning, and education. This type of zoning out is not the same, or as beneficial, as the intentional zoning out in which listening is used to block unwanted noises, emotions, thoughts and interactions (Nicole, GCSE Group Females and survey respondents #30, #29,). Social and psychological learning obstacles imply that students possess a habitus different from that of their learning community, and that it needs to be managed and brought back in line. Bourdieu discusses the management of primary habitus within education as becoming harmonized and regularized (Bourdieu, 1977). To achieve this, they need to outwardly 'harmonise' with their learning conditions and structures: to be quiet or obedient and 'productive' – complete homework, show a good attendance record, complete assignments and assessments.

Students listen during learning and studying to help deflect a variety of social and economic pressures, and confusion about education.

> 'School represents the ability to earn an education that could lead to an interesting profession, a good income, and a position in society. This knowledge is there, even when they do not know what type of education they want or what work they want to do in the future' (Einberg, Lidell, and Clausson, 2015).

For some students, educational pressures manifest themselves in learning spaces as emotional turbulence or apathy that can disrupt their thinking. This can happen when students bring their problems and fears into their learning spaces which, in

turn, become loaded with latent meanings and 'baggage'. Student accounts suggest that learning spaces represent future aspirations, social expectations, and the anticipation of drastically changing or improving one's social and economic standing. This outcome is dependent on students' ability to complete their education, even when they find it laborious or frustrating, and even when they are disinterested in the curriculum.

The interviews with Atefeh and Mahir indicate that some students internalise their uncertainty or lack of educational awareness.   They see students with vague or poorly formulated aspirations forming (learning) behaviours, goals, thoughts, and a sense of possibilities (Bourdieu, 1990) that are not connected to realistic outcomes. Atefeh, for instance, viewed some students as reluctant or bewildered students moving through education without any goals outside 'focussing on the results … the percentage … the grades'. Faircloth and Miller (2011a) also state that some students do not possess a (self) 'intentional relationship with learning' (p.2). Mahir's experiences suggest that some students appeared disempowered – the receivers of learning instead of the 'thirsty' pursuers of learning. Mahir's experiences are parallel to Freire's (2014) critique of the banking concept of education, in which education is viewed (by students and teachers) as the deposit of knowledge into passive students and not the critical, dialogic and transformation of students and teachers. Listening in this context may help empower and focus students. Examples might be students who are studying without a clear goal who use listening to manage their day-to-day learning; students that regard grades as enabling progression and access to more desirable further or higher education, training and employment, and use listening to help extend their ability to study and concentrate. Like Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), Freire (2006) views such strategies as changing the consciousness of the student and not their realities or challenging the structures that make their conditions.

5.5.2 Listening practices to manage the self

The listening practices discussed in this study can be viewed as accommodative (reproductive) strategies that enable students to circumnavigate issues or obstacles in a transformative manner. Students who wish to engage with their learning obligations seem to use listening to help activate useful emotions and cognitive skills such as thinking, memory, concentration, logic and reasoning / problem solving.

Mahir's accounts of his teaching raise worthwhile points. They indicate that listening while learning could be treated as the by-product of too much technology on the part of an increasingly digitally dependent youth population. According to Mahir, this hyper-technologicalization encourages or allows students to engage in digital practices and not to engage with learning and teachers in learning spaces. Yet, when listening practices are explained in the context of emotional and mental management, it seems that recordings can be powerful tools in encouraging emotional wellbeing and increasing focus. Listening appears to allow the user to manage their own psychological states (McFerran and Saarikallio, 2014; Krueger, 2013).

Dewey (1923: 77-78) states that the control of the self is imperative when learning:

> *The educational process works in two: the psychological and the sociological. … Education can give the individual a full command of their powers – of themselves –… This is only possible if education is 'continually converted into psychological terms.' A student's powers, interests and tastes.*

Dewey argues that learning needs to stimulate the student, and that there should be a desire to convert learning 'into psychological terms' that resonate or have meaning and value for each student, sociologically. In this study learning is seen mostly through sociological gains, while listening is used to manage the psychological.

Mahir's 'wow buzz', for instance, explains why and how students make their learning psychologically relevant to them. 'Wow buzz' relates to how students want to make

learning enjoyable and captivating. Such learning desires are in line with Prensky, who researches the 'digitally native' secondary school student. Prensky argues that modern day students require learning to be fun in order to maintain their interest and motivation in formal learning (Prensky, 2010). Prensky also states that excluding the fun in learning because 'digital immigrants' (anyone born before 1980) deem learning to be 'serious business' means today's students disengage from learning and engage instead with competing (digital) alternatives, such as services on the internet. This is also found to be the case by Roberts and Christenson (2012), who study the effects of media and technologies on young people and how it transforms their learning practices and engagements.

Simultaneously, students' listening may not necessarily indicate that all learning needs to be fun (Faircloth and Miller, 2011). The 'wow buzz' obtained from students' listening changes their emotions and ability to focus, but not what they are learning or how it is delivered. For some, using listening to change the self or to focus on the self is an aspect of the culture of narcissism, self-esteem and self- promotion (Vallet and Annetta, 2014) that fuels 'generation me' (Twenge, 2011).   In education this supposedly manifests itself as the prioritisation of feeling good about oneself over performance (Vallet and Annetta, 2014). These views suggest that listening offers pleasure and short-term gratification.

In any case, whether or not students use listening as 'digital natives' or members of a narcissistic 'generation me' does not challenge the Bourdieusian contention that all practices agentively reproduce or transform the conditions that produce them nor the Wengerian idea that students agentively use recordings from communities that give them strength and a sense of belonging. Numerous other studies show that listening can bring about a change to the emotional and/or cognitive state of the listener as a powerful self-regulatory, self-help therapy (Rudd, 2013; Lozon and Bensimon, 2014; Bigliassi et al., 2015; Meltzer et al., 2015). Seen in this light, the pursuit or creation of a 'wow buzz' in learning spaces for some students may be a serious attempt at agency through self-management. This appears to be the case when listening is used as a motivator and an enabler. Listening appears to help encourage positive

emotions and discourage negative ones. This helps increase students' potential to concentrate on a psychological basis and helps them feel competent sociologically.

Mahir, the teacher, discusses very different motivations and perspectives to the agency that listening provides students. For the teacher, the focus is to make lessons more enjoyable and inspiring from a teaching perspective. Agentive focus is also based around the creation of learning structures that can fill learning spaces with energy or excitement. For students, agentive listening helps manage external pressures and internal aspects of their selves. This agentive response is to internal and external learning spaces simultaneously, whereas the teachers cited focus on the physicality of a particular learning space. The teachers and students mentioned in my study construct different motivational spaces. This highlights the differences in their approach and their perceived solutions to the same issues. The students believe that if they can manage themselves through transforming and accommodating their learning spaces, they can succeed, while the teachers believe that if they can transform their teaching to accommodate students' dispositions they can produce motivation and interest. Each agent is attempting to effect a change within their own field of control. For teachers, it is within classrooms and their lessons. For students, it is within themselves.

It appears that both students and teachers, although working independently and on different aspects, attempt to influence the outcomes, interactions and experiences in the same learning space. The key differences are in influence and agency. As mentioned above, Mahir attempted to create a 'wow buzz' through transformative teaching practices and resources. This is an externally directed power exerted towards or around students. Simultaneously, students through an internalised directional agency use their listening materials as resources to transform themselves into better students. The students discussed make use of cultural tools including music, films or religious scriptures in pursuit of a personalised 'wow buzz' that can nudge them to remain engaged with study and to manage their internal and external learning spaces. This strategy relies on students policing themselves in order to fit in, and Bourdieu refers to it as 'repressing' or 'inhibiting' one's habitus (Bourdieu,

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

1977). Listening therefore also appears to be used as a self-help practice to alleviate such pressures.

Without alleviation, 'stress can significantly impact academic functioning and more importantly psychosocial well-being,…' (Dods, 2013:74). Student accounts appear to show that listening practices temporarily shift negative feelings and a lack of focus in learning spaces. There seems to be a need to manage external pressures, internal conflict and unwanted interactions – as seen in CON2 and the GCSE Group Female example – while promoting positive 'mind space(s)' and interactions. This appears to be the main driving force behind students' use of listening materials during study. Listening alongside supporting emotional well-being also seems to encourage cultural inclusion in learning spaces and engagement with learning (Katz, 2013). Feelings of discomfort, unease and anxiety in learning spaces are indicative of a sense of social or cultural alienation. Students in this study state they use listening to feel psychologically comfortable and in control of their selves, to manage their surroundings, and to feel better able to focus on their studies.

5.5.3 Listening practices and learning spaces

Several studies on young people and music state that listening can create a barrier between the listener and their surroundings (Bull, 2000, 2006, 2008; Camilleri, 2010; Prior, 2014), and that it can act like an 'aesthetic sonic wall paper' (Rimmer, 2010). In this study there were examples of students doing this during unpleasant or repetitive study. Students who listened to manage their learning also describe their listening experiences in ways which are similar to the notion of creating comfortable and secure learning spaces. These experiences explain why some students engage in listening and how they want to feel or should feel in their learning spaces (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). The use of listening to manage surroundings and to create a sense of safety or comfort also relies on students using their agency to transform their engagements and perceptions, to regularise their learning space, and to harmonise with their learning community in order to reproduce the institutional habitus that is expected (Bourdieu, 1977).

The examples discussed – Bilan, CON1, Meelaaney and a GCSE Female Group – indicate that student listeners like to create highly personalised and regular sonic learningscapes. This is irrespective of whether their learning spaces are interesting or dull, noisy or quiet, homely, institutional or public, grouped or solitary. Listening in these cases is not solely used as a sound barrier, for companionship or due to isolation. Listening makes learning more accessible and less daunting (Bucholz and Sheffler, 2009). The erratic sounds of younger siblings playing, other family members' music or interactions, or a talkative study buddy in the library, for instance, are exchanged for sounds that enable the student to feel more 'connected' to their learning or learning space (Faircloth and Miller, 2011a; Katz, 2013; Einberg et al., 2015).

On the whole, listening seems to have a pragmatic purpose. It is a direct response to a learning space's sonic, physical and interactional conditions, and serves a filtering purpose. Some students such as Nicole, Bilan and Meelaaney use it in a multi-purposed way. In addition to filtering distracting sounds or interactions in the learning space, they use it to promote thoughts and feelings that encourage study, and to affirm themselves. This may be necessary since harmonising with a learning community also requires students to repress habitus that is not in line with community expectations.

5.5.4 The nature of listening practices and preferences as a whole

Listening is multi-faceted and multi-purposed. Student responses imply that an appropriate 'soundscape' (Camilleri, 2010) must first be created to produce a learningscape that brings about favourable learning behaviours and attitudes. Many students do not engage in listening while studying because recordings during study without an agentive purpose are disruptive. Therefore, recordings can be said to be appropriate when students agentively engage them strategically for the purpose of studying. Such listening materials are not random. They possess specific qualities that resonate with the user emotionally, cognitively, and socioculturally. They are amenable to appropriation as cultural tools, and for this reason are used by students

outside of their intended community of practice. Students who found suitable listening materials for study also discovered many more recordings they found unhelpful. Therefore, not all listening materials can be used. Listening materials are used differently, hold different meaning, and produce different results. The value and meaning of each recording is assigned by the listener, who also decides the purpose of the material.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the students in this study use recordings agentively to manage the dynamics of an expedient approach to education, to manage emotions and encourage thinking, and, to create personalised learning spaces for study. These students use listening to inhibit behaviours that would otherwise hinder their ability to learn and progress. They use listening to help them focus on the endgame and accrue capital. This chapter concludes that students use listening to manage themselves better while learning.

Chapter 6: Listening, Identity and Allegiance

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how students use recordings to reinforce specific identities, to access role models or mentors, and to maintain cultural allegiances. Also discussed are the meanings and values students impart to recordings themselves. Some students in this study use recordings from their own historical cultural heritage – for example, Dominican carnival music (Nicole), the Quran (Meelaaney and Sana) or Kurdish folk songs (Sana). Others use recordings from their present-day locations, such as London grime or trap music (Bilan, Hani and Isra). Still others engage with popular culture from beyond their present and historical heritages and locations – for example popular music and drama from North Korea; music and anime from Japan; and music, movies and games from Hong Kong (Khadro, Aisha, Bilqiis).

In the ten student interviews that I conducted with sixteen students, it was the three male students interviewed who tended to respond monosyllabically to avoid elaborating even when prompted. For this reason, they have not been included in this chapter as separate cases. The student cases discussed in this chapter are: Meelaaney, who uses Quranic recitations to reinforce her identity and surround herself with female role models; Hani, who uses London grime to express sociocultural and ethnic allegiances; and Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis, who use East Asian popular culture that matches their ideological attitudes. Bilqiis was interviewed in a group with two male students and two female students, and together they discuss the ideologies represented in music, their own cultural values and their religious beliefs.

6.2 Cultural identity and role models

Throughout this study the theme of cultural identity is based on students' perceptions of themselves (see section 2.2.4). Through listening, each student identifies with, borrows from and attempts to participate in (imagined) cultural communities of belonging and allegiance (Wenger, 2000). Students' listening choices, as described in this study, reflect their current cultural identifications and ideological allegiances, and this contributes to re-affirming their perceived self-identity. Cultural identifications and ideological allegiances can evolve or change altogether, over time and based on changes to personal circumstances.

In this study, the theme of 'role models' and 'mentoring' is derived from the way in which students describe their recordings as providing people or stories that give inspiration and guidance on how to think, behave and feel (habitus). The role models in recordings appear to reflect exemplary attributes or achievements, such as the women in the Quran for Meelaaney. Students such as Hani suggest that they learn about the social dangers and cultural issues or experiences around them from local artist's songs. This learning is similar to how she would learn from peers and mentors, which is why I view it as mentoring rather than role modelling. In reation to both role modelling or mentoring, students describe their recordings as encouraging and containing empowering discourses. Some suggest that recordings allow them to aspire to personalised goals after listening to stories about the struggles or successes of others with shared aspects such as religion, gender, culture, ethnicity or locality.

On the whole, role models and mentors are closely associated with students' cultural and social self-identifications, which are linked to the concepts of habitus and capital discussed in the literature review (please refer to the discussions of Bourdieu in sections 2.4 and 2.5). Students appear to find comfort and assurance in listening to recordings that have been created by people who share a variety of aspects related

to their own social or cultural capital and habitus. These similarities appear to reinforce a sense of cultural or social belonging, give a sense of normality and reaffirm existing capital and habitus.

6.2.1 Meelaaney – cultural identity, womanhood, and the Quran

Meelaaney is a twenty-year-old female student completing an A Level in psychology to obtain four more UCAS points to meet the criteria to attend university. She has already completed a BTEC course in Health and Social Care from another institute. She does voluntary work which involves helping those with mental health issues. Her courses and extracurricular activities are directly related to her ambition to open a mental health practice in Somalia. As the second eldest of ten children she is part of the first generation in her family to go to university in England. While Meelaaney came to England in her infancy (aged two), her family is still relatively traditional. This means her mother is a full-time housewife and her father, who appears to be mostly absent, also has two other wives. Neither her parents nor her 'aunts' (step-mothers) have had first-hand experience with the educational systems in England.

Meelaaney listens to Quranic recordings during study to develop her religious heritage, while simultaneously engaging with her education. Listening appears to give her access to narratives about Muslim female role models, which provides her gendered sociocultural affirmations. Religious scriptures are, for Meelaaney, social, cultural and symbolic capital resources that are applicable to all aspects of her life.

> *I: You said your favourites were the one on women and Mary, why is that important to you when you're studying?*
>
> *Meelaaney: Erm not just studying. It affects everything. Erm the reason why is (4) wow this is actually quite a hard answer. Erm, (3) it's both general like and also it's erm (4) it's motivating because (3) you are able to hear about women that do amazing, amazing things. Like how (3) erm Mary was able to live with Jesus. And how erm (3) how much God actually values women. How much women (1) are basically are/ should be seen in society and I can't remember if it was in a verse or the sayings of the prophet. Erm, it was the mother was (3)*

not/ between a mother and father, the mother has three rights over the father. So who comes first? The mother. Who comes next? the mother. And who comes next? The mother and then the father. … (c.02:23)

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Meelaaney likes to listen to surahs (chapters) in the Quran and ahadiths (stories/reports) added to the Quran specifically about women who have achieved something (she views as) noteworthy. They are narrative accounts or reports about the Islamic Prophet's life, talks, behaviours, family and so forth. They appear to be supplementary and contextual stories from people at that time and for three centuries after. Some religious sects see the accounts in the ahadiths as inferior, less reliable, and more contradictory, than the surahs in the Quran.

When asked why she listens to such texts when studying, Meelaaney responds by saying that it is 'motivating', 'amazing' and 'inspiring'. She also indirectly suggests in the same responses that she is (re)discovering Islamic female role models. Meelaaney's practice of actively seeking positive discourses on women from the Quran strongly suggests that they are providing her reaffirming and empowering narratives. As is evident with students in similar situations in other studies, she uses these narratives to construct her own positive female Islamic identity (McLean, Wood, and Breen, 2013). Meelaaney appears to use the affirmations she obtains from listening to make her own narrative of a female Muslim that is capable, valued, valid and 'abiding by' her religious doctrines.

Simultaneously, although Meelaaney discusses her faith and the Quran throughout the interview, she does not use the labels/ categories 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' throughout her fourteen-page transcript. Instead, Meelaaney talks about aspects of her faith, how it makes her feel (psychologically, spiritually, culturally) and why she listens to scripture during study. Being 'black' is also mentioned by Meelaaney, but it has far less significance for her than being female, African and Muslim. She only uses identity categories when I ask: 'how do you see yourself?'

Meelaaney: I see myself as … I am black. I am African. I am Somali. Majority I am African (laughs). That's what I see myself as.

I: And then what about the Britishness?

Meelaaney: Britishness (3) this is the land that I grew up in. This is the land that will open up doors for me… there's a place that I can call home. There's a place where people speak the same language as I do. Just in the same way as I do at home (laughs). Eat the same food that I eat. Have (2) the same culture that I have so I would classify myself as British but I wouldn't classify myself as do you know those people, … the white and red flag? [the English].[18] *(c.18.16)*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Meelaaney's notion of identity is both fixed and dynamic. The cultural aspect of her identity is transformative, becoming, but never altogether being one: 'I'm a British African or African British' (Meelaaney, c.18.29) and she has two cultural homes – in Somali and in Britain. However, the two most powerful and encompassing intersecting identities that Meelaaney identifies with are her religion and gender. They incorporate and/or displace other categories such as nationality, ethnicity, country of birth or current domicile and national culture. This is important for understanding role models, especially for Meelaaney, as meaningful because of shared cultural values. This also explains why she looks for female Islamic role models rather than role models who simply come from the same place(s) as her or share similar ethnicities.

Drawing on the last excerpt, other 'active' parts of Meelaaney's cultural self-identity are also seen throughout her interview. These involve practising Somali culture while being British, by speaking Somali and eating Somali food at home with her family in London. Meelaaney does not need to affirm her Somali identity because she practises aspects of it daily, therefore there is no fear of losing it. She also practises her British identity daily through language, education, and sociocultural

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[18] The student refers to the Union Jack with the intention of saying White people through an implicit shared 'ethnic code' by saying English(ness) which equates to White(ness).

practices unique to the country. Britain for Meelaaney is not only the land that she has been brought up in, but also the one that affords her opportunities.

Meelaaney's reasons for her focus on women in the Quran and ahadiths bring to mind a current debate about the lack of Muslim role models in education and other public areas (please refer to section 2.2.4). Findings from this study and the interview with Mahir (the teacher at the academy) suggest that there is a lack of cultural knowledge that is exacerbated by a lack of role models whose experiences reflect those of students. Meelaaney's listening indicates that, in her case, role models are culturally affirming even if they do not reflect her experiences. Her use of 'sacred texts' to address her need for female Muslim role models suggests she may not have access to suitable, visible, publicly accessible Islamic female role models. .

Meelaaney's references indicate that she listens to chapter four from the Quran, 'Surah An-Nisa – The Women'. There are a 114 chapters in the Quran. There are also other chapters around women such as 'Al-Mujadilah – The Pleading Woman, 'Al-Mumtahanah – The Woman who is Examined' and other chapters such as 'Al-Ma'un - Acts of Kindness' (Quran Mu, 2012), which Meelaaney may or may not listen to. The surah Meelaaney shares with me, is 'The Women.' This is the second longest chapter in the Quran and comprises 176 short verses that contain a variety of social, economic, religious, and legislative commandments on inheritance, morality, conflict, how to treat orphans, slaves, women, daughters, mothers, wives, sons, parents and other extended family. Although it has little specifically on women alone it does comment on women's position, obligations, their rights and status in families and society. Meelaaney's comments on women and the Quran indicate that her readings or listening must also include other chapters such as 'Maryam - Mary,' and ahadiths, such as 'Hadith on Mothers' (Cragg, 2016; Haleem, 2005). There are also many compilations of female ahadiths on the internet that can make Meelaaney aware of her Muslim rights and what is expected from her. Some of these stories or rules may reaffirm her religiously and empower her female identity.

Meelaaney also appears to ignore or exclude negative and archaic content from her recordings. Her listening choices, even within the Quran, appear to be very intentional and focused to ensure that she listens to religious discourses that support her contemporary, female and Islamic identity that promotes relatively contemporary attitudes. This practice of filtering unwanted discourses was discussed in chapter four. Recordings in chapter four helped students to filter unwanted narratives from teachers, peers and family by constructing alternative narratives to experiences and positionalities. Meelaaney's selective use of religious scriptures indicates that recordings are also filtered and ideologically 'reformulated' (Lull, 1995: 4).

The student's desire to use religious scriptures during study appears to have been inspired by her visit to Somalia in the summer of 2015 (the first since she left the 'motherland' aged two). This spurred her to reconnect with her Islamic (Somali) 'roots'. This included learning about her parents' background when she visited the country, staying in contact with family in Somalia, and making plans to return and contribute to the society /country (as one of her brothers has recently done, by marrying and attending university there). This indicates that her listening is part of a wider desire to fit in culturally and religiously, and to reconnect with a cultural community from which she feels estranged. Meelaaney's listening choices enact cultural identity and affirm ideological allegiances that would be pushed aside if she solely focused on her (British) education and life in London. As discussed in the literature review, education also implants a secondary habitus that can be different from a student's primary habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990), see section 2.5. By listening to scriptures during study Meelaaney is maintaining her connection to a global religious community and sense of cross-cultural belonging.

It can therefore be argued that Meelaaney's listening is fulfilling all of the requirements of intersecting fields in areas related to religious, cultural, and learning. Her listening can also be seen as a multi-tasking practice that enables Meelaaney to continue to engage with her religious and cultural heritage while crafting her own new contemporary identities through education. If this is the case,

then Meelaaney uses the discourses in her recordings to boost her learning and reinforce her religious identity.

> *Meelaaney: … It's like that extra kick in the butt if you know what I mean. It's like getting you to do something that's why I feel like it. Cos I said, remember when I said erm, "trying to make your mum happy equals the Lord's happy?"*
>
> *I: So is your learning in line with your religious belief then? Do they go hand in hand?*
>
> *Meelaaney: Yes. Erm (3) hmm. As I said my goal in life is to help those with mental illnesses. If you help people/ wait in the Quran it says that erm (3) if you (2) help one human it's like you save the whole of mankind. And if you hurt one human it's like you murder the whole of mankind. That's our belief so I'm like hey I'm studying to do something good. That's [a] good deed. And good deeds a (inc.) basically and then it just keeps on going and going and going, do you know what I mean? That's what I believe.*
>
> *I: So you want to help people with mental health. It's a passion of yours and it also helps others which supports your religion.*
>
> *Meelaaney: And help me in the hereafter (laughter). (c.06:27)*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Due to the intersecting fields that influence Meelaaney's learning and aspirations, it is not enough for her simply to finish her education and attend university. Her religious, gender and cultural identities play a role in contributing to how she studies (listening to the Quran and not music), what she studies (for humanitarian professions), her rights, duties and obligation to study as a Muslim and a female, and her purpose after study (community mental health practitioner).

As already discussed, Meelaaney uses very specific stories from the Quran to reinforce aspects of her own identity, and to maintain continuity between her inherited traditional belief systems and her modern-day identities. She appears to select the best of several worlds by borrowing from the Arabic Quran, Somali culture, and using what is useful and relevant for her in England. By adding from other fields and communities, Meelaaney is also perhaps reducing the tensions that may exist within each cultural field. The Quranic recordings provide Meelaaney affirmations that her educational choices and employment aspirations are in line with her cultural/

religious belief systems. The feeling of being culturally connected gives her a strong sense of self, security and inner confidence.

Simultaneously, Meelaaney does not listen to entire surahs or ahadiths and study with equal focus and dedication. Her comments about why she listens to surahs and ahadiths and how they make her feel ('absolutely inspiring'), suggest she focuses on specific aspects of a text. For instance, during the interview Meelaaney recalls the parts of interest of an ahadith on 'Mothers' and comments on it. She appears both fascinated and thrilled as she recalls it excitedly:

> *Meelaaney: I can't remember if it was in a verse [surah] or the sayings of the Prophet [ahadith]. Erm, it was the mother …, the mother has three rights over the father… I was like, what? That's amazing! And to hear, to hear like paradise, your paradise lies under the feet of your mother. … I was like what? Just for a woman? Not just for a woman… (c.02.23)*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Such warm and excited recalls are found throughout Meelaaney's interview when she is discussing sacred texts. The narratives of other students (Sana and Zahid – a male student) who also listen to Quranic recitations and ahadiths when studying suggest that Meelaaney selects and listens to surahs and ahadiths that she already knows, likes and has learnt or memorised. This is the most plausible process since, like the other Islamic students interviewed, Arabic is a third language in which Meelaaney is not fluent. It is through English subtitles on the Quran app that Meelaaney is able to understand recitations, compile a Favourites or a Most Recently Downloaded list, highlight, tag, bookmark, share, search and repeat sections (Quran.com, 2017).

> *[This excerpt is taken from when the student shows me the Quran app off her mobile phone and plays me some of her recitations.]*
>
> *Meelaaney: Any of these readers and they are all awesome, but I have favourites. And now I'm going to list my favourites. You're going to love this (laughs). (c.17:17)*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

The type of listening initially carried out to find appropriate texts is intensive. It shows intent and management that requires both time and effort. Therefore, it is most likely not done while engaging with academic study. As other students have mentioned, Meelaaney first listens to surahs and ahadiths in her own time, learns them and selects her preferred listening texts when studying. During study Meelaaney does not consciously listen, understand or remember the entirety of each Arabic scripture. She uses her recordings to create culturally comforting soundscapes and positive learningscapes. She herself remarks:

> Meelaaney: …it's playing and I'm not hearing word for word like how it's supposed to be'. [Instead], 'you're doing your thing and you're actually lost in another world'. [And] 'I discovered you know what, let me just block out the world and just listen to something which is positive and calming. (c.04:23)

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

This leaves her room to reinforce aspects of the text that appeal to her if they are 'amazing'. Another example of this is when Meelaaney extends, interprets and applies her own meaning to the recitation of 'Mothers' in which 'happiness and paradise' are said to lie at a mother's feet:

> Meelaaney: … trying to make your mum happy equals the Lord's happy. (c.05.12)

Meelaaney takes the religious notion that by attempting to make one's mother happy, 'the Lord' is also satisfied. She uses the recitation in this instance to form the ideological basis for why she should work hard towards her education. This and other recitations help make her education culturally relevant. The female role models from the sacred texts provide reassurances about what she can achieve and how she can direct her learning towards goals that are in line with her family values, gendered status and religious identity. Meelaaney pulls together religious discourses that direct her towards becoming a modern-day [well] 'practised Muslim' during study. She uses recordings from pre-existing cultural fields and ideological allegiances to guide her education and develop a positive identity.

Meelaaney in the past attempted to use popular music to provide her with guidance, but this was unsuccessful.

> *Meelaaney: I found myself dancing to it like, "yeaaah" (laughs). To like I don't know, I'm doing some weird stuff. (c.09:48).*

Interview, Meelaaney, London, 9th May 2016

Although music was enjoyable it was also distracting as it often ended in dancing and singing. Meelaaney also found that she did not have control over her body: *'You can't help it. Your body just naturally does that.'* (Meelaaney, c.10.52). This is partly why Meelaaney does not listen to music now, although her friends and siblings, who are 'not as [religiously] practised', still listen to a variety of music genres. It is from these interactions that she fondly remembers the songs she used to listen to.

The shift to Quranic recitations reflects, for Meelaaney, a move away from involuntary, questionable behaviours ('doing some weird stuff'), and from sexually suggestive songs to something more religiously appropriate. During the interview Meelaaney made hand gestures and indicated her hips which indicates she is talking about gyrating to pop and R'n'B songs. Meelaaney describes the Quran as*: 'the words of God', [which] 'speaks to the soul as well'.* Religious scriptures are purposeful, for Meelaaney, because there are lessons or instructions to be learnt and used throughout all aspects of life, including during study. Both Meelaaney and Sana like to feel that God or the words of God stipulate that they must study and achieve greatness. This applies pressure, creates urgency, and guidance, as Meelaaney states:

> *Meelaaney: … it's reminding me of what I need to do. Where I need to go. Who I'm doing this for cos you're hearing (1) God's word isn't it… (c.18.59).*

In Meelaaney's interview, the theme 'role models' is intricately linked with the theme of cultural identity. Meelaaney's cultural identity is not a singular category. Even during study it is shaped by a variety of fields such as the family, the religious, the educational, the social and the cultural (Bourdieu, Passeron and Nice, 1997) Meelaaney uses her primary habitus (Bourdieu and Passeron,1990) and the

resources from the communities she borrows from to perpetuate and re-shape her identity, positionality, status and participation (Wenger, 1999; 2000). For Meelaaney the most effective cultural tool enabling her to bridge her intersecting communities and identities has been religious texts. As discussed in chapter four, learning is a communal venture and, as such, Meelaaney chooses to engage it with the help of her cultural and religious communities. Meelaaney opts to join the imagined community of the Muslim sisterhood, and to use its rhetoric for gendered inclusion, religious affirmation and overall guidance. As in chapters four and five, Meelaaney does this by enhancing discourses she likes and filtering ones she does not. This helps her manage herself – her emotions, her focus, her learning space and the cultural narratives she takes in about herself and people like her.

Lastly, Meelaaney's choice to listen to Quranic recitations during study shows that she is attempting to preserve and/or promote her own cultural and religious identity. Meelaaney preserves her identity by finding the culturally relevant role models she requires in religious scriptures. The Quran is her most powerful and adaptive resource. It provides cultural support, affirmation of her identity as a woman and a student, inspiration and religious guidance from within the community. Meelaaney's transcript mentions the Quran nineteen times, making reference at a number of points to specific recitations. This shows that her faith is closely connected to what she does, even when learning, and who she sees herself as being, even if she does not use religious categories for self-identification. Listening during learning is thus an extension and an enactment of her identity.

6.3 Ideological allegiances

Students show ideological allegiances when they select recordings that appear to fit or reflect their values while excluding discourses they perceive as falling outside of their value systems. This does not mean that students select recordings that depict actions and language they endorse, for instance violence in hip hop, but rather that

they select recordings they perceive to reflect their own overall interpretation of meaning in relation to experiences, identities and attitudes.

6.3.1 GCSE Girls' Group

This group interview was with between six and ten British Somali female students, aged fifteen to eighteen, at the Academy. It was a very dynamic interview with students leaving or joining the interview throughout. Analysis of the interview is in three sections designated by natural pauses in recording. The first begins with six students. The second occurs after a student, Hani, leaves the interview to bring her friends to be interviewed for support. The third section is characterised by even more students leaving or entering the interview. In all of the segments some students either simply listen, other students interject when they disagree with a student's response, and some students add more information to another student's response. Due to this, there are many interruptions which often stop responses before they are completed. Nonetheless, the students who stand out during this interview are Hani and Khadro as they are the most responsive. I would have liked to discuss listening practices with other students such as Amina, who listens to Arabic love songs from the Persian/ Arabian Gulf during religious studies, but the more dominant students in the group tended to silence Amina and the other quieter students. As discussed in the methods chapter, these quieter students were also reluctant to be interviewed alone. Therefore, the three more dominant students who shared their listening choices, and who are discussed in depth in the next section, do not reflect the views of all the students in the session.

The two main students in the group interview each had their individual listening choices. Hani discusses British grime, Afrobeats and hip hop, while Khadro discusses K-pop. Hani's interview is treated separately in the following section as her recordings and listening reasons are different from Khadro's. The third student included in this section is Aisha, who was not in the interview. Aisha's listening habits and reasons are similar to Khadro's, and they are most likely classmates and friends. There are only two classes for her year: the girl's GCSE class and the boy's

217

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

GCSE class. I met Aisha by chance in a computer room before the GCSE group interview, while the other students were in a lesson. She is included in this section because I spent an hour talking to her about her East Asian preferences (books, movies, music and languages).   This talk in the computer room also shed light on Khadro's responses, which were in a group setting (more information will be provided in her section). In the conversation with Aisha, I learnt that students who engage with East Asian popular cultures appear to share resources that are physically purchased and not streamed from the internet, such as books, DVDs, comics and games. This needs a local community in which to borrow and lend. Students referred to this community as comprising classmates, siblings and cousins.

This group interview was useful in allowing me to meet students who engaged in listening during study amongst friends rather than in stressful or alienating learning spaces. A student at the beginning of the second part of the group interview aptly describes listening experiences during study and amongst friends as being:

> *So near and yet so far [from each other]. (c.00.24)*

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

Her words suggest that the soundscape each student creates is their own unique learningscape and cultural experience, but amidst the closeness and security of friends. Such personal listening initially suggested that students' choices were not based on peer pressure since there was no expectation to conform, impress others or to share listening choices.

> *I: Okay so what I'm interested in is that you three have your own music while you're sat next to each other//*
> *P4: //We don't like listening to each other's music//*
> *P5: //Yeah we don't. (c13:45)*

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

However, during the group interview there was evidence that peer pressure still exists as some students mocked or disapproved of other students' preferences.

6.3.2 Hani – ethnic representation, local mentors and London grime and hip hop

Hani is a fifteen-year-old student studying for her GCSEs (Year 11 / Level 2). Unlike some of the students considered here, Hani has not yet taken any major assessments or experienced failure. She listens for the most part to London grime, underground rap, and hip hop by young artists such as Geko, Stormzy, Mostek, T-O-Wayne, and J-Hus. Although she listens to a wider range of music with friends, her personal preference while studying is for home-grown artists she can 'relate to'. In the interview, Hani distinguished between London or UK artists and others from further away:

> Hani: [I] like stuff that's like trending in the UK not like, not like Korean stuff or like Taylor Swift cos I'm not really a fan of that cos I can't relate to them I guess. (c.08.14)

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

Hani listens to her mobile phone with headphones at home to block the sound of younger siblings and while undertaking independent study in her local library in London with two other classmates. Her 'social' approach to listening and studying with friends does not suggest isolation or alienation. Nor does her listening appear to be exclusionary, rebellious, or countercultural (as it might perhaps be framed in the writings by Willis (1977) and Woods (1979), since it is bound up with study.

Hani's preference for music and artists she can relate to appears to be connected to her social and cultural identifications, which are linked to her local and ethnic background. The communities she identifies with are local 'black/ African' 'minority groups'. Hani uses recordings to hear and share the group's perceptions of problems such as 'racism', educational struggles, crime, family and social breakdown.

> I: Why do you like to listen to London rappers? What is it// [during the interview I recalled that the interviewer should avoid using 'why' so I attempted to reframe the question.]

Hani: // cos I can relate to them because we're from the same background (other students laugh). … (laughs with the other students) but like you can relate to them because of what they talk about … like (1) racism, and they talk about stuff that [is] benefiting (overlapping voices) minority groups. … and I under/ I take in like the struggles, and like where they came from and how they struggle to get education and stuff … But you know I'm still doing my educational stuff. I still understand where they're coming from.

I: Would you say that you're struggling to get your education or anything like that?

Hani: I'm not struggling to get my education. You kind of from time to time you want to listen to people who … don't have stuff that you have. Like you have access to school and learning and like family. They've been deprived from their learning. Their family, [either] their dad died or like their dad left them, their mum or they've been in foster home[s]. It kinda makes you think like, "wow I should be happy for what I have," kind of thing. (c.10:25)

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

Hani's closing words, above, indicate that although she is grateful for her situation, she often needs encouragement to stay on her current learning trajectory: 'wow I should be happy for what I have'. She also seems to be learning about the realities of minorities and the taboo nature of expressing particular identities. This is partially evident when Hani relaxes in the interview and becomes excited about her music and begins to use 'street' dialects, but then composes herself and reverts to standard English. It is evident that peer pressure (in the form of others giggling at her responses) and not wanting to appear disrespectful towards me, the interviewer, stops Hani from talking in a manner that is more casual and less guarded. Similarly, she stops her friends from playing her songs as she feels they are inappropriate for me or the interview. Hani's friends' responses to her music indicate that they do not ordinarily discuss each other's choices, and that the use of headphones allow them to avoid sharing their preferences. This private listening space shelters them from peer pressure, embarrassment and disagreements. It also affords them the autonomy to create their own cultural and social soundscape.

Hani appears to listen to her music for a variety of interrelated reasons such as to learn about others, to avoid becoming the unfortunate characters depicted in some

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of her songs, and to stay connected to narratives that both challenge and reinforce the epistemic violence of dominant stereotypical discourses from mainstream cultures (Saada, 2014). The subcultures that Hani chooses appear to over-represent marginality, violence and deprivation. Hani uses this to remind herself of the access to resources that others do not have or utilise, and she compares the accounts in her music to her experiences.   The recordings that Hani listens to sometimes contain anecdotes and humour. They can also be informative about the living conditions and experiences of young people in particular communities and talk about issues young people are concerned about: the pursuit of success, 'respect', material wealth and the experience of rejection, ridicule, educational or social failure, legal punishment, loss of status, drug selling and taking, competition, sex and violence.

After listening to Hani's music and watching the videos the artists produce it is evident that songs are often intended to communicate with a specific community. The music videos created by younger artists reflect the target audience themselves in age, ethnicities, cultures, backgrounds, experiences and sometimes gender. Almost all music videos feature young males in hoodies and/or tracksuits, trainers, make reference to social housing, fast food chicken chains, the park, the streets and underground clubs. The female students who listen to London grime, trap and rap in this study appear only to listen to male artists. These male artists rarely include female fans in their videos, unless a song is about women.

To discover why Hani and other female students did not listen to female rappers I conducted a Google search of popular London grime artists, selected female artists associated with or in the same music scene as the male artists students listed (Nines, Mostack, J Hus) to ensure I was researching the right music community. I then listened to songs and watched videos from Youtube of the female rappers found female MCs such as Stefflon Don with songs such as 'Real Ting', 'London', 'Envy Us' and Ms Bank's 'Fire in the Hood', 'Day Ones', 'Vibez'. I noted that although female artists are similar to their male counterparts in rap styles, their content seemed more explicit and videos were hypersexualised. For these reasons,

it is also perhaps more in line with American gangster/ glam rap, which can be said to produce glamourised exaggerations of particular lived experiences instead of poetically reflecting and politically discussing local realities or nuanced community experiences (Baldwin, 2004; Kitwana, 2002).

At the same time, songs and videos by other female rap artists – including Ray BLK's 'My Hood' and '5050'; Lady Leshurr's 'Queen's Speech' episodes; and Nadia Rose's 'Skwod', 'D.F.W.T.' and 'BOOM!' – suggest that not all female artists are hypersexualised. The female artists listed appear to come from cultural or geographical communities that are distinct from those of the British Somali students interviewed. This further supports the view that Hani's listening is associated with cultural identity, local ties, and shared allegiances. However, this does not fully explain female students' listening to male grime music, which as a hip hop subgenre seems more concerned with representations of masculinity and strength (Low, 2011).

In view of the subject matter in male artists' songs, Hani, just like Meelaaney, is selective about the type of grime that she listens to, the kinds of narratives that she feels are relevant to her, and how she uses the music in her daily life and studies. One way that Hani seems to filter and select appropriate narratives is by deciding whether a song is an 'authentic' account of a lived experience.

> Hani: … you need to listen to something where you can like understand the person, where you feel like, like wow like you're actually going through this. Now that's the kind of stuff I like listening to. (c. 02:38)

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

Simultaneously many of the male artists and youths depicted in the videos represent her ethnic, religious, geographical and social circles. There also appears to be some similarity between what female students see and know about what is happening in their neighbourhoods, and what they hear from songs. Some male students (in the past at the academy) had informed me, often jokingly, of how much easier it is to

222

succeed by selling drugs than to obtain formal qualifications, which they viewed as only leading to low paid jobs. This distrust of education and the types of employment it leads to has already been discussed in the context of white British boys in schools (Hammersley, Thompson, and Willis, 1977; Willis, 2003).

Female students, such as Bilan and Hani, have mentioned knowing friends of friends, siblings, cousins, boyfriends, uncles or neighbours involved or said to be involved in some of the activities discussed in their music. The female students I interviewed do not appear to experience this themselves, but they are aware of the economic pressures and social consequences of educational failure. They seem to use the male narratives they hear in songs, the 'real' struggles in the world, as pressure to stay engaged with their studies.

The fact that Hani seems to need to be reminded of particular realities during study suggests that she is sheltered from the struggles discussed in songs. As chapter 4 showed, students often use recordings to remember their homeland (if they have emigrated) and their culture and religion (if it differs from the mainstream). Hani may also find it hard to understand how educational failure and lack of economic access create the hardship parents and institutions warn against. In an earlier quote in this chapter, Hani informed us that she comes from a 'stable, supportive and loving family' with a present mother and father, yet she still feels the need to learn or hear about those less fortunate than herself. Her listening occurs daily and during study. Ordinarily this would indicate that she was an unenthusiastic or complacent student; however, her learning anxieties show that she is a concerned student who cares how she fares educationally. It is only by reviewing what Hani says about her musical experiences and who she perceives herself to be (her cultural identity and local allegiances) that it becomes clearer what listening means in her context.

Hani uses listening to calm her learning anxieties and to enable her to study. Her friends complain that, without music, she talks too much and becomes a distraction to them and herself. This suggests that music helps her focus by reminding her of

what is at stake if she does not achieve something in school, and by inhibiting her from interacting with others. Listening helps calm her mind and reduce anxiety.

> *I: Okay when you say it calms you down does that mean you're not calm before?*
>
> *Hani: You're like, "Oh my gosh you have to revise." … for example when you're getting your stuff out of your bag you're like, (feigns being flustered[19] and taps[20] the table). When you listen you're just like (clicks fingers and feigns being calm and composed). … you're starting s-m-o-o-t-h. Like your moves. You know what you're doing, basically. (c. 02:25)*

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

Hani's recordings teach her about particular identities that are not necessarily seen as belonging to her, which is why her friends laugh when she lists her choices. Her listening experiences seem to allow her to broaden her cultural knowledge of how to talk, think and act or not act like those in her neighbourhood. Hani and her friends also perceive grime and its community to be more direct.

> *I: I'm also interested in the content, the style of music you're listening to. Some of the lyrics sometimes don't seem calming.*
>
> *Hani: Yeah, (overlapping voices) but they're expressing themselves with like, I'm not trying to be racist, with like white music it's just like they think too much about the lyrics. They're just like (mimics singing, ballad style), 'oh like once upon a t-i-m-e, (inc.) my h-e-a-r-t, she took my h-e-a-r-t' but with like African music and like// (c.03:13)*
>
> *P: // they're just going with the flow! (she shouts out) (c.03:16)*

Interview, GCSE Girl's Group, London, 9th May 2016

I was unable to ask Hani and her friends to comment on this in more depth due to the recruitment and access issues discussed in the methods chapter. Based on her comments and the apparent need for mentors and role models it is likely that, through listening, Hani and her friends are demonstrating a cultural need for ideologies that are produced by people with similar identities and local backgrounds to them. The recordings and the artists available to them are not always the best fit.

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[19] By hyperventilating.
[20] Most likely to mimic a fast and strong heartbeat.

This is supported by the fact that Hani (and the majority of listeners) do not directly experience many of the things depicted in songs, and songs do not appear to sing about her lived experiences as a British Somali / African female in education, who is Muslim and comes from a supportive family. Her kinship for the music she listens to suggests that it is plausible that there is an absence of suitable local mentors and cultural tools for Hani that best represent her experiences or reflect her cultural identities and ideologies. Hani could be resorting to her current recordings because what is available to her in other communities omits her entirely.

Hani and her friends label their grime listening choices as 'African', which is simply a polite way of saying, 'black music'. They perceive their recordings as keeping them connected to their roots or who they believe they are similar to culturally, locally or ethnically. This is echoed by students like Nicole, Sana, Bilan and Meelaaney, who use their recordings to continue learning about people they perceive are like them or from the same background as them. This learning can be inspirational (Meelaaney and Nicole); encourage resilience (Sana); and provide the social support and cultural mentor needed (Hani and Bilan). Since this listening occurs during study, it is unclear as to whether this is a form of cultural resistance, accommodation or insertion.

What is clear is that Hani listens to London grime and rap from local male artists because of the social relevance of songs. Hani (and Bilan) perceive such material to be more culturally authentic and educational. Hani seems to use such recordings to help reinforce her own educational goals, her cultural self-identity (who she is and what she is attempting to overcome), and to denounce narratives that counter her ideological values, like female grime artists or music from other communities. Hani (like Bilan) listens to London male grime artists who rap about local issues or community experiences because they contain culturally relevant ideologies, which she finds grounding and focusing during study.

6.3.3 Khadro and Aisha – safe ideological spaces, traditional role models and East Asian popular culture

Khadro is a fifteen-year-old student studying for her GCSEs, Year 11. She has been attending the Academy since Year 9. Her responses are important because they reflect some of the listening practices and choices of the other students who did not respond or were in other lessons during the interview. This was verified by the references to other students in the interview who were not present. Khadro, and at least one other student in the interview, predominantly listen to South Korean music. The student states she and her friends spend their free time and independent study sessions listening to K-pop bands such as Exo (a South Korean boy band). From the information students entered into my notebook during this interview (Appendices 5.1, Picture 1.4), Khadro (or her friend) also listed a variety of other male and female K-pop bands such as, Red Velvet, SNSD, BTS, Twice and more.

K-pop is extremely successful globally and is beginning to share centre stage with established Western artists (Benjamin, 2014, 2017). This indicates that British youths listening to K-pop are a mainstream subculture. After watching dozens of YouTube videos on the bands and songs listed by students in my notebook, and reading about bands and their mash-up genre styles[21], I learnt that bands release songs in a variety of Asian languages. The bands listed predominantly sing in Korean and Chinese, and often with English choruses or phrases. The general content of K-pop songs is based around 'adolescent experiences' (Benjamin, 2017). This is all of relevance as it shows the ideologies students are engaging with during study and how closely similar or dissimilar they are to what students claim to dislike in other genres.

Khadro and her friends also extended their listening preferences to East Asian TV dramas and series using online sites such as Viki.com[22] and KissAnime (AKA KissManga.   An unplanned meeting in the academy's computer room with Aisha

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[21] Pop, dance, hip hop, dubstep and so forth.
[22] Viki.com – Korean, Taiwanese, Japanese, Chinese movies and TV series.

also revealed that students read manga comic books, TV series novellas and other standalone novels from the regions . Aisha had recognised me as I had tutored her and her friends and their sibblings. This resulted in discussing my visit to the college, which at that point was to interview a group of GCSE girls. The student before our conversation had been reading an East Asian novel. Aisha and I discussed this further and she provided me with a comprehensive list of East Asian manga animations, novels, movies and TV series to follow-up (Appendices SD4). These intentional daily practices indicated that the students were greatly invested in East Asian popular youth culture, which is why they also used it during study, and that the preference had been developed over many years.

Initially it was unclear why British Somali teenagers engaged so avidly with East Asian popular culture. Aisha said that over the years she has listened to an extensive amount of Korean music, had been reading manga comics and watching enough Japanese animations to start learning the languages more consciously. On her mother's encouragement, she also researched the prospects of teaching English in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, after finishing her studies. Aisha plans to obtain an English teaching qualification in London first. Aisha discussed this prospect as very desirable for three reasons. The first was that she would be able to travel and see the world. The second was that because of her popular culture engagements, she felt partly acculturated with East Asian cultures. It is from these engagements that Aisha perceives South Korean culture to be friendly and respectful. The third and most important reason for Aisha was that Seoul (according to her) has at least nine mosques. For Aisha, the presence of mosques means that she would be able to continue practising her faith away from home, and because of the existence of an Islamic population, feel safe and welcomed. This latter point would not have seemed as significant had Aisha been the only student to mention faith and South Korea. A second student also mentioned South Korea and its Islamic population during this visit to the academy.

That students saw K-pop, South Korean culture and Islam as ideologically and culturally compatible suggests that their listening choices are perhaps also partly

aligned with their social values or religious perspectives. Like other students, these students enjoy the emotional affordances of their recordings and they may even agree with the ideological values expressed. This suggests that these students, like the other students discussed, like listening to content they can relate to and which reflects or expresses their sensibilities.

Many of the students who expressed an interest in K-pop did not have the opportunity to explain their preferences in detail, so I resorted to K-pop fan blogs, forums and articles to understand how the larger listening community view K-pop. Listeners on the (non-scholarly) Quora platform give many reasons for K-pop's popularity in Europe. Fans perceive each band to promote togetherness or unity, family and solidarity (Yukki, 2014; Lin, 2015; Javiera, 2017). These so-called 'traditional family values' arise from bands appearing to be brotherly and sisterly (fraternal) instead of being marketed as self-interested or competitive, for instance. This apparently creates 'safeness' and security for K-pop fans (Javiera, 2017). K-pop bands are also viewed as role models, since band members are themselves young, seen to be hard-working and talented individuals with the virtues that their fans value (Yukki, 2014; Lin, 2015; Javiera, 2017). Each band member has auditioned, been trained and selected from a competitive pool of candidates. Their 'wholesomeness' also makes them like-minded peers, which suggests that students can use their recordings to associate themselves with communities and ideologies they wish to be a part of or from whom to seek role models.

During the GCSE group interview, when I asked students (as a group) about their general listening practices, Khadro only had the opportunity to say: *'I usually listen to Koreans when I'm studying cos … when … I remember the song, I remember that subject.'* Elsewhere in the interview, she interjects and suggests that her friends who cannot multi-task should listen to Chinese music since its lyrics cannot distract them. Although Khadro did not discuss her listening choices further, from her responses to her friend's listening choices, it is apparent that she has strong views as to what is and is not appropriate to listen to. For instance, she is part of the group of students who ridicule Hani's 'gangster' listening choices for grime and hip hop. The reasons

behind this dislike appears to stem from a variety of cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin her self-identities and attitudes.

Khadro and the other students believe Hani's music is about criminality, violence, drugs, sex and for boys. It is in relative opposition to Khadro's K-pop and other East Asian popular culture, which is deemed 'fun' and 'softer' or 'cleaner'. There is also conflict with religious expectations that warn against inappropriate recordings and which question whether or not music is allowed.   The academy is strongly biased against music listening in general (and not just in the school context). This is also why several teachers were unhappy or simply suspicious about the topic of the research. Khadro, like a number of other students in this study (see Bilqiis, next section), believes that listening to the Quran while multi-tasking is inappropriate. To circumnavigate this issue, she may use recordings that can be viewed as 'harmless' or 'innocent'. Statements made by Bilqiis, a first-year A Level student (Year 12) who is soon to be seventeen, suggest that listening to particular recordings can allow for multiple ideological communities, and work around religious directives.

6.3.4 Bilqiis, Akram and Halim – morality, ideology, religion and genre affordances

Bilqiis was in a group interview with three other students (two boys and a girl), and despite her familiarity with the others (one girl and boy are cousins or half-siblings), it took a while for the members of this group to relax and become more forthcoming about their actual listening practices and choices. Once this occurred, students challenged or defended their listening, or supposed lack of them. Initially the two male students appeared to give conflicting accounts of whether they listen to music or not. Akram's real listening choices (Isra's cousin) for instance are listed by his female peers, despite his attempts to keep his responses vague. Akram is the male student closest to the recorder and therefore the loudest male.

> I: What kind of songs do you listen to?
>
> Akram: Songs that can, I say, benefit you instead.

I: Like what?

Akram: Erm, I don't want to name specific songs cos that's. That's always weird. I'll just name/

I: No I mean like what do they sing about?

Akram: They sing about things like er (2) things about (1) good, maybe, or making money, or a happy life /

Isra: He listens to the Beach Boys/

Akram: No I don't listen to the Beach Boys (Isra laughs) and even that's better than today.

Halim, Bilqiis and Isra: (list bands) And Boys Better (inc.) and List Off and Chinese music.

Bilqiis: Shut-up it's not Chinese (laughs) inc. (c.37:47)

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

Halim also mentions Akram listens to Spanish music (which he denies). Elsewhere, Akram states he would prefer to listen to 'old school music' from the 80s – jazz and soul music – as it has more meaning than today's music. His peers find his choices both shocking and amusing, which suggests that they do not share their recordings with each other, and that they each create their own soundscape and seek music that reflects their own ideologies.

I: So you said that's when the music used to be good, when the lyrics used to be good. What did you mean by that?

Akram: Yeah. I mean (2) well actually. I mean like, sometimes I listen to music. I listen to music in the 80s. I don't want to sound like an old man, you know, I'm 17. But yeah old school music/

Halim: / You listen to music from the 80s? (genuinely puzzled)

Akram: Yes from the 80s (Halim laughs) like jazz music, what else? Basically, soul music.

Isra: Say walahi (students laugh) (c.33:27)

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

The group's simultaneous awareness and ignorance of each other's listening preferences also suggests that students may listen to some of their most personal music through headphones to avoid explaining it to others, and perhaps that they also listen to music they feel less connected to more openly or with others.

The multiple student-led debates (based on Bilqiis' K-pop listening), to come, highlight the many assumptions some of the interviewees in the group have about the inappropriateness of particular music, the hazards of listening while learning and how identity shapes learning. During these debates, several opinions and attitudes were expressed. I took this opportunity to ask more nuanced questions to encourage more in-depth responses and less generalisations. I used the tactic of asking questions that directed students towards areas of interest such as identity and learning environments to avoid putting words or ideas into students' minds. Student responses indicated that cultural inclusivity during learning is important and that seeing their culture reflected back to them through the teachers, facilities and students made them feel normal (Akram: 'the same'). The students also debate the appropriateness of music during study.

> *I: I just want to know about how you fit identity in your learning and not the big stuff like religion, but who you think you are.*
>
> *Akram: Yeah cos that's what makes me different.*
>
> *Bilqiis: (Summary: Would rather learn alone once the material has been explained)*
>
> *Akram: Well, in a normal school your identity would be really important, let's say what makes you unique if you come from a country not many people even know of. But here you're all the same identities so it's not really unique. You don't really feel like. Yeah this is what makes me special. You're all the same. You got a lot of similarities and your differences, but yeah and yes and no basically (coughs). Sorry. It helps because erm, if you have the same identity and you all have the same backgrounds, you can interact easier and it makes you know, learning, interacting, even teaching each other. It makes it more easier cos you'll have the same base, which is the religion and religion teaches you that you have to work in life, to achieve the best we can and that's what pleases God and so if we all have that mentality and then we can all achieve together. (c.44:03)*

[A little later on music and religion …]

> *Bilqiis: … In Islam you're not really supposed to listen to music (in a whispering and decreasing tone) so I need to stop (1) but I can't. I'm trying (laughs) (Boy 1 and Boy 2 groan and sigh, theatrically).*
>
> *Akram: It depends.*
>
> *Halim: What?*
>
> *Akram: It depends on which she is using?*
>
> *Halim: Yeah.*
>
> *Akram: (inc.) Sometimes it's something positive. Then it's okay. But even though, even though/ (c.45:56)*

Throughout this interview, conversations often become more excited and students talk over each other frequently, resulting in only fragments of what they say being audible and able to be transcribed. However, the essence of what they say can be understood as follows. The two male students believe most listening practices are wrong as they distract them from learning. This is based on their listening experiences.

> *Halim: That's more of a problem for me cos I used to do that. I used to try and listen and then didn't/ I couldn't read what was on the page. I had to pause it and read it, then play it. It was like when I listened to it, I just (1) I couldn't really / (Akram mumbles inc.) / so I just took it off. (c.32:46)*

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

These male students also state that the content in songs, across most 'trending' genres, is inappropriate because it is hypersexualised. They also believe the content in many popular songs lack 'positive' or meaningful experiences.

> *Akram … When I listen to music, I believe it's aimed at males basically. I'm not saying that only a guy can listen to it. And they're like, "heyyyy" [mimics female artists]. It's referring to themselves and talking about their own bodies, like they're only for men, which is not positive and towards a negative. Most of the problem, like when I see what's trending on YouTube, when I listen to it, it's not about, you know, good things. Maybe happiness in life, even love. Basically, they don't know what love's about. It's not about love, it's about lust (taps table). You know, maybe se/ (taps table). You know it's that (taps table). That kind of thing (taps table). (inc.) (c.35:07)*

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

As seen in the excerpt above, Akram explains that in his opinion female artists depict themselves as sex objects for the pleasure of men and that many songs are focused on 'lust'. In the excerpt below, the other students point out that women are also hypersexualised in songs and videos by male artists.

> *Halim: How [what] on earth [has] pornography got to do with music?*

Bilqiis: Some of it may be videos/

Halim: / Maybe, may be videos/

Akram: / Not only videos. The lyrics as well.

Isra: The lyrics yeah.

Bilqiis: They talk bad about women /

Akram: I can give you so many songs that are chauvinist

*Halim: Yes they say, they call women, I'm not going to say the word they say.
Yeah, but (3) (c.33:58)*

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

Akram's views were initially challenged by the group, and the two female students were less convinced about the inappropriateness of most music. Bilqiis attempts to challenge the notion of music being wrong in content and religiously, but she is unsuccessful, both times. She states she listens to female artists to counter Akram's argument that the majority of today's music is 'auditory pornography'. Bilqiis later attempts to explain that there are no religious reasons against listening to music, but since she cannot recite a verse as evidence, she concedes she is wrong:

Bilqiis: That's not un-Islamic because. I'm joking (laughs). I'll stop fooling around. (c.46:15)

My time and two years' experience at this academy assures me that the conflict and ambiguity over music's appropriateness is not a unique or minority viewpoint. Bilqiis' lack of religious knowledge is why she is unsuccessful in her argument. In addition, she believes that her religion teaches that listening to music is wrong. This is why, in the excerpt, she states she is trying to stop listening to music so she can be in line with her religious beliefs. Further to this, when I asked a question based on Akram's earlier opinion:

I: Do you listen to the songs that are (1) pornographic towards women? (c.34:07)

Bilqiis responds in a manner that indicates she also believes that some of the music she listens to is bad itself:

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

Bilqiis: No. Quite offensive. (c.34:10)

I asked Bilqiis the question to give her the opportunity to disagree and provide her own opinions, and she does in an unexpected way. There is evidence from the interview that Bilqiis thinks this 'offensive' music is likely to be the grime, R'n'B and trap music she shares with her classmate, Isra. Based on my discussion earlier on K-pop, it is likely that Bilqiis thinks K-pop is less offensive as it is perceived as more innocent. This is relevant as it shows that what is viewed as inappropriate or appropriate, meaningful or even sexualised is based on popular assumptions, cultural stereotypes and outward appearances.

Although it was evident that the two male students in the group interview listened to music themselves, they only concede to listening during study once I mentioned that some students listen to Quranic verses. This is generally what they call 'something positive,' therefore, 'it's okay' (Akram, c.45:56). This suggests that the practice of listening itself is viewed as acceptable by these two male students so long as it remains in line with particular cultural and religious ideologies. To avoid the problem of listening to inappropriate ideologies, Halim recommends 'instrumental' music (c.46:14) to the female students in place of their K-pop, trap music and grime.   This recommendation is only if they need to listen to something during study because it contains no lyrics that can distract or encourage them to think or behave inappropriately. This recommendation indicates that the two male students make no distinction between most musical genres with lyrics as they assume they all contain negative ideologies.

This also suggests that the two male students view listening as a powerful tool that can reinforce a variety of ideologies that may be incompatible with their beliefs. This makes listening a threat to cultural and religious identities and ideological allegiances. Arguably, this view can also be said to hold true for parents, teachers and schools everywhere since during study students are expected to be learning about sentence construction, algebra and cell theory (for instance), not alternative ways of thinking and being through adolescent experiences and/or fantasies. These

234

are not unfounded concerns as in my analysis of student accounts, listening choices do reinforce values and ideologies, but which students already hold.

Subsequently, the question that emerges from Bilqiis' group excerpts is: why does Bilqiis listen to music when she believes it is wrong?   Bilqiis explains that she listens to music during study at home because her space is made noisy by four younger siblings. Akram is unhappy with this response and says that his home is made noisy (daily) by his mother's friends – 'guests' who shout, talk loudly and stop him from doing his work ('revise efficiently'). He argues that he does not resort to listening and asks them to be quieter. Bilqiis, for reasons unknown, does not attempt to make those around her quiet. Instead she retreats inwards:

> *'I have headphones. I can't listen to it out loud, my mum doesn't listen to music'. (c.26:29)*

There are two ways to interpret this. Firstly that, Bilqiis' mother does not listen to music and therefore the student does not want to play her music aloud as that will force her mother to listen to music. A second interpretation is that, Bilqiis cannot listen to music aloud because her mother does not listen to music, and she does not want to alert her to her listening. Based on Bilqiis' daily listening, the first interpretation is most likely. This also makes her listening private and unchallengeable. Pragmatically, listening to songs in other languages also means parents cannot understand what songs are about, and younger siblings are less likely report on them. Once alone (sonically), with just her music and her work, Bilqiis can listen to anything she desires (trap, grime, Afrobeats, R'n'B and K-pop) and hear any ideology she chooses.

Although Bilqiis uses her listening to 'block out' the distractions in her learning spaces (as reported in chapter five by other students), she does not seem to have the same cultural identification or ideological allegiances that other students have formed that makes her listening choices positive: empowering, inspiring, focussing or motivating. She also appears to be a student that listens to a range of genres: hip hop, grime and K-pop. Perhaps for Bilqiis there are other purposes for her listening during study, which may have been uncovered had I interviewed her alone.

Bilqiis also gives several ambiguous responses, which prompts her peers in the interview to question her out of curiosity. The two male students also try to expose any weak reasoning she provides. This results in them justifying their views against listening by sharing their own listening experiences during study.

> *Halim: I don't know. I just hear some nonsense (Akram laughs). I don't know what it is, but I learn (2) erm when I hear it/ I don't know I used to listen to music a lot. Then (1) I used to try doing my work and it never worked. Then one day went to the library and left my phone at home and it just felt so nice just to do the work without no distractions /*
>
> *Akram: Agreed./*
>
> *Halim: Just like so / and then I stopped using it, so yeah.*
>
> *Akram: For me when I listen to music when I'm studying I don't actually listen to it. I just use it to (2) is that weird? Even though I'm listening to this song I can still hear (1) what I'm reading / (c.32.00)*

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

The students ask if Bilqiis is able to memorise what she is learning while listening; how she is able to 'multi-task'; and if she understands what she is listening to. This allows me to push for more detailed responses, and Bilqiis' answers suggest that she is in the early stages of cultivating her listening choices and practices. This is based on responses that show she is still finding appropriate recordings and ways of incorporating it into her studies.

> *Isra: Do you understand it when you listen to it?*
>
> *Bilqiis: Yeah I understand some words cos I watch a lot of dramas so.*
>
> *I: How often do you listen to K-pop?*
>
> *Bilqiis: (laughs) Every day.*
>
> *I: Do you understand what they're singing about?*
>
> *Bilqiis: Yeah cos I look up translations (laughing). I want to learn the lyrics (laughing)*
>
> *I: Ok so you're doing your biology and you're listening to K-pop in Korean (Bilqiis laughs). How does that make you/ help you with what you're doing?*

> *Bilqiis: It's not that. I mean when I listen to K-pop when I'm not doing my work, it's cool. When I listen to K-pop when I'm doing my work, I don't actually listen to it. It's just/ I just use it.*
>
> *I: How?*
>
> *Bilqiis: I just put it into my ears and then (1) I don't actually hear it. Like, I block it out. While I do my work (Akram / 2 mumbles something inc.) and then when it ends, I realise it ends and then I change it.*
>
> *I: Is it the same songs that you've heard before or are they new songs?*
>
> *Bilqiis: Erm, same songs.*
>
> *I: So you kind of know them and do your work and put the same songs /*
>
> *Bilqiis: Yeah /*
>
> *I: And that's to block out the noise.*
>
> *Bilqiis: Yeah. (c.39:57)*

Interview, London, A Level Group Interview with Bilqiis, 5th May 2016

So, although Bilqiis states that she 'blocks out' her music when she is doing her work, the fact that she listens to songs she knows, has translated or wants to learn the lyrics to, indicates that the songs' content may indeed matter. Furthermore, memorising them implies she is also happy to take in the content of particular ideologies. If this was not the case, then she would simply listen to a random auto-play selection of songs, under the same genre on YouTube as she does for grime and hip hop, like Isra. Bilqiis' listening choices do not need to be justified or defended, but they have a lot of significance for her, beyond fun and enjoyment. After being introduced to K-drama by a friend she appears to find K-pop fascinating on a personal level, rather than a social or local level.

> *Bilqiis: I kind of knew about K-pop before I knew K-drama, but then I was like why are you listening to K-drama / (Akram: do you listen to what's his name)/ Korean music and then when my friend showed me (1) like I was just searching it up and I came across this one group. And I was like, "oh my god. Like, what is this? This is so cool" (giggly and excitedly). Like, okay. I need to start (inc. giggling too much). (c.40:22)*

Bilqiis listens to local rap and grime music and K-pop, unlike Khadro, her friends and Aisha. She seems to spend her free time learning K-pop songs while listening to

grime songs when with others. This is an interesting split between localised social allegiance and personal preferences. Bilqiis' listening choices appear to reflect her desire to remain connected to those around her, while discovering new 'cool' and 'exciting' ideologies. She also manages her listening choices within the context of her religious beliefs. Currently, Bilqiis selects each song during study, which indicates that she selects specific recordings according to whom she is listening with, and the ideologies she wishes to listen to or explore. Bilqiis' practices demonstrate listening for ideological expression, allegiance and belonging.

Ultimately, this chapter discusses several types of recordings and how students use them to affirm particular ideologies and identities and to seek role models and mentors. Khadro states that she learns better with music in the background as it aids her recall. From her reaction towards Hani's grime and hip hop preferences, it seems that she may also believe that K-pop is a more ideologically and socially appropriate genre to listen to. Aisha, on the other hand, views her K-pop listening as creative, cool and useful in helping her learn the languages and cultures she hopes to visit and work in. She consciously uses several materials – comic books, novellas, music, movies, and TV dramas – as cultural tools to learn from. In Bilqiis' case, K-pop in particular, is also 'cool' and exciting. During study, it enables her to block out the surrounding family noises. She also listens to local grime and rap music to remain connected to her peers. For the students who like K-pop and/or other East Asian popular cultural materials, it is notable that cultural identity is not based solely on ethnic, religious, geographical, historical or nationalist categories, but on the recordings' compatibility with students' own personal ideologies. Hani's strong preference for local music with artists she can relate, and Meelaaney's focus on women in the Quran indicate that recordings are cultural tools that can be used to reflect aspects of a listener's identities and ideologies that they see as valid and important. This is why a song or verse does not just sound good. It also feels good in an affirming way and reflects the students' cultural and ideological values. Meelaaney and Hani use their recordings to reach out to people like them, to feel part of a group and to learn from them culturally.

6.4 Discussion

Listening for identity formation, ideological allegiance, the pursuit of role models and peer mentoring are agentive practices that highlight how and why students use recordings to respond to their sociocultural conditions. Meelaaney, Hani, Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis all listen during study for social and cultural reasons. Each reason is contextualised by students' needs, to maintain or construct a cultural identity, to reaffirm a student's social and cultural sense of self-worth, to connect to a community. Students' listening choices can sometimes reflect affinities around locality, age, gender, ideology and ethnicity. This enables them to connect and learn about the experiences and conditions from people they can identify with, who can act like mentors and help them feel part of a like-minded community. Students with preferences from a part of the world with which they had no cultural, historical or local ties find compatible and reflective recordings that match their personalities and values. All the students discussed seek recordings that support their ideological values

6.4.1 Meelaaney's listening for cultural affirmation and female role models

Meelaaney's listening during study can be understood as her desire to express her identities, affirm her ideological allegiances and to access role models. Her agentive listening practices can be related to issues previously raised in the literature review chapter about cultural insertion and enactment through recordings (Rimmer, 2010; Mawhinney and Petchauer, 2013) and the preceding analysis chapters (especially chapter four). Conceptually, Meelaaney lacks some of the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) necessary in the society she finds herself in. She borrows cultural (reificative) tools, such as the Quran, from a religious constellation and cultural community of strength (Wenger, 1999). She appropriates its discourses to reaffirm her cultural identity, boost her female status and to reinforce her ideological allegiances while also navigating and benefiting from the learning community.

Meelaaney's account indicates that she uses listening to religious scriptures to specifically affirm her social habitus and cultural capital. This is needed since some new or first-generation Somali communities can lack the social and cultural capital that is appropriate for England (Harris, 2004; Rasmussen, 2009). As discussed in section 2.2.4, this in part explains why Meelaaney forms role models or mentors from her Quranic listening instead of those around her, such as family or those publicly visible, but from other communities. Meelaaney being the eldest (but one) suggests she may understand the British cultural systems or fare better than her parents (Rasmussen, 2009). This can create a binary cultural conflict between wanting to progress in the mainstream culture by detaching from one's cultural heritage or wanting to progress through the dominant cultural systems while holding on to one's cultural heritage, and developing or transforming it further (Harris, 2004; Rasmussen, 2009). Further to this, those around Meelaaney may not possess enough of the cultural experiences and capital she desires, leaving her to devise her own strategy on how to navigate the absence of role models and the sociocultural pressures to adopt or conform to mainstream cultures and values.

Evidently, a positive cultural identity in the learning community is beneficial for Meelaaney if it enables her to feel culturally secure and inspired to participate in learning. This is opposite to Bourdieu's notion of harmonising with the learning community by repressing one's habitus (Bourdieu, 1990). Meelaaney uses her recordings to construct narratives that allow her to expand her sense of identity, to feel positive and inspired to excel. This makes her less daunted at the prospect of being the first of her family to enter university in England. Her eighteen-year-old brother attends university in Somalia, studying a computer science degree so she immerses herself in 'absolutely inspiring' representations of herself and her community. Her cultural representations of the self as capable are extremely important as they are believed to counteract a host of discourses and trends that state otherwise (Adegoke and Uviebinene, 2018). Bourdieu discusses this notion of self-belief and perceived competence more broadly as one's habitus and historical accumulations of capital shaping one's sense of possibilities, and therefore prospects (Bourdieu, 1990).

In the literature review I discussed how Bourdieu states structures and capital are historically produced systems that shape habitus and the lived conditions of existence, and that agency is the only way of transforming an otherwise reproductive system of existence (Bourdieu, 1977). In connection with this, the positive discourses that Meelaaney agentively adapts from religious scriptures allow her to enhance her gendered and religious status while extending her possibilities educationally and in society. Of course, the opposite can be said if a student has a strong negative identification against education and uses listening to help formulate 'counter-school cultures' (Hammersley, Thompson, and Willis, 1977). and to reinforce anti-school ideologies (Woods, 1979). In either case, it is the agentive student who cultivates a listening choice and chooses what it means and how to apply it to their cultural contexts to reconstruct or deconstruct norms and values.

In Meelaaney's context, listening for inspiration and validation highlights the absence of it around her. As if by default, Meelaaney's reconstructive space is easily filled with negative stereotypes about religious conservatism (women are spiritually weak and are limited to caring for children and looking after men) (Stowasser, 1992); societal assumptions arising from generalising statistics (Harris, 2004); and biased media coverage on only the shortcomings of her intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1989). Perpetual negative stereotypes are said to bombard young people and those around them, making it appear as though specific communities in society only contribute as problematic elements, exist in 'a culture of poverty', and are 'passive victims' (Greer, 2007: 36). The quieter, large middle class or less stereotypical members of the community are harder to see or simply ignored as atypical. They are treated as invisible (Greer, 2007) exceptional statistical anomalies. Meelaaney comments that 'God' 'actually values women' and that the Quran shows 'how much… women should be seen in society', which implies that she feels marginalised or invisible in society or societies.

Simultaneously, Meelaaney's 'black', 'Somali' and 'African' prompted self-identifications appear to have no direct influence over her listening choices and her pursuit of role models, since she does not listen to music or seek role models from any of those categories. Such categories have been argued to have little meaning for young British Somali people, who strongly identify only with being Muslim (Mohamed, 2013). Some students at the Academy avoided this identification by not selecting black or African, and by writing British Somali instead. This is important in highlighting how identity exists as a deeper construct beyond skin colour and ethnic grouping. This is extremely important when considering the current focus on role models and increasing ethnic representations. More importantly, Meelaaney herself best identifies and experiences the world through the cultural, social and ideological lens of being British, female and Muslim. She chooses to listen to recordings that support her religious social and cultural identification, which helps her to feel empowered and part of a larger more established community. This reduces her minority status related to her being idenfified as Somali, black, and African. It also increases her social and cultural capital.

6.4.2 Hani's listening for local mentors, alternative narratives and representation

In the case of Hani, music is a cultural tool that appears to offer powerful messages. Discourses from songs have more resonance ('a bang') with Hani than if they came from her teachers and family. This is because Hani listens to hip hop, grime and artists that share her age, ethnicity and geographical appreciation of the world around her. Hani draws mentors from her perceived cultural community of identification because of what she sees in them, that is – what they see as current 'on the pulse' life lessons and authentic dialogue. Her teachers at the academy come from similar backgrounds as her but occupy differing cultural and social spaces due to generational chasms. They also represent institutional conformity, while Hani's family represent traditional family values.

From the outside, Hani's music appears to contain discourses counter to those she finds in her learning, family and religious communities, yet she does not use music to subvert or resist any of these communities. Rather, Hani appears to use the learning and the role models from her recordings to supplement her social and cultural awareness, and to educate her on what to avoid. Hani uses recordings as social educational tools and to expand her sense of cultural community and belonging. Songs are learning resources with artists as mentors (Dorothy, 1989). Hani learns from artists' experiences and their depictions of others. This helps her to avoid community issues, such as educational underperformance and helps motivate her in school.

Hani's engagement with so-called black culture and experiences while in education has been suggested in sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 as a way of inserting absent cultural and social narratives (Mawhinney and Petchauer, 2013). Hani and her friends' comments about grime music by male artists from London positions the music as inclusive, relevant and authentic. Simultaneously, it is also easy to recognise the absence of females in the grime music Hani chooses to listen to.   As already discussed, male grime music depicts narratives of resilience and masculinity. Videos also reflect their male fans, whereas the female grime artists Hani and her friends reject are often hypersexualised.

As is evident in other studies, Hani's comments about cultural authenticity and unrestricted expression indicate that Hani and her friends are discussing their own need for social and cultural expression and representation (Greer, 2007; Dorothy, 1989). This is, perhaps, why Hani states that, in 'white music', musicians 'think too much'. They are not questioning ethnicity or thinking, but are questioning the culture and habitus of such cultural tools and how they are structured. This is why they claim they cannot relate to this music as it is foreign to their habitus, experience of the world and worldviews. Hani critiques music produced by mainstream cultures, including K-pop, because she views their discourses as divorced from reality and what she perceives as the hard hitting 'truth' or the lived experience. She and her friends favour music they perceive is about the real world, which for them is less

formalised or institutionalised and more natural, and reflective of their realities and identities. Her listening to Stormzy for instance is an example of this, as he only achieves fame during the write-up of this thesis, and was not signed up to a music company prior to this study.

Hani and her friends' use of music for cultural representation results in them forming allegiances to groups and experiences that are not always reflective of them. Many songs can be immediately recognised as detached from the lived realities/experiences of Hani and her friends. This raises questions about whether Hani's listening choices fill a perceived social and cultural vacuum, or a lack of representation in their education and society at large. For Hani, there is also the suggestion that listening to 'raw' narratives about her potential or other selves gives learning greater urgency. Such songs provide her with the 'bang' she needs to spur her on. These same narratives, for others like Meelaaney, reaffirm negative stereotypes, but Hani uses them to give her education more relevance. Teachers and parents warn students that failing school leads to a life of poverty and crime. Hani's use of music to acknowledge these warnings, indicates that these warnings from institutional authorities maybe too abstract, and leave the student unmoved and unconvinced.

Young London grime and hip hop artists discuss the realities of marginalised experiences in their songs (Barron, 2013). In this sense, musicians play the role of peers. They discuss or expose taboo experiences through anecdotal narratives, community observations and offer mentoring on the dangers currently around particular groups of young people – based on their locations and demographics. This in some ways makes some songs more locally, socially, culturally and economically up-to-date and relevant than some aspects of students' education. It has been argued in progressive political and cultural magazines, that music can be seen to be a local-level mentoring system from the ground up instead of the economic and political systems from the top down (Greer, 2007).

6.4.3 Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis' listening for cultural appeal and ideological exploration

In the cases of Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis, sculpted idealisms are preferred over the lived experiences of raw or unjust reality. Some commentators and fans alike have described K-pop and its artists as living, breathing, perfect carbon copies of 'anime and manga' (Chan, 2012). This shows the genre to embrace fantasy over reality. Band members are perfectly or 'aesthetically' (Javiera, 2017) presented like 'marble beauties' (Chan, 2012); they wear purposefully selected wardrobes; their music is pitch perfect, their dancing precisely choreographed and executed (Yukki, 2014); and their behaviour is almost always respectable and beyond reproach (Spencer, 2013; Lin, 2015). This is the antithesis to some of the anti-establishment genres found in mainstream popular music including rock, hip hop, grime and dance music. This type of listening choice can suggest a listening experience different from that of students who listen to religious scriptures, Kurdish folk songs, Dominican carnival music or London grime, but the actual differences are in the cultural communities and ideological allegiances to which the student subscribes. The students in this section also use their recordings for community mentoring (Greer, 2007). It is not local and takes the form of ground up mentoring since is from peers over authority figures.

Some survey respondents and the two male students from the A Level group interview with Bilqiis also preferred not to listen to music based on the ideological inappropriateness of songs. In this study, this critique comes from religious teenagers, both males and females, and students who have opted to listen to alternative genres such as K-pop listeners. Their aversion to the popular music around them appears to be an indication of their relative rejection of the subject matters in songs – or how it has been depicted. This indicates that students do not see themselves or wish to see themselves in the songs and genres they deselect from their listening choices as:

> People define themselves through other people and through the artifacts
> and resources—visible and invisible—of their social and cultural worlds.
> (Esteban-Guitart and Moll, 2014: 34).

Investing in East Asian popular cultures, religious scriptures or local grime while studying and during one's free time is therefore also making and expressing cultural and community connections. In chapter two (section 2.3), I used the Wengerian communities of practice toolkit (Wenger, 2000) and discussed how students used their agency to borrow cultural resources such as recordings from communities of strength or inclusion to bolster a position of weakness or exclusion in another community. Some of the students do this by drawing on their social or religious communities. Through listening, students are engaged in learning the formal curriculum (securing their membership) while also developing and maintaining their allegiance and membership to other communities.

For some students, this has a historical and cultural significance, as their recordings reflect or represent their perceived heritage, hence the notion of 'holding on to my roots'. This is said by Nicole, Sana, Meelaaneey, Zahid in their interviews. In other cases, such as Hani and friends, and Bilan (in previous chapters), the main reason for listening to local music appears to be to form roots that reflect present day conditions, and to learn about, and stay connected to, the authentic self or the authentic Other. Students who listen to music associated with distant cultures – such as the 'K-pop students', Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis – suggest reasons such as general social and cultural exploration and local escapism through the conscious filtering of unwanted or unpleasant ideologies for less offensive versions of those same ideologies found in other popular mainstream genres. Khadro, Aisha and Bilqiis intentionally seek more playful depictions of reality.

Essentially in all the cases discussed in this chapter, listening expresses ideological allegiances and enacts identity. Through the listening choices they make, students indicate their allegiances to values or attitudes that they find compatible. Listening to violent music is not itself where the value lies as the value is in the community inclusion and representation. This makes listening choices both positively empowering and potentially problematic in the context of education. For instance, gathering confidence and cultural inclusion from recordings that promote habitus that

is actively discouraged by education could be seen by some as producing cultural conflict and competition.

Students make decisions about what they listen to during study. This can reinforce a common fear among parents, educationalists, policy makers, and researchers that inappropriate or detrimental recordings will encourage the formation of cultural identities, ideological allegiances, role models and mentors that interfere with, or discourage, students from learning and studying (Richards, 2011; Roberts and Christenson, 2012; McFerran et al., 2015). Drawing on studies of the way in which structures (Bourdieu et al., 1977) and communities (Wenger, 1999) include and exclude aspects they value or do not want, it can be stated that some cultural identities, role models and ideological values are deliberately pushed out or overlooked. However, as this and previous analysis chapters suggest, there is evidence that students possessing these particular cultural identities and ideologies can use recordings to reinforce them, to stay connected to those like them and to personalise their learning spaces. They do this accommodatively by listening to recordings that allow them to study, to feel socially comfortable and culturally included.

6.5 Conclusion

The evidence of the student cases discussed suggests that listening allows for the exploration of identities and expression of voices alternative to those that exist in education or the students' local community. This ideological affirmation can be understood as necessary to building the 'self-esteem' of minority students as it can empower and increase their engagement with learning (Griffiths, 1993). My study shows that this reduces the need for students to succumb or adapt to local or mainstream community-based peer pressures, as listening choices are personal, individual enactments of cultural identity and social allegiance, if they are not shared with others. This freedom encourages students to express and reinforce their particular ideological allegiances and narratives. If used appropriately, it enables

students to feel safe and connected even in environments such as learning spaces that, as discussed in previous chapters, can be anxiety-ridden.

Recordings as cultural tools represent many forms of capital – social, cultural and symbolic. Through listening students gain access to and control these forms of capital. This capital helps some of the students in my study to create or reinforce particular ideological narratives and identities. Students use this capital to address their cultural needs during study. This agentive use of listening attempts to address the lack of appropriate cultural identities, role models, mentors and habitus in education that the student is accustomed to, such as ways of thinking, knowing and being. This lack of inclusion comes from the inherent nature of structures in education that overemphasise particular forms of capital while excluding or misinterpreting differences in habitus (Shim, 2012). The students in my study creatively negotiate these social, cultural and ideological conditions by listening to recordings.

In my study, students outside the cultures that have the power and capital to perpetuate themselves as the norm, find representation, voice and affirmation from cultural resources outside of their learning communities. Students through recordings access their own preferred cultural resources and social communities, without rejecting their learning communities' capital and habitus.

Chapter 7: Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to discover why Level 2 and 3 secondary school students engaged in listening practices during formal learning, and to use a critical sociocultural frame to examine whether their listening preferences were shaped by their learning and personal contexts. As discussed in the introduction and rationale chapter, from my own teaching observations I noticed that there was a possible connection between listening practices, recordings, learning experiences and educational outlook. Before I began my study I had observed student listening behaviours and attitudes, and was aware of the idea that popular cultures produce cultural artefacts that can influence young people in their daily lives. This is also supported by academic research (Dines and Humez, 1995; Kellner, 2011). Therefore, listening practices and recordings were viewed as possessing powerful discourses that could direct students away from their learning, and can be seen to encourage anti-education attitudes and behaviours. The findings in my study, however, indicate that recordings do not direct students' attitudes or behaviours. Students choose which listening materials to invest in, and have agency over making meaning and value of the discourses implicit in their chosen recordings (Lull, 1995). The student has agency to seek recordings that suit their frame of mind or listening strategies that support their emotional needs, and reflect their experiences and cultural attitudes. Students are also able to appropriate the meaning(s) in recordings to connect to imagined communities of belonging (De Certeau, 2011).

The various types of listening strategies and choices displayed across the results chapters shows the multiple forms of agency students possess and their creative problem-solving approaches. In student accounts agency in my study is perceived as a student's struggle to manage the tensions between objective and subjective structures, various forms of habitus, capital and social conditions. Each result chapter discusses how students manage different conditions and structures through listening. The key findings discussed in this chapter are management of external learning conditions through the construction of alternative narratives (chapter 4), the management of internal conditions, structures and interactive learning spaces

(chapter 5) and the use of recordings to access or reinforce cultural values, mentors and role models (chapter 6).   my study

7.2 Using listening to manage subjective structures and conditions

Agentive listening practices are used during study to adapt to structural conditions that generate types of learning experiences, positionalities, interactions and personal lives. Students' use of recordings during study as part of a host of other management strategies which indicate that educational:

> 'fields are places of power relations where practices of agents are not arbitrary. Once it has been understood that all interactions are anchored in a specific social field, it now has to be examined how positions on the respective fields are gained' (Walther, 2014: 9).

Based on these principles, listening can be seen as a practice that is formed in the material conditions of a student's learning and personal contexts. This is why it can tell us about the conditions that exist in both. It is also why the results chapters present arguments that indicate student listening practices are used to manage a variety of conditions that come from objective (external) and subjective (internal) structures.

Student narratives indicate how external structures and conditions are internalised, subjectified and in tension with a student's primary habitus and agency. From the results chapters, it is evident that conditions range across the following: the experiences of a peripheral learning positionality due to failure or being a newcomer (chapter 4); a detached educational approach towards learning or to a lack of choice, emotional and mental pressures, non-negotiable learning spaces (chapter 5), and absences in appropriate role models and mentors (chapter 6).

According to Bourdieu, subjective practices such as listening do not directly show the greater conditions that produce them. This means the material conditions (the everyday environments/ contexts) that students detail in their narratives and manage through listening only allude to subjective structures, and not the greater objective structures that produce them. For this reason subjective structures need to be contextualised to the broader social conditions and structures that produce them, and in which they operate. For instance, students in my study understand that they

use recordings to help them feel more culturally or socially at ease in their learning spaces at a personal level, but they are not consciously aware of the objective sociocultural structures that make them feel uneasy or 'different'.

Students do not appear wholly aware of the institutional, economic and political structures that are at play, but they are aware of how their habitus and capital creates tension and conflict within the 'system.' This is seen in chapters four and five, where students are anxious of their selves 'getting the better of them' and failing. Students are aware that to 'succeed/ progress' they needed to work within the predefined conditions and structures they inadvertently create or find themselves in. Bilan, Sana and Nicole responded to the sociocultural conditions and institutional structures of their peripheral learning positionalities by managing their subjective manifestations: alienation, failure, decreased educational choice and social status. Meelaaney used her recordings to manage the social conditions in her learning space by separating herself from it mentally and symbolically since she could not do so physically. Meelaaney's case demonstrates how she used recordings to deal with the subjective condition of several siblings and having no access to people that can provide her educational guidance. The objective conditions and structures such as family values (culture, religion), migratory, economic and sociocultural factors remain intact and unchallenged.

Meelaaney uses her recordings to sculpt a learningscape that is more conducive to learning/ studying. Other students also use recordings to block themselves from the distracting social conditions in their learning spaces (Nicole from 'rude' students) while enhancing the learning space (Bull, 2000, 2006, 2008; Couldry, and McCarthy, 2004; Camilleri; 2010). Students use recordings to cocoon (Prior, 2014) themselves in recordings, which helps them focus on their studies instead of their conditions. Students who use this listening strategy also tackle the interactional problems that exist in their learning spaces by using recordings to separate themselves from them. This is why they give reasons for listening practices such as the need to block out the sounds of noisy family members, or to avoid interactions that can end in conflict. Therefore, listening practices are very useful strategies for controlling the sonic qualities of a learning space and the interactions within it. This also creates the

illusion of ownership of the learning space and temporary control over the material conditions in it. Such listening responses allude to the way structures and conditions in education have increasingly provided value and rewards for students that best understand the rules and practices of when to engage and how to progress (Apple, 2007; Rose and Agas, 2016). Students appear to respond to the economic motivations behind course enrolment and participation by using recordings to make their learning and/or learning spaces more 'tolerable', less 'boring' and create the illusion of time passing more quickly.

In chapter five, students demonstrate how they manage the inescapable institutional structures in education by managing their subjective approach to learning and the interactions in learning spaces. Students do this by regulating the self, through psychological management: emotional and mental states once again to separate themselves from their learning spaces. Teachers discuss how some students respond to 'external' educational conditions and structures by adopting expedient approaches to education. Students appeared to do this when there is no 'internalised' motivating structure beyond accruing points or grades to access the next learning community. This expedient approach to education can be linked to the broader neoliberal influenced political and educational structures that encourage such tactics (Apple, 2007) to secure economic access (Rose and Agas, 2016). In such cases, the economic and institutional structures and conditions can be seen as producing the detached learning conditions students attempt to personalise and manage through listening.

A teacher introduced in chapter five, Atefeh, describes the institutional and cultural structures and practices (attendance records, grades or parental obligations) which encourage the subjective motivating structures of students who are not necessarily interested in a subject or in education. She views this as creating cultural conditions with artificial learning or students with directionless trajectories, which appear to be experienced by students such as Nicole and Sana in chapters four and five. For teachers like Atefeh, students' own motivating structures should drive them to incorporate the cultural capital in their education – not the other way around. This is in contrast with another teacher discussed in the chapter, George, who believes an

instrumental or expedient approach to education that results in progression and accreditation is better than no approach and no gains in cultural capital. Thus, it is imperative that:

> agents act in accordance with the field specific rules as all agents tacitly recognize "the value of the stakes of the game and the practical mastery of its rules" (Walther, 2014: 14 citing illusio; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 117).

Listening while learning, even when it interferes with the mastery of learning, does not appear to inhibit the mastery of game playing – that is, adhering to rules of learning when it is necessary to do so. This suggests the reasons why some students engage in listening while learning to pass the time between key learning periods such as official assessments. Students see this as valid because the time between assessments is seen as a waiting period during which a distraction is needed. Listening between assessment periods also appears to be less meaningful or more random. This is evident in the way in which survey respondents suggest the music used is background noise that is needed to fill the void of boredom or impatience. These subjective feelings are connected to overarching external motivating structures and the push and pull factors that determine why a student (should) invest in education to access employment.

7.3 Listening to transform primary habitus

In chapter four students used their recordings to manage their learning experiences of a peripheral positionality and of failure through recordings. Students used their recordings to help consolidate their primary habitus, symbolic capital (self-worth), and to transform their social capital (community) and cultural capital (knowledge, credentials). Students constructed narratives that affirmed their learning identity. They specifically used listening practices as a management strategy and as a form of accommodative agency as they occupied weak positions in their learning communities. Bilan, Sana and Nicole could only react to the reality of their learning situations by transforming themselves in ways that did not make them problematic to their teachers and family. Students transformed how they viewed and responded to their subjective conditions (low status, expectations, alienation and hostility) and

institutional structures (course re-directions, rules for progression and accreditation. Students' use of recordings to increase various forms of capital and habitus while studying indicated that they had a vested interest in 'preserving' and 'fighting' for their distribution of the (cultural) capital in education, instead of 'subverting' it (Walther, 2014: 15). The narratives of Nicole, Bilan and Sana demonstrated this when they used recordings to craft an alternative learning experience and identity within their learning communities that increased their perceptions of competency and belonging.

Students' learning experiences and the reasons given for their listening practices and choices also indicated that learning communities and families have taken for granted practices, discourses, perspectives and expectations. It is also demonstrated in the accountability students experience for failure (Apple, 2007). This is seen in the accounts of students who discuss experiences of alienation, struggle, and feelings of being left behind or not belonging in their learning communities. These experiences, perceptions or feelings are glimpses of the 'symbolic violence' (Bourdieu, Passeron, and Nice, 1977) that exists in learning and personal communities for students who do not fit in and for students who do not progress. Student accounts provide evidence of symbolic violence through the sociocultural practices they encounter such as name calling, shaming, abandonment or isolation, ridicule and being routinely underestimated and not being expected to fulfil their aspirations.   The students also perpetuate this violence on themselves and through accommodative practices such as displaying competitiveness towards peers and expressing shame for not being model students. Students instead of rejecting 'the game' use their recordings to help them adapt and compete. Bilan, for instance, uses London hip hop and grime recordings to hear about the 'losers' and 'winners' of life, and to 'pump' herself up so she can become an educational winner (Rose and Agas, 2016). Such feelings and practices (as discussed in the literature review, section 2.5) are implicitly endorsed by economic (Robertson, 2007), social and cultural structures (Bourdieu, 1977). They create uncomfortable conditions for resistance and require 'good' or 'competent' students to accrue an abundant amount of capital to outcompete others (Bourdieu, 1986).

Students in chapter four and six indicate that they use recordings during study to enable themselves to compete educationally. They transform their habitus by expanding their identity, crafting a learning narrative and a place within the learning community that supports the idea of identity as:

> a lived experience and not an arbitrary label like ethnicity, title or personality trait. It needs a homebase in order to have a sense of belonging; to be locally rooted but globally expansive and be effective. This allows an identity to be healthy… The work we do to … combine, confront, or reconcile our identities has a double effect which can be a source of personal growth and social cohesion. Our identities allow for trajectories within and across communities. Communities that allow for multimembership are more likely to have us engage our whole identity. When communities are large they need to form fractal structures, which are layers of subcommunities (regional communities of a global community) to allow its members direct and active engagement with their community. If this does not occur members can become disconnected (Wenger, 2000: 242-243).

The 'fractal' nature of identity means that students who are disconnected or on the periphery of the learning community are still connected to other social and cultural communities such as those found in listening communities. Students access other communities through recordings to help forge a better and more stable student identity in the learning community. Wenger (2000) suggests no community can be successfully navigated and engaged without an individual negotiating membership, particular status and negotiating access to community resources for participation. Students on the periphery of their learning community encounter difficult learning experiences and positionalities that reduce their ability to negotiate 'unprejudiced' access and participation (without symbolic violence). Recordings although separate from the learning community helps students make sense of the complex and dynamic learning conditions they encounter in their learning community. Recordings enable students a safe space to reflect and express their experiences, without fear of judgment or reproach. They also provide students with a fresh injection of perspectives, which enables them to manage the debilitating discourses of the learning or personal community while incorporating positive ideologies to develop the social and cultural capital of their secondary (educational) habitus. From this viewpoint, recordings can offer 'confrontation' and a 'competing universe of possible discourses' that challenges the taken for granted 'doxa' of an educational field's habitus and cultural structures (Bourdieu, 1977).

7.4 Using listening to manage the act of learning

Drawing on student accounts, motivation, energy or the ability to concentrate and change mood is perceived to be affected by emotional and mental states (chapter 5.3). Students indicated that they used listening to conduct a variety of self-help practices such as managing one's mental wellbeing to enable them to comply with their learning obligations (Lonie, 2009; Krueger, 2013; Lilliestam, 2013; McFerran and Saarikallio, 2014). Students who use this listening approach care about what they listen to, so they have specific preferences and are also trying to become more involved with their learning. The emotional and mental states that need managing are, therefore, in some cases connected to the experiences discussed in chapter four such as educational alienation, insecurity or uncertainty. This listening strategy differs from others by enabling students to learn while other strategies focussed on managing unpleasant structures, narratives, experiences and conditions.

7.5 Using listening to increase capital by accessing role models and mentors

In chapter six, listening preferences appeared to be less about interactional educational experiences or learning structures and more about students controlling the cultural material they assimilated and reinforced. Student listening choices and the stories behind the discovery of particular recordings indicated that cultural reinforcement or affirmation is an important factor while learning. It appears to provide cultural or personal validation by acknowledging the value systems of the student, maintains cultural continuity or provides an anchor for the student who is encountering new ideas, practices and value systems. This is especially evident for diasporic students such as Meelaaney, Bilan, Sana and Nicole, who demonstrate aspects of 'superdiversity' and 'supermobility' (Black, 2014). Students display differing levels of: migration, countries from migration, access to resources, immigration status, gendered expectations, ethnicities, cultural values and so forth.

Students such as Meelaaney and Sana use Quranic recitations to construct cultural validations which recognise and promote their religion, gender and culture.

Meelaaney particularly sees this as necessary since education and her career ambitions allow her to practise and reflect her Britishness. Not listening to Quranic recitations would mean that she over-invests in the cultural capital of being British, to the detriment of her Islamic and Somali cultural capital. This explains why she, Bilan, Sana, Hani and Nicole all state they want to stay connected to their roots or that they fear losing them. From this perspective the secondary educational culture to which they are being exposed can be seen as dominant, and capable of overtaking their primary cultural values. The cultural and social aspects students want to hold on to include primary habitus related attributes such as ways of talking, acting, thinking and knowing. Students want to maintain their primary habitus while also incorporating the secondary habitus they receive from their education and other fields. From a critical and sociocultural theoretical viewpoint, education is learning the cultural capital and habitus that belongs to the dominant / hegemonic group in society (Bourdieu et al., 1977; Grenfell and Kelly, 1999; Shim, 2012). Therefore, it is unsurprising that students may feel the need to maintain or insert their own cultural values and habitus into their education.

However, recordings at best only highlight the 'interculturality' (Shim, 2012) and 'intersectionality' (Sigona, 2016) of students' cultural identities. The students in my study are superdiverse, but the recordings they listen to during study do not reflect the entirety of their identities or their cultural allegiances. Therefore, what is selected to be expressed and reinforced, and what is actively blocked out is significant. Recordings are cultural tools that can help express and reinforce a host of identities and ideologies. They can be used to bring out specific aspects of a students' identity, and to support learning by facilitating access to what is absent or insufficient in the learning community. Students in my study select recordings that mediate differing cultural attitudes. From this viewpoint, recordings can be seen as helping students amplify or craft 'the right dimensions' (Appiah, 2011) of their identities for learning.

My study shows that students use recordings to create appropriate educational identities that enable them to feel part of the learning community, to be in relative control of themselves and their social or cultural conditions and to feel competent. Chapters four and six indicate that learning identities shape educational engagement

and sense of belonging. The students discussed in these two chapters use their recordings to craft better learning identities and narratives as:

> It is important to apply our identities in relation to context and people. We all have multiple identities and highlighting the right dimension of your identity at the right time is crucial. There is no right moral or correct answer about which identity, which aspect is more important. People can make demands on our identities but everyone is entitled to choose which one they want to highlight, use at any given time. Each individual has to make the decision on how to utilise their multi-dimensional facets as it is their responsibility (Appiah, 2011)[23].

Chapter six described how students used recordings to extract the positive aspects of their personal identifications in order to feel good about themselves culturally, personally and educationally. Students' listening stories suggested that recordings expressed their multi-layered cultures and helped them manage their conditions in sociological and psychological terms (Spencer-Oatey, 2012), to form learning identities.

Drawing from the previous points made, listening preferences are formed because of their intrinsic value to students. They offer the students in my study an unlimited supply of supporting discourses and fresh perspectives. Students use such recordings to sculpt their own version of culture, history and themselves (Grossberg, 2013). These versions are not tainted or violated by others since they belong exclusively to the student. Students appear to use such cultural capital to craft an independent, self-confident, self-inspiring learner identity to protect themselves from perceptions of not belonging, cultural alienation or feelings of self-doubt regarding their educational competency.

7.6 Conclusion

To conclude, the findings explain how and why students use listening practices as management strategies to help order, affirm and create particular learningscapes and idenities. Listening strategies have included creating coping mechanisms for

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[23]No page numbers, video source.

difficult or stressful learning experiences and positionalities by constructing learning narratives that are more empowering. Students have also used listening strategies to control their learning behaviours mentally, emotionally and interactionally by using recordings to distract, separate or to enhance. Students use listening strategies to access symbolic, cultural and social capital, to affirm their habitus and identity, and to bolster and personalise the learning community they must participate in. The listening strategies in my study can be said to be cultural practices that can 'create patterns for each group of social organization, its process of self-recognition, and reclaiming its own history – the process of subjectivization' (Dragićević Šešić, 2010:24). Listening also allows students to maintain their multicultural identities by allowing for multiple cultural identities, references and authorities to coexist. This sidesteps the de-individualisation process and the tendency towards cultural sanitation (Ahearne, 2010; De Certeau, 2011) or cultural homogenisation by institutes and the people within them (Bourdieu, 1977; Rose and Agas, 2016). Students ultimately use recordings through listening stratgeies to manage structural and material conditions that they experience subjectively as tension, friction or conflict. Their agency is restricted and confined to transforming the self and conditions through subjective internalised changes.

Chapter 8: Conclusions – New Perspectives, Practices, Critical Reflections and Future Directions

8.1 Introduction: Offering new perspectives

My study makes a number of contributions to the existing literature, the first being that the empirical data collected suggest that students use listening as an expression of their agency. My study gives evidence not only of how listening is used during study, but also the process by which students accommodate and manage their personal and learning conditions. Such findings have contributed to highlighting the significance of various forms of capital, such as the symbolic capital along with social and cultural capital through narrative reconstruction, discourse filtering and cultural affirmation. For the students in my study, listening practices seem to contribute to a broader attempt at conformity and harmony with the learning community, rather than being part of the expected norm of rebellion that listening in classrooms usually seems to signal.

My study gives evidence that students use listening to reflect and come to terms with their learning experiences, positionalities and trajectories. Several discussions show that students fail or encounter hardship within the educational field (Vallet and Annetta, 2014; Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane, 2014; Mijs, 2016; Windle, 2010), and some also show that students can reject or feel rejected by the discourses in their educational field (Rimmer, 2010; Mawhinney and Petchauer, 2013). This thesis adds to the literature by showing how students deal with their failure and educational hardships through agentive listening strategies (chapters four and five). This is in accord with current debates on educational inclusion and the nature of communities reproducing exclusion from 'underachieving' cohorts (Shim, 2012; Apple, 2007; Rose and Agas, 2016). The students in my study find ways to reduce their educational exclusion, and provides insight into what educational inclusion requires.My study

The study has also uncovered a new perspective which indicates that students want recognition that their educational efforts are valued or meaningful, culturally and socially – as well as economically. Some students (in chapters four and six) selected recordings that made their educational aspirations and efforts congruent with their primary habitus or cultural values. For instance, students grounded the

educational narrative of working hard and succeeding in ways that had value to their personal communities. Some students created learning narratives with the aid of the discourses in their recordings such as: 'I need to work hard because of my background or the social conditions around me' (grime and hip hop) or 'because I have a religious duty to do my best and make my family happy,' (Kurdish folk music and religious scriptures). This perspective challenges notions of how such students can be inspired and encouraged to engage with their education. This also indicates that learning communities should not overreach by trying to change a student's primary habitus when they can be focused on building their secondary habitus. Some of the students in my study embraced their primary habitus because they felt culturally threatened, when they should have been learning.

Based on the observations of students in my study some students are already finding ways to make their education directly relevant and inclusive. Students use recordings to formulate motivational answers to questions such as, 'Why am I here and studying this? What do I hope to gain and contribute? Why and how should I continue to endure the conditions in this learning space?' Several students also use recordings to access what they describe as 'positive' or 'inspiring' messages in order to imbue themselves with the relevant social, cultural and symbolic capital for education. This suggests that teachers, families and educational institutions need to enable students to find inclusive and empowering narratives that will help them to generate their own purpose and meaning around their own educational efforts. Students also need to be formally encouraged to decide and discover for themselves how to avoid adopting 'cookie cutter' / 'one-shoe fits all' ideologies and value systems in order to resist the dominant habitus, as this is a strategy which can be detrimental to their educational inclusion and progress within the main education system.

Another perspective from study findings suggests that learning communities could be more tolerant and understanding of learning trajectories that do not follow linear patterns. Students accounts indicate that educational communities need to acknowledge a variety of learning experiences and meaningfully accommodate

differences. This may perhaps be achieved through openness: by relating stories of failures and alternative learning routes and by acknowledging a wider array of learning identities in ways that do not ostracise students or treat their difference as problematic and inferior. Formally allocated learning mentors might learn from the fact that, in my study, some students sought the essence of mentoring (e.g. support, solace) from recordings. Formal learning mentors such as teachers, and informal mentors from social communities or families were sometimes perceived as exercising unpleasant social practices. Teacher and student accounts, in addition, indicated that some students were independently sensitive to being educationally and culturally different, or to being treated different socially. This dynamic further exacerbated their educational insecurities and sense of belonging. Such students appeared to view inclusion and access to a learning community by how others make them feel in their learning space(s) through the types of interactions they exchanged and observed.

My study also highlights the perspective that marginalised young people need to have access to suitable educational role models and mentors in order to generate a sense of educational belonging and a positive or aspirational identity. Students' listening strategies indicates that inclusive representation comes in two forms – narratives and community identifications. The two are not the same and are currently not always represented by the role models and mentors available to students. Drawing from student accounts, the term 'inclusive narratives' pertains to recordings that contain culturally compatible values that are both reflective and useable by the student, while the term 'inclusive community identifications' refers to how students see themselves as belonging and sharing aspects of a community and self-identifying as a member. Students in my study showed this through gendered, ethnic or local listening preferences. Students who focussed on inclusive narratives appeared more interested in shared ideological values; therefore, the 'producers' of recordings did not need to reflect them physically. On the other hand, students who focussed on community identifications could be said to focus on physical attributes defining their membership status. Students in my study used role models and mentors from their recordings to seek their own positive representations of

themselves and their communities. They also used recordings that matched, or could be used to match, their own values and practices. However, there is plenty of scope for more sources of inspiration for young people, and recordings do not always contain enough useable examples or meaningful discourses.

An additional contribution of this thesis to the literature was the finding that listening offered students a 'safe place' within which they could learn and which they could 'own'. The fact that students in my study crafted their own sonic learningscape and selected specific recordings suggests that their 'ownership' of learning and the learning space is more complex than currently discussed in the literature. Listening strategies capture how students use their agency to shape learning spaces. My study indicates that some students create ownership of their learningscape as listed by:

1. controlling their primary habitus
2. selecting which cultural discourses they hear during study
3. controlling social interactions within a learning space
4. choosing the language of the recordings
5. bringing out particular dispositions favourable to study and inhibiting others
6. creating their own learning narratives of their experiences and trajectories

The analysis chapters (4,5 and 6), show that learning spaces are full of contestations and students use their agency through listening to craft personalised learningscapes. This is an important perspective because it shows how individual students in my study were able to exert agency and proactively shape and negotiate their learning conditions as part of the formation of their learning identities. This indicates that community belonging, even within the educational context, requires students to actively create a workable space for themselves in their learning communities.

Lastly, student and teacher accounts indicated that there was a lack of critical discussion of how economic and political factors pressure students, their families and their educational institute to make unpractical and sometimes poor educational

choices. Some students appeared to use listening during study to help reduce their fear of educational failure and the economic pressures of not obtaining an HE qualification for a career. Yet student and teacher discussions on these issues were implicit and indirect. Discussions focussed on how students navigated challenging learning experiences, trajectories and emotional turmoil, but not why they did so – for economic success or as a legal requirement. Some students in my study viewed educational attainment as a guarantee for economic success, but they did not discuss how education is converted to economic gains or the paths required to ensure this. Their educational choices and career aspirations sometimes seemed vague and such students used recordings to keep themselves motivated and enthusiastic in the face of uncertain outcomes and trajectories. This indicates that more honest and meaningful dialogue is required from learning communities. Some students need acknowledgement and guidance on how to deal with the tensions and conflicts they encounter, rather than just being advised to self-manage them.

8.2 The merging and critique of theoretical concepts

This thesis has developed a sociocultural approach to listening practices by connecting Bourdieusian critical theory to Wengerian social theory and ethnography. The manner in which the Bourdieusian and Wengerian analytical frames have been applied in my study brings new insights into how agency operates within personal, educational and listening contexts. As discussed in the introduction and rationale chapter (one), the development of the conceptual framework was based on the observation that student listening exists in complex social, cultural, educational and economic contestations. In the literature review chapter (two) a Bourdieusian frame explained this complexity as stemming from the existence of 'structures' that shaped the 'material conditions of existence' (Bourdieu, 1977). The contestations that existed in the educational and personal fields were thus understood as various forms of 'agency'. Listening practices were understood to display a student's 'agency' and 'primary habitus' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). The manner in which they were used indicated they were 'timely strategies' (Bourdieu, 1990) that helped students to accrue more 'symbolic', 'social' and 'cultural' 'forms of capital' (Bourdieu, 1986).

These forms of capital, once obtained, helped students to manage the material conditions and negotiate structures they encountered in their learning and personal contexts.

The concept of agency was expanded by incorporating Wengerian concepts such as learning identities', experiences, 'positionalities', 'trajectories' and 'statuses' and the use of recordings – 'reificative' / cultural tools from other communities of 'belonging' and 'membership' from the communities of practice framework (Wenger, 1999). This enabled the discussion of agency and listening practices to focus at both an individual and a community level. Much of the work that draws on Bourdieusian concepts focus on much broader levels. In a Wengerian framework, 'agency' has a more explicit and central role than in a Bourdieusian framework. This Wengerian perspective highlights the way in which each student in this study, belongs to different social, cultural and institutional communities simultaneously, and each community is accessed and negotiated differently with differing statuses, trajectories and access to resources as the basis of agency. Agency throughout the thesis is also evident in how a person navigates a community, how they construct identities from the available communities and how they use the cultural tools accessible to them.

The balancing concepts from the work of both Bourdieu and Wenger, enables this thesis to discuss the subjective practice of listening during study without sacrificing the broader contexts in which it occurred. The Wengerian approach to agency allows us to see how a student borrows from a variety of communities (fields) based on their belonging which is similar to Bourdieu's concept of habitus and accruing various forms of capital to improve their membership and navigate the community. This combined approach can be developed further and used to investigate how other subjective practices both enact agency and engage with objective contexts. In my study, my study of listening practices has found that why a student fails or feels excluded from a learning community is as much a subjective experience as it is a historical product.

8.3 Contributions to understanding practice

In addition to new perspectives and the merging of theoretical approaches, my study has developed a better understanding of how symbolical, social and cultural practices in the two secondary institutions studied can shape a student's sense of belonging and their perceived sense of inclusiveness in learning spaces. Teacher and student accounts indicate that social practices such as clear communication and acknowledgement of particular conditions may reduce students' learning anxieties and insecurities, allow for better social interactions and give students a better understanding of their educational expectations and obligations.

The findings in my study also indicate that teachers can learn more about the backgrounds of their students in order to understand their pressures and motivations, to know more about the cultural gaps that shape their learning experiences and to discover how best to guide such students through their education. The students in my study found personalised ways of navigating these issues, sometimes without the support or understanding of facilitators such as teachers. The latter is problematic as teachers can use their experience and knowledge to help students channel their efforts into fruitful outcomes. There also appears to be a need for additional research to better understand the effects of peripheral educational experiences and how they shape future interactions in the learning community, which in turn can affect student learning behaviours and outcomes.

The students in my study come from a variety of backgrounds and learning communities. Their listening strategies and choices have shown how they have found ways of enacting their agency by culturally personalising their learning experiences and managing themselves. However, their learning experiences and strategies could be better understood so that teachers and educational institutes

could offer guidance that would help them utilise their education more effectively and access their learning communities with more ease. This, together with the investigation of how status shapes community practices and engagement in learning communities, might also be the direction of future studies. There is a need to unpick how unconscious bias changes the practices of learning communities. There is also the need for a study that investigates how students can be encouraged to develop inclusive learning identities that enable them to overcome failure, work with their learning communities and thrive educationally. Such a study needs to uncover which practices enable students to focus on learning while reducing structural and conditional barriers.

Educational communities can benefit from this research by discovering how their practices affect different students, how students adapt to them and why, and how effective they are at enabling access and progress. Some of the students in my study tackle these issues alone, while others are supported by their teachers. A more focused pedagogy-based approach to tackle the issues highlighted in this thesis could support and empower students and teachers to adopt ground up, tried and tested strategies that are related to specific learning contexts. Pedagogy and practice in this area would also benefit from enabling students to participate in improving and contributing to the culture of their learning communities. The listening strategies that have been uncovered in my study indicate what students need from their learning communities and what they want to achieve. It is now a case of addressing those needs within the context of each learning community.

8.4 Conclusion: Reflections and future directions

The inquiry into why and how students listen to recordings during study has provided answers and perspectives beyond the practice of listening, by showing how students navigate mismatches between educational aspirations, belonging, positionality and what is educationally delivered. My study has shown that listening practices are agentive responses designed to help the student negotiate the difficulties in their learning and personal communities. This finding has provided a deeper

understanding of the dynamics operating within specific students' contexts and the contested practice of listening during study.

In addressing the research questions, my study highlighted the areas and issues students attempted to confront through listening. These involved the issue of failure, the nature of family and learning communities, various motivational factors, structural pressures in learning spaces, the power of learning identities and narratives, and the nature of student agency. Although insightful, these findings also created new questions that need to be researched and addressed, namely:

1. How relevant and valuable are role models and mentors with similar identifications to students in learning communities?
2. What are the strategies for reducing sociocultural alienation in the learning community? What strategies can be adopted to enable students to feel part of their learning community and to become competent insider members, instead of peripheral members?
3. Which (community) tools can most effectively increase student agency, reflexivity and ownership of learning?
4. What inclusive practices can learning communities adopt towards an intercultural educational landscape?

My study findings suggests that future research needs to continue privileging the interconnectedness of practices and their contexts. Future research needs deeper ethnographic approaches to be employed that involve case studies with students over a longer period of time. More participation and data are required from the broader community, including teachers, mentors, community support and families. This was not achieved in this study due to recruitment difficulties and time restraints, therefore, future studies need to increase the recruitment phase and the time required to collect data.

Finally, in relation to methodology, a listening analytical approach was found which led to the uncovering of the underlying reasons for listening during study. Discovering that listening strategies were a contextual lens for students' personal and learning conditions is valuable. It changes how practices, however mundane or

rare, can be theoretically analysed and contextualised. It also changes how practices can be approached – as meaningful and objective enactments of the realities studied.

Memory Malibha-Pinchbeck   The Open University

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Classroom Observational Notes (CON)

*Table 3.*Classroom Observational Template

1. Classroom Climates	2. Technologies Used	3. Learning and Behaviours	4. Classroom Environment
a. Positive interactions	a. List of tech observed:	a. What is the teacher doing?	a. Classroom layout:
b. Negative interactions	b. For what purposes/ what are they doing with it?	b. How is the teacher teaching?	b. Location:
c. Interaction btw. students	c. Use of tech allowed, dis/encouraged, ignored:	c. What are the students doing?	c. Space:
d. Interaction btw. students and teacher	d. How many students use tech and don't?	d. How are they engaging and participating with their learning or not?	d. Sonic setting:

Additional Notes:
School: Teacher   Observ. No.:
Date: Time: Lesson: Size:

Below is an observational framework which was originally planned to guide the observational data collected.

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Figure 6. Semi-structured Classroom Observational Notes *- Above is the first page (of three) from my first set of observational notes (CON1), based on observations done at the FE college. Although I did not write on the observational template in this instance, I still attempted to structure the notes according to the relevant categories, as evident in the headings: '1. Sonic environment' and '2 Interactions.' Names of institutes, teachers and students have been blacked out in the pictures of handwritten observational notes. All the names in this thesis are pseudonyms.*
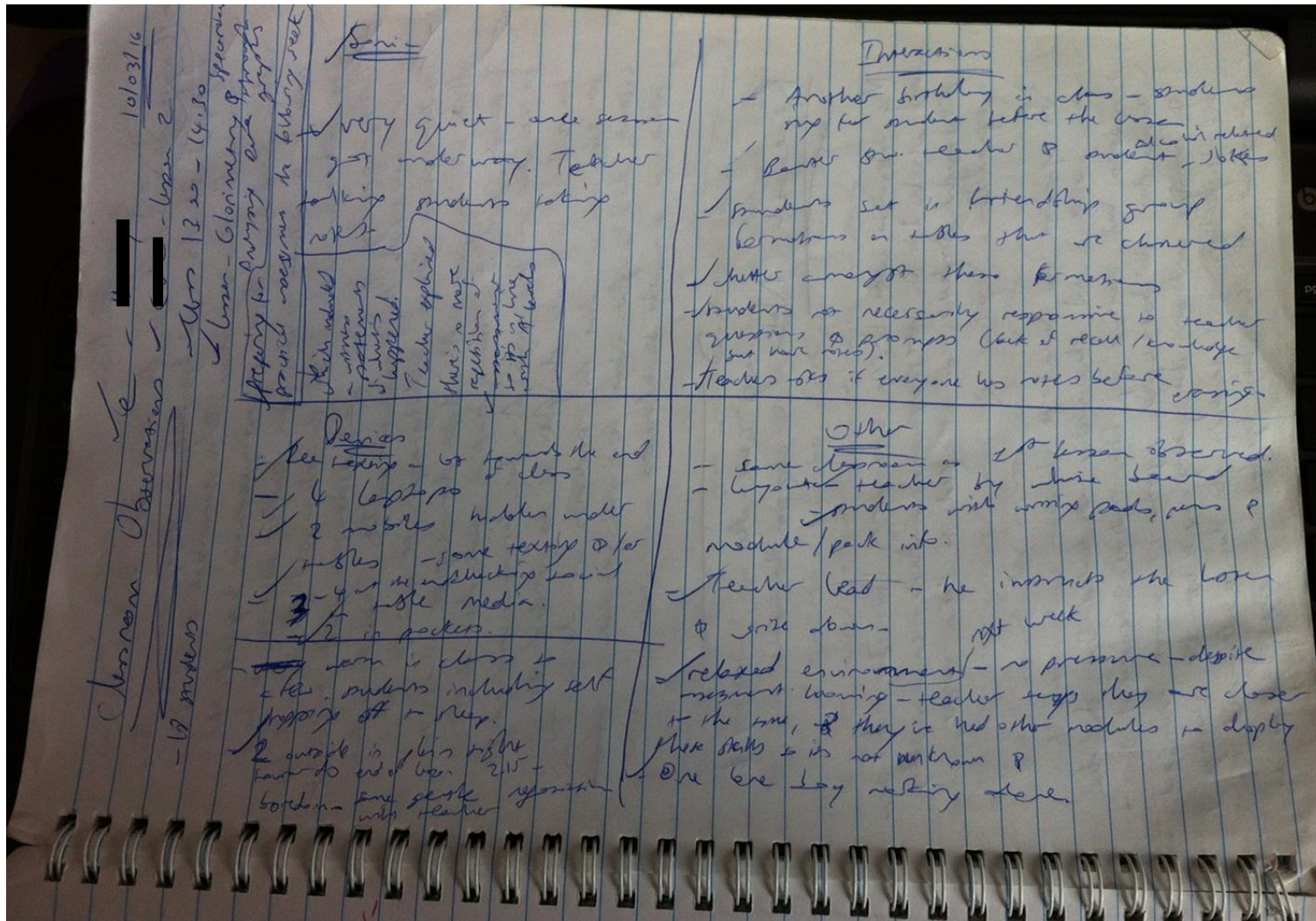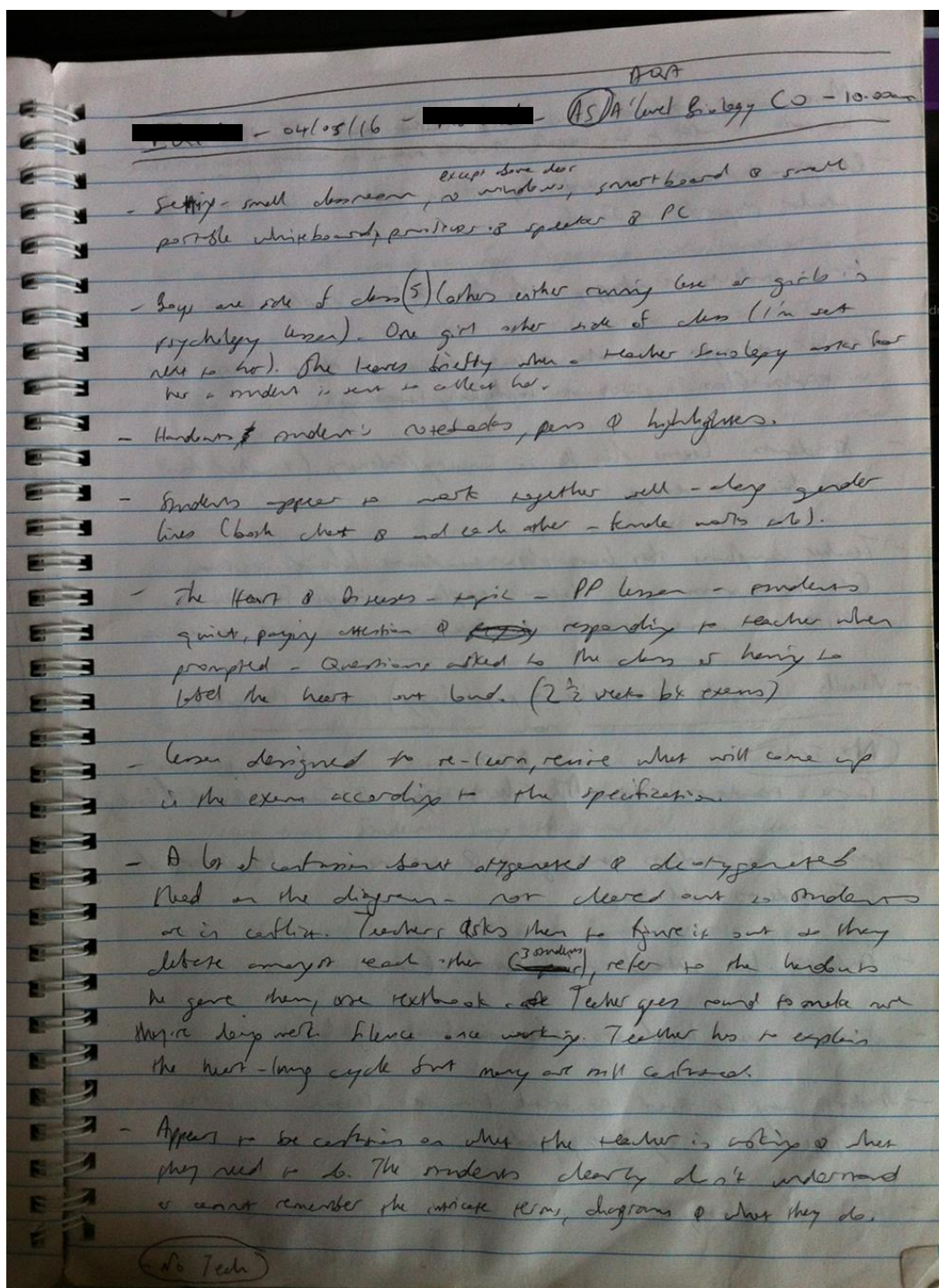
Figure 7. Structured Classroom Observational Notes - *Above is an extract from the second set of observational notes (CON2), also based on work done at the FE college. As shown these notes are in a frame because I was still attempting to create order. This only succeeded in making the notes more succinct.*

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Figure 8. Unstructured Classroom Observational Notes - *The observational notes above (1 of 2 pages) were taken at the academy). As shown they are less structured. At this point, I was aware that it was unlikely I could have follow-up classroom observations so I needed to collect all the data that was available to me without being selective.*

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CON1 Typed and annotated notes from a lesson at the college

cupboards down one side of the wall. Clock with wrong time above whiteboard. (*I believe there is a computer too on the teacher's table and a projector too for the Smartboard – even though I did not record this in my notes*). Students are gowned-up in forensics overalls. Half of the class is sectioned off for forensics activities. The other half has grouped tables and chairs for the other half of the class to work on. Students have notebooks, handouts and procedures. On the start of the class there are twenty students. Most of the students are female as there are only two males. There is a wide diversity of ethnicities. For the first part of the lesson students are watching and crowded around the teacher whom is demonstrating how to lift fingerprints. After this, students are scattered between the grouped tables and chairs or sat on the carpet and in the forensics half of the class. Some students are using cameras to photograph the evidence and others using smartphones. Towards the end there is a lot of yawning from everyone as the room is too warm and the students forensic gear is also adding to their discomfort.

Sonic environments (what and who is heard):
The teacher when he is demonstrating. After the demonstration has ended, the students conducting the forensics tasks in the crime scene area are engaged in a lot of discussions. The talking is of moderate pitch and there are a great number of interactions and conversations between students and groups on the given tasks. The environment is jovial and relaxed. Whenever the volume got louder than a student asking questions during independent group work the teacher requested students to lower their voices, which they did.

Interactions: (who is listening to whom, how; what negotiations, exclusions exist):

would...' A student part of this group (*I think, did not include in notes*) is entirely engaged in her phone and not participating: 'I'm looking at selfies.' There's solidarity between teacher and students against other teachers, previous and current members. The boys although part of the group appear to work separately from the girls. There is overall a lot of guidance and help amongst students. At the very end attention spans and discipline slightly weak as students start to talk over teacher when he is giving out homework and advice. He responds with a sarcastic command: 'Maybe wait before talking until the end of the lesson.' A couple students were working without interaction and only copying down what was written by others. This was for the entire duration of the lesson.

Actions:
Students have several notes from previous lessons, which the teacher encourages and they also produce plenty of notes in the session by copying off the board or noting what he says during demonstrations. The students no tables have formed form filling groups. Some are ringleaders and other students are on the periphery copying what the others say and do. Some students are also engaged in texting and their phones are on the table. Approximately 4 students and the teacher use their phone visibly throughout the session. Teacher uses phone to read out email from colleague or manager. Students rotate between each section and task in the classroom: watch demo, take notes, practise skill and apply skill. Towards the end of the lesson (16.30 approx.) students becoming tired and starting to get distracted. Conversations and mobile use increases with an additional two users also using them (bring that up to 7 people I know of). The phone use is open and there is no reaction from teacher.

with their present learning con... engage with another learning o

Memory Pinchbeck
1.3 Learning is very interactive work together, move around, e tasks as well as sit down, lister

Memory Pinchbeck
1.4 Unlike the student earlier v and not interact with those aro students do not necessarily ch be active.

Memory Pinchbeck
1.5 As well as the tech in class themselves which is used for a completing tasks and for perso

Figure 9. Typed and Annotated Classroom Observational Notes (CON1) *- Above, is the extract of typed and annotated notes. The notes and highlight colours match the themes shown in the Transcript Key (Appendix 4.2).*

CON6 Typed notes from a lesson at the academy

CON6-04.05.16-12.15pm

Course details: AS Sociology

Purpose for lesson: Qualitative and quantitative research. The exam is the following week so the lesson is a revision class.

Classroom setting and physical environment: 4 girls (one of which comes in late because of a dentist's appointment) and 2 boys. Other students have not turned up. Two sides of the room are large walled glass that cannot open. One side is by the main road. It has large black-out blinds that do not completely block the sun so there is a lot of light. There is a whiteboard, lockers and a projector. The classroom looks like a revision session: water bottles, notes, work material and highlighters are strewn on the tables.

Devices: No technology used by students. Textbooks, highlighters, notes, essay that had been for homework.

Sonic environments (what and who is heard): Class is generally very quiet. There's just traffic noise – buses, bikes and cars.

Interactions: The boys are sat together at the front. Teacher is in charge. The atmosphere appears relaxed. The teacher is sat at the front in a corner and she occasionally checks if students are okay, which breaks the silence. The students ask the teacher with ease. The teacher is annoyed at the lack of homework completed, attendance and students not turning-up with their materials.

Actions: The students are engaged in a practise essay with essay examples and grade descriptors. There is a lot of independent self-study and work. Students are reading and writing answers to exam questions in the form of an essay. They are using handouts, books and engaged in note-making. The work being done should have been completed for homework.

Misc.: The female students and teacher are dressed in black, traditional headscarves and dresses. The boys are in hoodies and jeans. Students are also expected to stay after school to complete work for psychology with the same teacher. In the interview with the teacher she told me to ask an odd question – ask the students if they respect female teachers. I believe this was in relation to male students. Now in the analysis phase, I can verify that male students were happy with female teachers, but from my own experiences whilst interviewing, talking or observing teachers, some of the male teachers I encountered perhaps could have been what the teacher was referring to. This is based from the fact that male teachers often attempted to dominate or direct our conversations and one male teacher directly told me they did not like or believe in feminism, feminist or any so-called rights in relation to the equality of women. I interpreted this as – I don't like you, what you represent and your study. And as a female you should be doing more worthwhile things like getting married, looking after children and the homestead so us men can be men. This was an awkward interview with tension.

Figure 10. Typed Classroom Observational Notes (CON6) - *Above, is the extract of typed notes before analysis.*

Appendix 2: Music and Learning Survey

Music and Learning Survey

*This questionnaire has 22 questions, some which are **tick boxes** and some which require you to **write detailed responses**. Tick as many of the answers you think reflect your habits and views. For the written responses, write clearly so I can understand it and don't worry about making mistakes.*

If you notice something missing or you really want to add something more, write it on the back of the questionnaire and/or tell me about it.

Approximate completion time: up to 20 minutes. Thank you!

1.   Your general music habits

Do you listen to music?

Yes ☐   No ☐   (skip to question 1c. if you have ticked No)

If yes, why do you listen to music?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If no, why don't you listen to music? (skip to section 2 after answering this question)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you listen to music, what types of music genres do you like to listen to? Please be specific

E.g: Nigerian afrobeat, Punjabi Bhangra, dubstep, gospel

---

2. Your music habits around learning

    a. Do you listen to music when you are:

in class ☐ Yes   ☐ No

doing school/ college work outside class and not at home ☐ Yes   ☐ No

doing school/ college work at home ☐ Yes   ☐ No

    b. If yes, why do you listen to music when you're doing your school/college work?

---

    c. If no, why do you don't listen to music when you're doing your school/college work?

_____

_____

_____

d. Are you allowed to listen to music when doing school/college work:

☐ Yes ☐ No in class

☐ Yes ☐ No at home

e. If you listen to music when doing your school/college work, do you listen to music:

☐ alone ☐ with others

☐ using speakers ☐ using headphones

f. Do you create playlists for when doing you're school/college work?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

☐ If yes or sometimes, for particular tasks …….……………………………

☐ If yes or sometimes, for particular subjects/lessons …….…………………..

☐ Other reasons ……………………………………………………………..

g. When doing your school/college work do you only listen to music from specific genres or listen to specific songs?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

h. Would you recommend a friend or sibling to try listening to music when doing school/college work?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Why / why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. General music information

a. On a typical day how much music would you say you listen to?

☐ None ☐ 1-2 hours

☐ 3-4 hours ☐ 5-6 hours

☐ 7$^+$ hours ☐ I don't know

b. What devices do you use when you listen to your music?

☐ mobile phone ☐ tablet ☐ laptop

☐ MP3 player (iPod, Bush MP3, SanDisk Clip and any other digital music playing device)

☐ desktop computer ☐ Other …………………………………………………

c. Do you share your music with friends or siblings? Exchange songs or playlists

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Who are you?

    a. School/ College ………………………………………………………………

    b. Year and Course/ Subject …..…………………………………………………

    c. Gender

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Other

    d. Religion

☐ Buddhism ☐ Christianity ☐ Hinduism ☐ Islam

☐ Judaism ☐ Sikhism ☐ Other ☐ None

☐ It's private

    e. Ethnicity

☐ Asian and Black

☐ Asian/Asian British Bangladeshi

☐ Asian/ Asian British Indian

☐ Asian/ Asian British Pakistani

☐ Asian Other ……………………………………………………………

☐ Black/ Black British African

☐ Black/ Black British Caribbean

☐ Black/ Black British Other ……………………………………………

☐ Chinese

☐ Gypsy/ Roma

☐ Mixed White and Asian

☐ Mixed White and Black African

☐ Mixed White and Black Caribbean

☐ Mixed Other …………………………………………………………....

☐ Traveller: Irish Heritage

☐ White British

☐ White Irish

☐ White Other …………………………………………………………

☐ It's private

f. Country of birth ………………………………………………………

g. What languages can you speak? …………………………………………
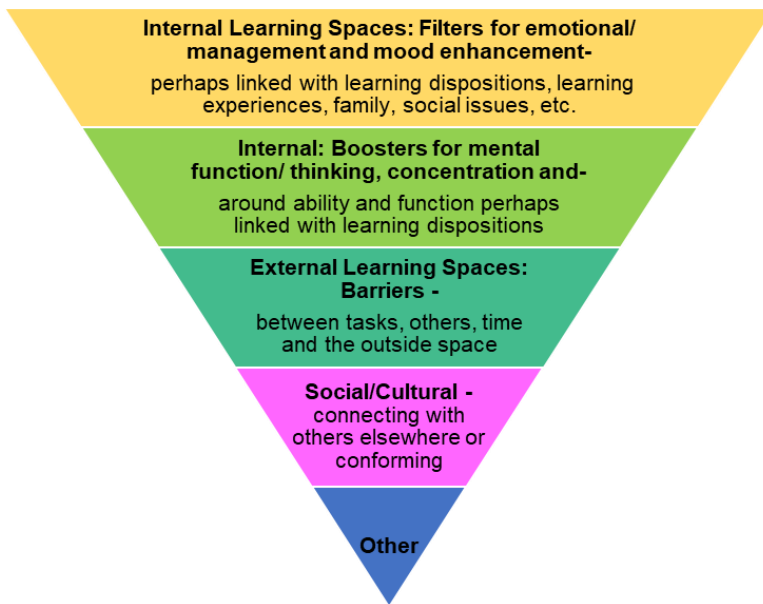
5. Your contact details

*Only fill this in, if you are happy for **me to contact you** for **a face-to-face interview** sometime in the near future **after school/college**. If you're under 18 I will also need to get consent from one of your parents or guardian.*

     a. Name …………………………………………………………………………

     b. Mobile number ……..………………………………………………………

     c. Email …..……………………………………………………………………

Thank you.

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Figure 11. Survey data pyramid of main reasons students engage in listening practices *- The pyramid shows the explanations from students who answered yes to 'do you listen to music while you are...' in the survey. The pyramid shows the most common kinds of reasons students gave for their listening. Responses were tallied, visually grouped and then categorised into those seen in the pyramids.*
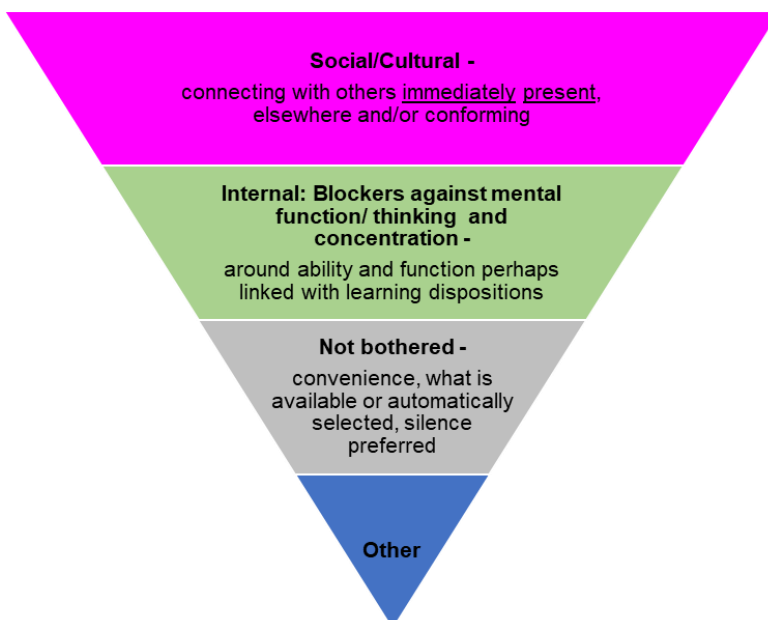
Figure 12. Survey data pyramid for main reasons students did not engage in listening practices *The pyramid shows explanations from students who answered no to 'do you listen to music while you are...' in the survey.*

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Appendix 3: Interview Templates

3.1 Teacher Interview Template

1. **Tell me about your role as a teacher and your teaching**
   - What courses do you teach?
   - How did you get in to teaching?
   - How long have you been teaching?
   - What challenges do you feel you encounter when teaching?
   - What benefits do you gain from teaching?
   - Have you got any areas of concern towards your teaching currently?
   - Where do you see yourself in the future?

2. **Tell me about the students you teach**

   - What age range are they? Where do they come from?
   - What are their learning abilities and engagements like?
   - How do they like to learn?
   - How they feel about the students? Would you say you have a good rapport?
   - Do you have any areas of concern?

3. **What devices do students tend to use in class?**

4. **Have you observed students listening to music in class?**
   - What do you notice about such students?

5. **What are your views on this practice?**

   - Do you allow students to use music in class? Why/why not?

6. **What are your views and experiences of students who use music while learning?**

   - Why do you think students use music?

7. **How do you negotiate or manage students' music listening or device use in classes?**

8. **Can you tell me about the types of environments you try to encourage or set up for your students in class?**

- How successful is this and why?

9. **What are your views on students' learning obligations?**
   This is to determine students' agency, autonomy, workload, academic situation and pressures which influence their learning.

10. **What are your views and experiences on students and final assessments?**

11. **What are your views on how students attempt to prepare for their future?**

12. **What are your views on your teaching obligations?**
    This is important for determining agency, autonomy and power relations and institutional habitus.

13. **Is there anything further you'd like to add?**

Where possible I'll also use classroom observations to refer to.

3.2 Student Interview Template

Note: This template was created for data collection, therefore, before it was discovered that some students in my study listen to religious scriptures.

Musicking practices and reasons

1. Students will be asked to select 3 songs they listen to when studying/ most frequently listen

Why: To open up a discussion and to extract deeper and more detailed responses.

2. They will talk me through at least one song:

Q. Tell me about this song

Why: I want them to describe and explain what they like about each song. A detailed response with scenarios to provide detailed reasons behind musicking.

Generative questions/ prompts depending on earlier responses and on what I need further detail on:
Tell me anything you like about it such as:

- o What do you hear when you listen to this song?
- o What do you like about this song?
- o Do you like listening to this particular song?
- o What are your reasons for listening to his song?
- o Tell me more about it reminding you of/ making you feel/ helping you to…

3. I'll ask them directly about their musicking practices in class.

Q. Give me examples of when you listen to music in class

Why: This is to decrease vague responses and to ensure they are relevant and specific.

- o Are you allowed to?
- o How do you go about it?
- o What devices do you use?
- o Do you listen by yourself or with others? How (headphones, speakers)? Why?
- o Do other students respond to this? In what way?
- o What does your teacher do or say about this?
- o What can you hear when you have your music on in class?
- o Do you still interact with your teacher and classmates when you listen to music in class? How/why?

4. I'll ask them about how they compile and select their playlists/ songs

Q. Can you show me and talk me through how you select the songs you listen to in class

- In what kind of lessons or in which subjects and doing what kind of activities do you listen to music in class? (depending on their earlier responses).
- Do you create playlists? Show me. How have you created this playlist?
- Give me examples of when would listen to this playlist/ these songs.
- Give me examples of when you wouldn't listen to this playlist/ these songs.

5. I'll ask them about their learning environments

Q. When you listen to music in class can you describe the classroom environment

- Describe the sounds and interactions in class.
- Describe the type of lesson.
- Describe the type of class you wouldn't listen to music in.

Q. Can you tell me about your home environment when you're studying and listening to music?

- Where do you do your school work? Who is there? What does it sound like?
- Are you allowed to listen to music while doing school work?
- How do you listen to music? (quietly, on speakers, mobile…)
- How do those around you respond?

Identity, cultural capital and community of belonging

6. Find out about their background.

Q. Can you tell me a little about yourself?

Q. Have you always lived here?

Q. Has your family always lived here?

Q. Can you tell me a little about your family?

Learning aspects

7. I'll ask them about their educational experiences.

Q. What were your reasons for attending this school/college?

Q. What were your reasons for selecting these subjects/ course?

Q. How are you getting on with school/college/this course?

a. classroom interactions

Q. Do you prefer to work alone or with others in classes? Give me examples.

Q. Do you work with your teachers in class or not? Give me examples.

b. educational aspirations

Q. Tell me about what you plan to do after finishing this course

Q. **What are your friends and/or siblings doing?**

Q. **What does your family want you to do?**

       c.   obligations, concerns and difficulties

Q. What's the most important thing right now concerning your studies?

Q. Do you have any difficulties with or concerns about your studies? Tell me about them.

       d.   What they are doing to fulfil their goals and to cope

Q. **How do you plan on achieving ….?**

Q. Give me examples of what you've done so far

Appendix 4: Transcripts

4.1 GCSE Female Student Group Transcript 1:

This extract is from a group interview at the academy with up to seven GCSE female students at any given time. Students came and left at will. Some participated and others simply listened and did not participate. The group was self-organised by one or two students who appeared to be ringleaders.

Music plays in the background #00:14:05-8#

I: Is that your K-pop? #00:14:04-3#

P4: I don't understand that; she likes listening to like// #00:14:12-5#

P6: //These two I just don't get it! // #00:14:12-5#

P4: // you know erm, what's that song when I was eight? #00:14:16-4#

General responses: Erm/ X Grasser/ (*overlapping voices*) #00:14:23-4# #00:14:23-4#

P4: You listen to that, I listen to rappers. #00:14:27-0#

General responses: the whole class disagree with/ #00:14:29-9#

P4: No X didn't. Me and X we relate so much. Miss can I go get two other girls? We like listen to the exact same music. #00:14:35-1#

General responses: *(inc.) overlapping voices.* #00:14:43-6#

Student leaves to get other girls. #00:14:43-6#

I: Okay so you can still explain this to me, so you're sat in the library with your books and literally your own environment… the music that you're creating in your head and then you're doing your work and whenever you need to interact with each other is when you speak amongst each other. But because it's quiet and you're together, why are you listening to music? #00:14:57-5#

General responses: I don't listen to it/ we listen/ I feel empty without it/ nah I remember things easily if I'm listening to something... / I don't listen to anything, I feel like (inc.) #00:15:12-0#

The recording is stopped and a new recording is started in a new file.

4.2 Transcript Key

Following is a list of key themes addressed in interview transcripts, as well as the colour coding I employed to identify these themes.

Learning experiences and educational trajectories:

- Green text = Feelings, thoughts and views regarding current place of study and course.

- Jungle green highlight = what they are studying and the history of how they came to select their subjects and place of study.

- Light green underline = Educational thoughts, feelings, engagement.

  What they think and how they feel about their education. How they are engaging and interacting with their education. What they are doing or not doing and why.

- Light green double underline = Educational desires (sense of giving, helping, be proud). Perhaps this is also their views on the role of education.

  This appears to be what they want from their education currently and also what they want their education to afford them in the future. This includes emotional and internal benefits as well as social and financial ones.

- Green dashed underline = Future career aspirations after education.

  Their future employment aspirations and reasons for these.

- Light green highlight = Extracurricular activities.

  What they do outside education that may or may not be related to it. This can include hobbies, jobs and family commitments.

- Green wave underlined = Future educational aspirations.

  What courses they have applied for or are thinking about and why.

- Thick green underline = Previous educational experiences.

Self-identifications, identities and communities of belonging:

- Pink text = General information about them and background.

- Pink = Self perceptions of own learner identity or teacher's view of learner identities

  Do they belong / fit in or not? Are they aware of systems / rules, and do they abide by them or not?

- Pink double underline = self-identifications of their own identity outside education.

- Pink wave underline = Friends and social communities outside education and perhaps related to musicking.

- Pink dashed underline = educational support or guidance from teachers, students, friends and families.

- Thick Pink underline = community or sense of belonging.

  To whom (role models) and to what (music) they look to for support, advice and reinforcement.

Musicking preferences, practices and reasons:

- Gold underline = musical preferences and reasons for musicking.

What genres they listen to and why. Where the music comes from.

- **Gold bold text** = what musicking does for them or enables them to do and why.
- <u>Gold thick underline</u> = musicking practices.

  How they physically engage in musicking. What they use and why.
- <u>Gold wave underline</u> = views towards their own musicking.

  What they think and feel about musicking and why.
- <u>Gold double underline</u> = views towards the musicking of others.

  What they think and feel about musicking and why.
- <u>Gold dashed underline</u> = what and when they don't listen to anything and why.

Learning Environments:

- Thick dark red underline = sonic environments.

  What can be heard and by whom.
- <u>Dark red double underline</u> = physical environments.

  What they look like; who's in them and what's in them.
- <u>Dark red dashed underline</u> = the social interactions taking place.

  Who is sat next to whom and helping whom; why and how.
- <u>Dark red wavy underline</u> = the mood/tone emotional/psychological space.

  Stressed/ pressured/ relaxed/ friendly/ cold environment for various reasons that are internal or external.

Appendix 5: Additional Primary Data Sources

5.1 Student Data Inserts
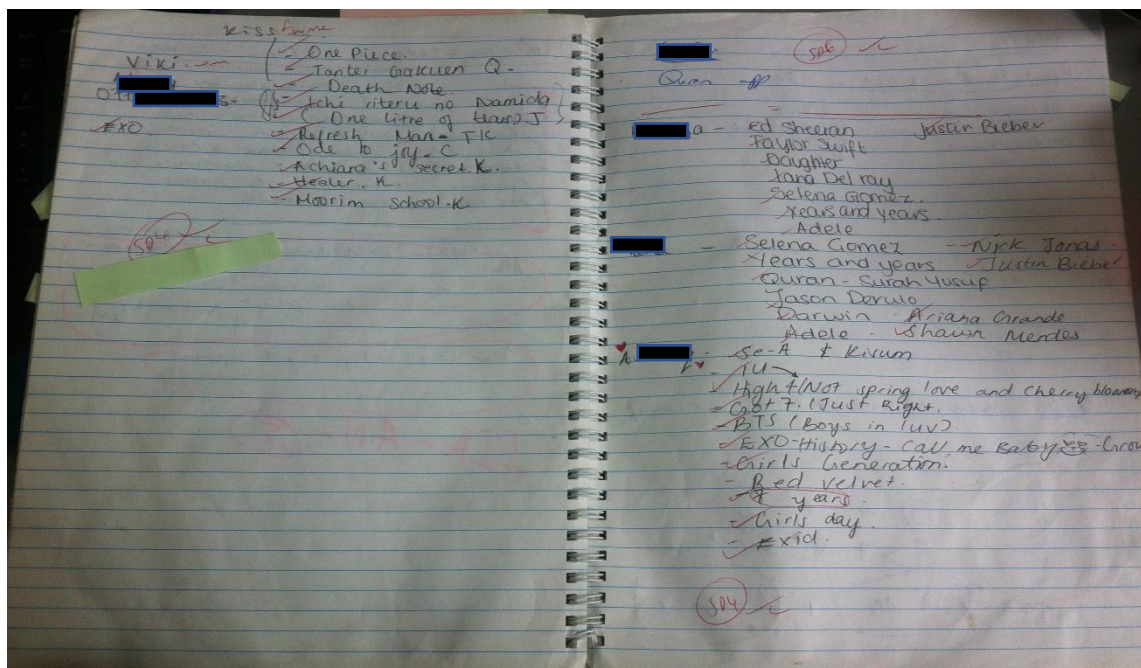
Figure 13. **Fieldwork Notebook -** *This is the fieldwork notebook which I took to institutes. It is filled with research notes based on my readings, appointments, contact details, dates and research drafts. Students also used this notebook to write down their favourite artists, songs, movies, websites and apps. The red ticks represent information that has been entered onto a Microsoft Word document and the circled codes – SD4 and SD6 – represent their reference (see Appendix 5.2). The two pages include information from five students (names blacked out). Four of these were in the GCSE Student Group Interview discussed in chapter 6 and in the excerpt transcript in Appendix 4.1.*

5.2 Student Data Notes
Following is an excerpt of the student data (SD) written by students into my notebook, which typically provides information on the names of songs, bands and apps. It follows students' (mis)spellings where I was unable to find the 'correct' spelling.

SD1

•   Sana (18 yrs): Turkish/ Kurdish – most cannot be found on Google so either wrong spelling or just not there. Sehid (martyrs or 1 of 99 names of Allah) Lahtinda (?), Rabbe (?), gulumserler (?), Grup Abdal Arix (entirely Turkish, including all comments on YouTube and search data on Google. Images of Kurdish peoples. Had to use Google translate).

SD2

•   Nicole (20 yrs): Buoyon (asa banton) Dominica; American RnB: Chris Brown, Rihanna; Reggae; English: Rita Ora, Adele; 'Do something crazy' carnival song.

SD3

- Bilan (19 yrs): Mover – 'white not blue' From east London (London rap. Song about crime, violence, police, prison); Nines, 'Certified North West G's' ft Fatz Gone Till November (London hip hop, gangster rap); CXCV Mic-L x Yus - 'Mujo' (this song London + Afrobeat. It's about the diverse types of African females: skin tone, hair types, body shapes, beauty)

- Song Flip app

- O2 Islington, Brixton, Coco Club.

- Shazam app

5.3 Additional Notes

Additional notes (AN) excerpts were predominantly made on location during classroom observations, break times and/or after speaking to participants in informal and unplanned conversations. ANs were also made on the commute home from a visit or much later while collating and reflecting on my observations and the data.

AN-3

O4/05/16: In order to encourage the boys to participate in the SNI I had to offer a group interview with 4-5 boys in an A Level class. This is a tactic I wish I had tried early at the college

Students are reluctant to formally agree to anything, I'm forced to hang around and catch them as they become free.

AN-7

04/08/16: Theme - what's the data saying? Role model void: I need someone to encourage me, to inspire me, to guide me and to give me information. External motivator: lacking strong internal motivation, self-will, strength.

AN-9

16/09/16: There is a number of literature that states Muslim students require role models but from my study I can see that students create their own role models in the place of none through their digital practices – in this case.

AN-11

02/06/16: There is a lack of appropriate music with appropriate lyrics and content for learners. Students like the music, vibe, the attitudes expressed but the songs are not always directly related to their opinions or values. E.g. shooting people when studying for maths A Levels.

AN-12

08/06/16: While transcribing Meelaaney's interview it occurs to me that:

There's also an imagined learning community with how learning should occur.

Music and religious texts can provide the role models students need, to cope and get through their education.

Students create stories to help navigate and cope with their learning obligations and career aspirations.

AN-13

Learning environments (LE) vs spaces (LS): LE = physical space (the tangible and observable); social space (interactions with others); psychological space (inner perceptions and emotions). LS=?

LE= students' learning identities: 1. insiders (this is where I belong); 2. Outbound (I'm leaving to another community); 3. Brokers (not quite in or out); 4. Inbound (I'd like to have more access and input); 5. Peripheral (I don't want to be here or they're not letting me in).

Imagined communities of musicking in London are not so imagined. They are local, tangible and real. Listeners bump into the artists on the streets and see them frequently.

These relationships are both social, symbolic and internal – Bourdieu.

AN-17

FE-Teacher-Informal Chat after CO1: Students on the course didn't want to be there. They couldn't do A Levels and were therefore forced to do this course. The college doesn't offer full-time teaching contracts therefore teachers are on part-time contracts or from an agency. They leave rapidly and often. The college is undergoing restructuring and under tension.

5.4 Ethics Committee Research Considerations:
After reviewing relevant literature and discussing the research areas, I applied for ethical clearance for the project through the Open University's Human Research Ethics Committee. This involved submitting a form addressing each of the following issues.

1. Methodology
2. The published ethical and legal guidelines to be followed during the research
3. Schedule of research
4. Data protection and security
5. Whether participants would be recompensed
6. Whether there was any deception involved in the research
7. Whether there would be any risk of harm
8. Debriefing
9. Benefits and knowledge transfer

5.5 Ethics Committee Letter
Below are excerpts from the first request for ethics approval which was declined until the requirements outlined below were satisfied. Once I addressed these points, ethics approval was granted and I was allowed to begin my research from December 2015. I gained access to a class in February 2016.

Dear Memory,

We have looked at your application to HREC and there are a few changes that you will need to make before we can give it a favourable opinion. Most of the points are primarily on methodology but have ethical implications:

… I think that an online questionnaire will lead to a lower response rate: if students fill it in in the classroom, you'll get 100% unless someone refuses; if they have to remember to do it at home, many of them will forget and it can only be done by those who have plenty of free time outside school, ready access to a networked computer, etc …

… Following on from the last points, how will the student discussions be recorded? Will this be via video or audio recording? Will it be in a big group during lessons etc.? If students aged 15-18 need to meet you in a public place, we still think they should be encouraged to have a chaperone, or they or their parents should explicitly state why not. This it to protect you as much as anyone else if something went wrong.

I'd suggest audio recording only. You'll never find a camera angle that covers a whole classroom…

… It has been stated that no harm is likely to come to any participants. This is probably the case, but it may be possible that if my study is conducted at a key time, it may detract from the core studies and be perceived to impact on exam revision for example, so please consider how to ensure this study does not interfere with that.

You could simply promise to consult with the schools/teachers in question about this.

5.6 Fieldwork Activity Table

Table 4. Fieldwork activity
Table 4 below shows the breakdown of the visits, dates, classroom observations, interviews and communications I carried out between February – October 2016 for data collection. It excludes personal communications with teachers, schools and heads I knew from my own teaching experiences or to whom I was introduced at social functions. Such informal connections and contacts were made and maintained from 2014–2016, but were completely unproductive.

|	Period	Location	Activity	Time at Location
1	4th February 2016	(FE) College	Introduced myself and my study to students; answered their questions; asked for research participants and collected contact details; carried out classroom observation CON1 – George	2 .5 hours
2	8th February 2016	College	Waited for 1.5 hours for 3 students who didn't turn up for their appointment. Bumped into their classmate Sana at the college café; she agreed to an interview, which I conducted.	4 hours
3	9th February 2016	College	Interview with Nicole (arranged via text).	2.5 hours
4	16th February 2016	University	Interview with Emily at her mother's workplace. This was arranged via personal connections.	1.5 hour
5	10th March 2016	College	Classroom observation CON2 (George), survey, classroom discussion and teacher interview	4 hours
6	March 2016	Contact	Introduced to school assistant who has a close family member who is a school head. Spoke to the contact and sent letter about research project to be forwarded to the school head. The contact was to introduce me and my study to the school head, but this never materialised as I was never able to speak to the head directly.	2 months
7	April 2016	Social Sites andTelephone Communications	Formed 14 connections online with teachers, a sixth form principal and a school head, using Facebook, LinkedIn, email and telephone. Several of them did not like classroom observations or the idea of researching music. A head pointed out that research would not be possible as a new policy meant no mobile phones in classrooms and no school would want this study conducted. Other contacts have stopped communications. Primary school teachers on the other hand loved the research topic and were disappointed my study is aimed at secondary school students. Several primary school teachers already use music in their classrooms and one teacher invites students to bring their own music to share with the class. No success using educational websites to post advert for research participants from teachers.	3 months

|				
8	3rd May 2016	academy	I negotiated access to the academy with the owner and principal via Facebook and a telephone conversation. A sociology teacher (Adnan) allowed me to talk to his students, give out surveys and observe his class CON3. However, he was visibly not happy about the research topic and declined to be interviewed. I talked to students in common rooms and at break times to recruit participants. I also talked to teachers to try to get them to participate and/or allow me access to their classes. This secured some contact details and informal agreements to allow me to observe classes the next day. I interviewed male students Said (A level student) and Kareem (Year 10). These interviews are too short and lack detail as students gave brief answers to questions. As a result, their transcripts are not used in the findings chapters.	1 day
9	4th May 2016	Academy	Observed a biology lesson (CON4) followed by a chemistry lesson (CON5) by the same teacher (Mahir). I had to leave the lesson half-way as my presence was affecting the teacher and the students. The teacher agrees to be interviewed.	2 hours
10	4th May 2016	Academy	Observed sociology lesson with female teacher (Atefeh) (CON6). I gave survey to students, collected contact details and interviewed teacher after class.	2 hours
11	4th May 2016	Academy	I interviewed a student Bilan during her free period between lessons	1.5 hours
12	4th May 2016	Academy	To encourage male students to participate I offered group interviews. This results in the 4 A level student group interview discussed in chapter 6.	1.5 hours
13	5th May 2016	Academy	Waited for over two hours for students and teachers to be free in the morning. Collected contacts from teachers. Several teachers claimed they want an interview between 1 and 2 pm. Students who have confirmed their willingness to participate keep changing the times for interviews, so I'm forced to wait for breaks and after school to catch them before they make other commitments with their friends.	1 day
14	6th May 2016	Academy	Classroom observations with physics teacher (Naima) CON7. Handed out surveys and got two students to interview from class - Zahid and Kareem	1 day
15	6th May 2016	Academy	Interview with Aisha as we were both waiting in the computer room. Afterwards an interview with GCSE Girls Group Interview	1 day
16	9th May 2016	Academy	Interviewed a student Meelaaney over lunch	1.5 hours
17	October 2016	Local YMCA	Emailing and calling council youth clubs in my borough (Greenwich) for permission to talk to young people at youth centres. This way no need to ask permission from parents or get in trouble for approaching minors. No interest in participation or allowing me access.	1 month

my study

5.7 Correspondences with Gatekeepers
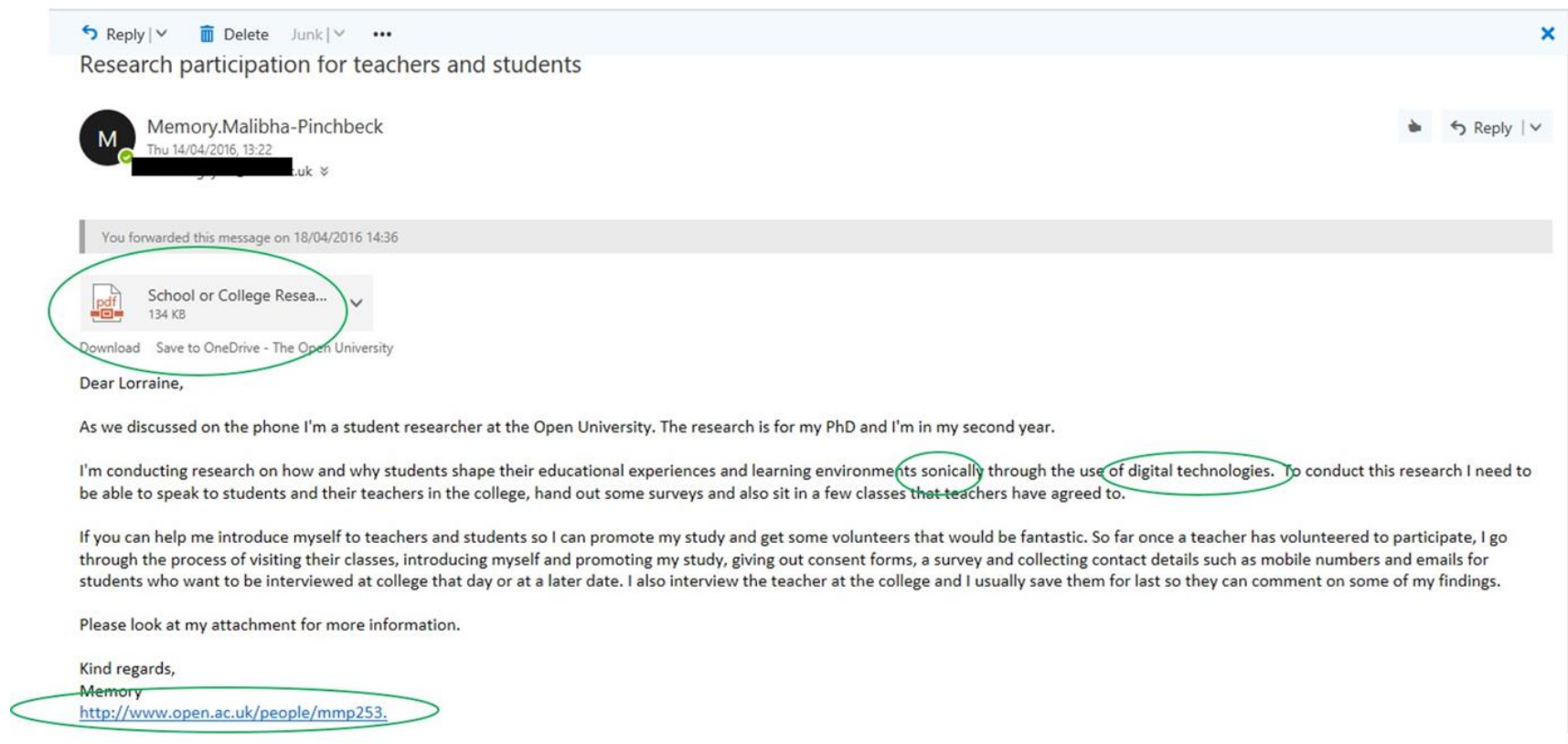
5.7.1 Figure 14. Email Example of recruitment strategy two - *This email shows how recruitment strategy two was conducted. It also demonstrates how I sought to make my study more palatable to potential participants by replacing references to 'music during study' and 'classroom observations' with expressions such as 'shape experiences and environments sonically', 'digital technologies' and 'sit in a few classes'. This was done to reduce the likelihood of a gatekeeper reacting protectively or saying no without proper consideration.*
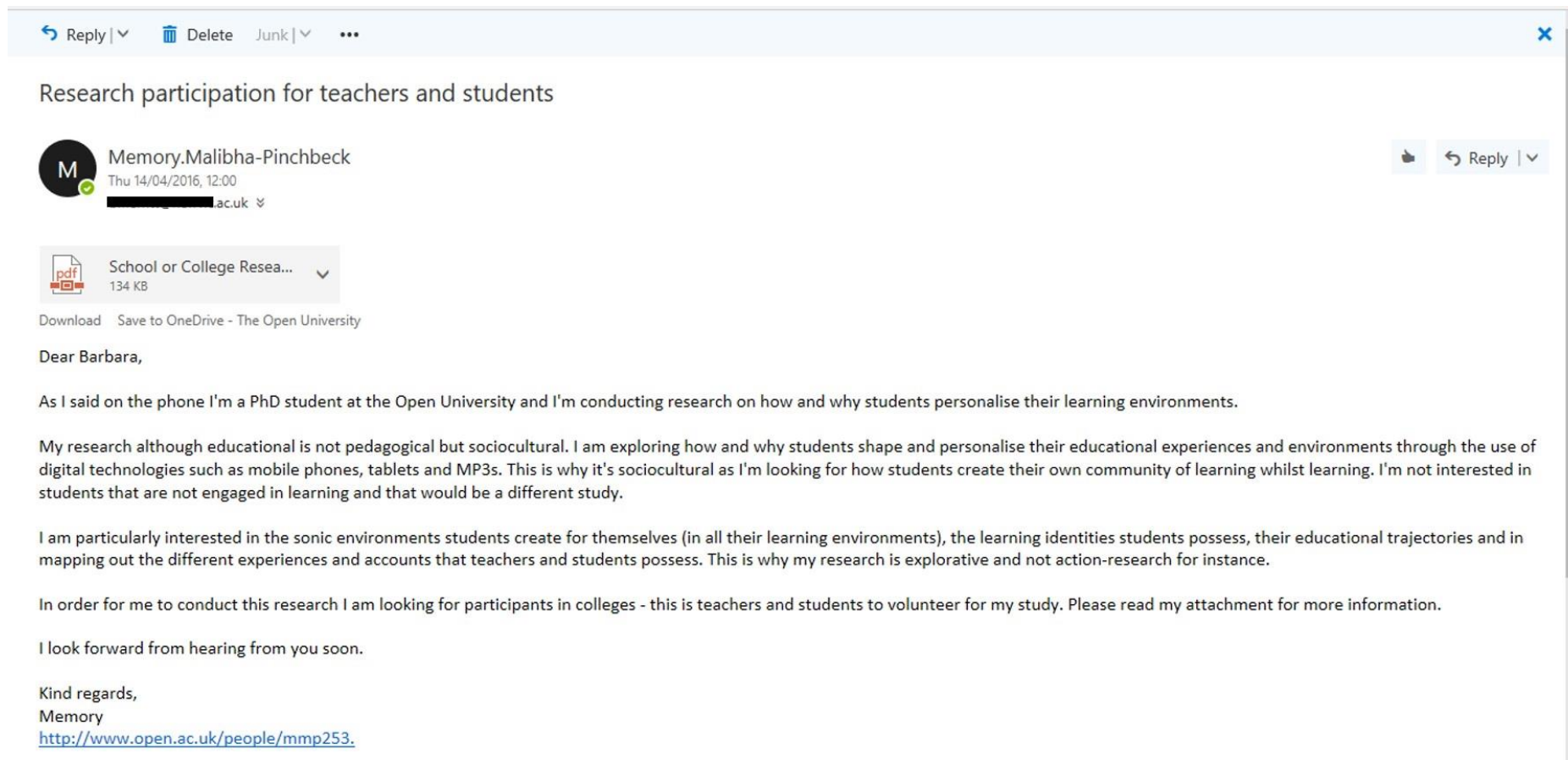
5.7.2 Figure 15. Email example of personalised negotiations - *This email is part of recruitment strategy two, and shows how I attempted to manage teacher concerns on a case-by-case basis. In this instance I am reassuring the teacher that I am not considering the pedagogical aspect of educational experiences, and thus not looking at teachers. I avoid using the word 'music' while nevertheless attempting to be transparent about the nature of the research outcomes, explaining that I am not conducting 'action research' and so am not making promises about what my study will find or that it will produce findings that can be immediately applied. Unfortunately, my experiences indicate that teachers want studies that can diagnose a problem and prescribe an actionable solution, and that teachers and managers are less satisfied by explorative research that produces knowledge that may not be applied immediately.*

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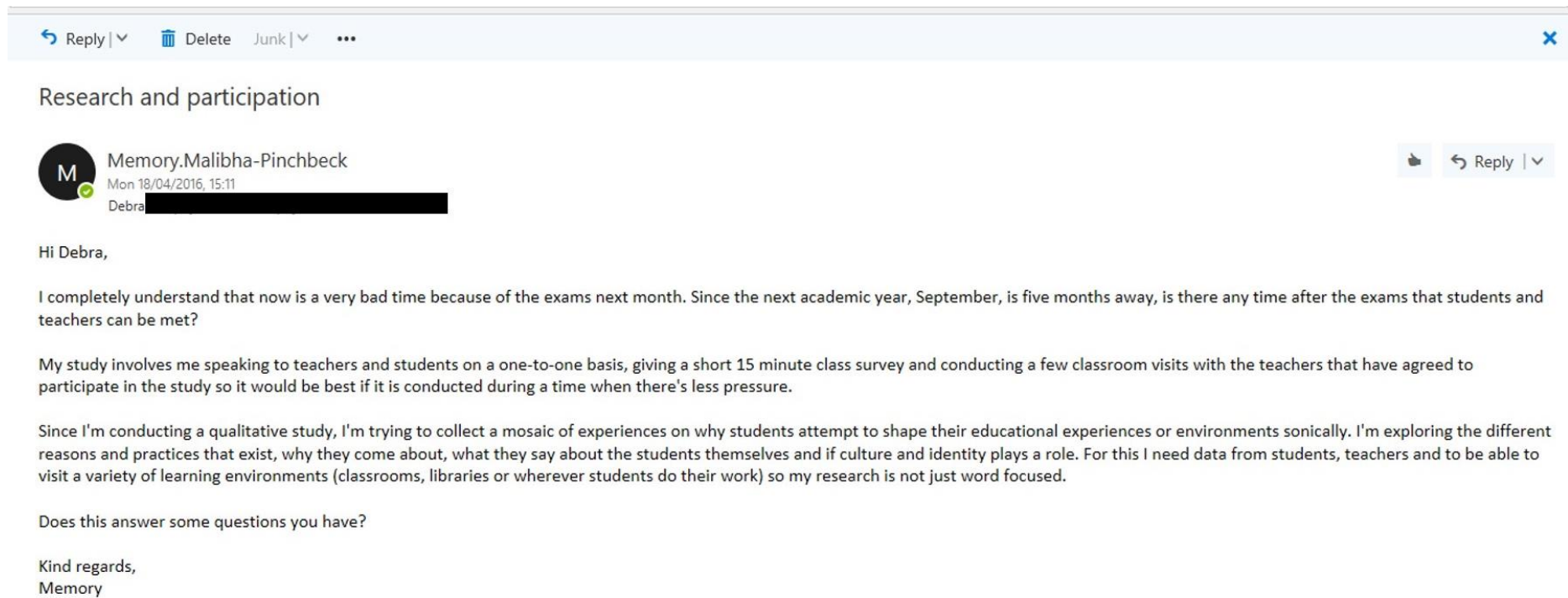
5.7.3 Figure 16. Email example of gatekeeper concerns - *This email is part of recruitment strategy three. The teacher was introduced to me through an email by a contact who also placed my study on a Facebook page for teachers at a London university. The email shows how I attempted to manage the concerns of the teacher, by providing as much information as I could on what I was going to be doing and why. This was necessary since the teacher needed to 'sell' my study to her manager, and possibly other teachers, so that I would be given permission to carry out my study.*
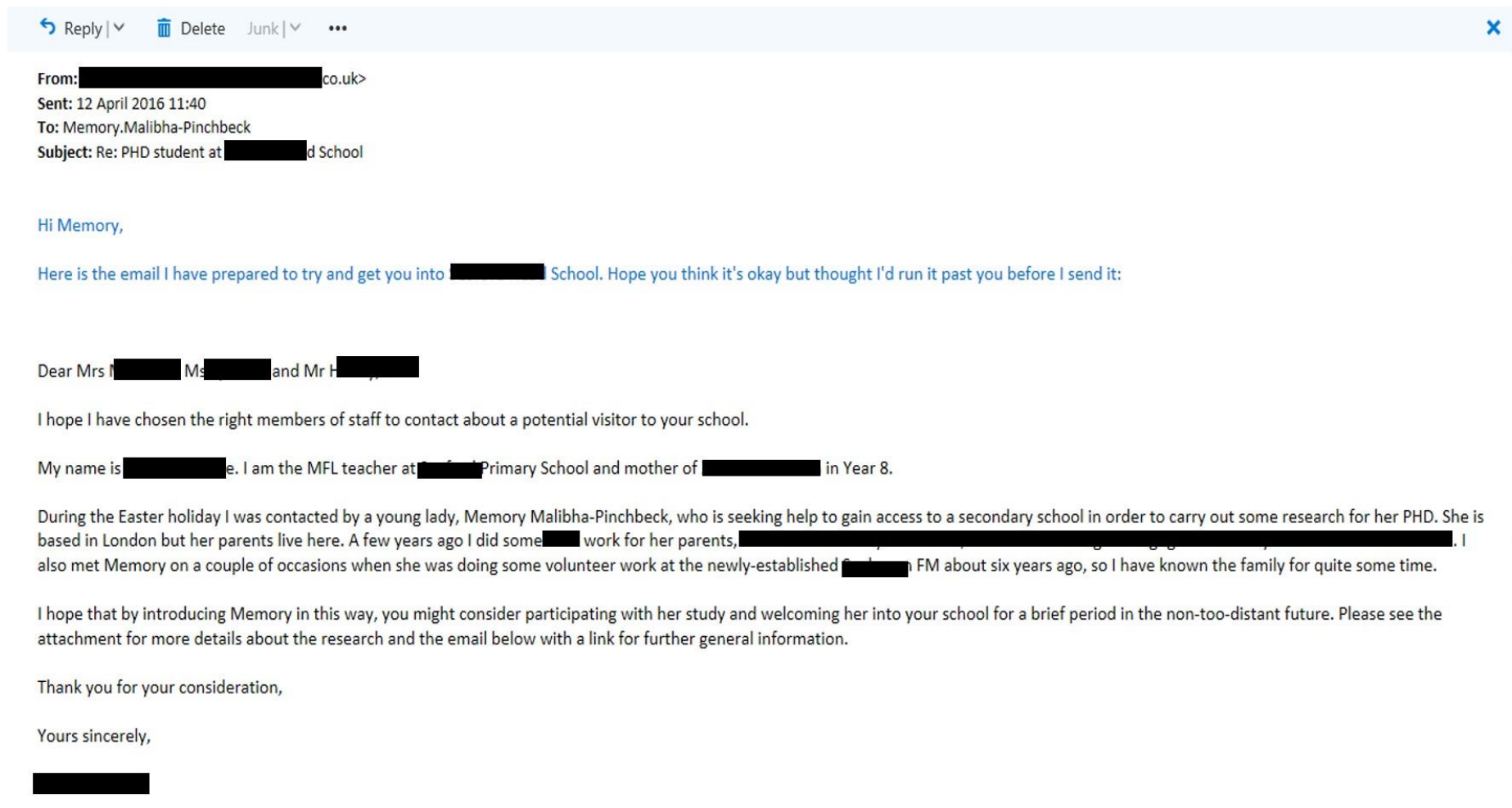
5.7.4 Figure 17. Email example of informal networking - *This email was written by an acquaintance of my parents, who used her social capital as a primary school teacher and as the mother of a student attending the school to gain me access to the institution. The email had positive results, and a teacher responded to my request, but only after the head, with whom I was in contact separately, had officially declined my request.*