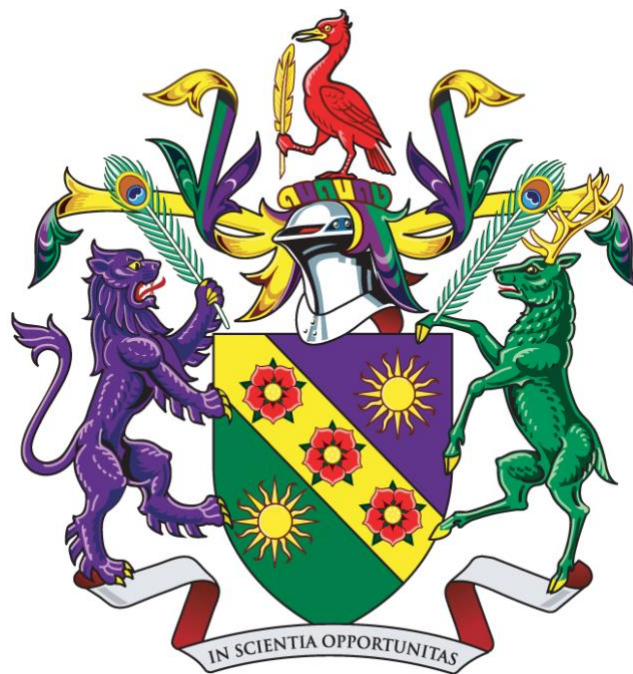# Exploring Austerity in Sound: Applying an Ethnographic Approach to a Collaborative, Field Recording-based Composition

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1. Abstract

This document provides an exegesis of an ethnographic soundscape composition engagement that culminated with the creation of a work entitled *About Us – For Us* (2021). This creative artefact is a large-scale work that is presented as a binaural composition for headphone playback. It can also be adapted for multi-channel, site-generic presentation. The work builds upon practice that was developed during the creation of two preliminary works entitled *What Does Who to What?* (2018) and *Cartographies* (2019). Despite the existence of innovative works and important development in terms of theorisation, the use of field recording-based composition as an ethnographic practice is still underdeveloped. Voices from within the discipline have called for use of composition as an alternative to a traditional ethnographic write-up and identified the need for rigorous academic documentation to accompany any such undertaking. This study provides precisely this. It is also an explicitly political interaction, aimed at the exploration of power and domination in an area impacted by austerity measures. This exploration is organised according to a methodology that interprets the four stages involved in ethnographic studies sonically. These four stages are: observing and participating in a local area; conducting interviews with local community members; utilising archives; and producing a sonic write-up. As a study that engages with notions of power, careful consideration of researcher-participant collaboration and power relations was deemed necessary. These considerations led to the adoption of a hermeneutic approach to the engagement. Methods such as the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of interviews and the development of an instrument for the playback of participant statements according to rules derived from interview themes, carried this concern for power relations into the composition itself. The resulting work contributes a sonic write-up to the discipline and the exegesis gives a detailed overview of process. A discussion of contributions to specific aspects of the current literature is afforded by this overview. The benefits of a deep engagement in the locality are argued for, as well as the need for reflexive care at every stage of the process. The impact of the process upon the

participants is also examined, and changes to the sonic awareness of one participant is discussed. Although details of the process for implementing the research strategy are singular and contingent, this text is felt to provide an opportunity for the community of practice to scrutinise, adopt, reject or build upon its findings.

2. Contribution to Knowledge

The current study contributes a systematic and practical implementation of recommendations for ethnographic soundscape composition. In documenting the process according to academic standards, the study answers calls for such an undertaking from within the relevant literature.

Discussion of the study is organised according to the four stages of ethnographic study identified by Drever (2002) in an important article on the subject. These stages are: (i) observing and participating; (ii) conducting interviews; (iii) utilising archives; and (iv) write-up (sonic write-up).

In engaging with the contemporary literature in each of these four areas, specific contributions are made to our understanding of them. Furthermore, the use and extension of semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) for ethnographic soundscape composition constitutes a methodological innovation. This innovation includes the introduction of sonic and embodied considerations to the standard method. It also includes the implementation of rules derived from IPA to organise the playback of participant's statements – an ethical matter.

The current study takes a consciously political approach to the ethnographic soundscape composition engagement and the benefits of a deep interaction over attempts to find an "objective" sonic perspective are argued for. The consideration of researcher-participant power relations also forms an important part of the study and contributes to existing knowledge in the area.

Finally, this study contributes to our understanding of the impact that such works have on research participants.

3. Introduction

3.1. Background and Artist's Statement

3.1.1. Overview of the works

About Us – For Us (2021) is a large-scale work that marks the culmination of an ethnographic soundscape composition engagement with the community of West Everton. The work was a collaboration with three local residents whose experiences of life in the area were explored against the backdrop of austerity. *About Us – For Us* was originally intended for installation at site. However, the limiting effect of the COVID-19 pandemic led to its eventual binaural presentation for headphone playback. Despite this, the work can be adapted for presentation as a multi-channel, site-generic installation.

Prior to the completion of *About Us – For Us*, two preliminary works were created. The first, *What Does Who to What?* (2018) was an interactive audiovisual installation that explored power relations in a gallery setting. The second, *Cartographies* (2019) was a quadrophonic installation that was later adapted for playback with headphones. This work was a field recording-based engagement with local groups that were pushing back against austerity measures and their negative impacts upon the community.

3.1.2. The artist and their motivation

I am a composer who works with sound and text. My background is as a singer-songwriter and producer of popular music. During my time in education, I also began to write music for acoustic instruments and produce electronic works. This included work with concrete sound, and I composed my first lengthy work, *Fragments of the Ship Canal Project* (Patchwork Rattlebag, 2017) whilst studying for an MA in Compositional Studies at the University of

Salford in 2013. The work explored political themes, examining the myths surrounding the political movements and apparent consensus from which the Manchester Ship Canal emerged. As an artist who identified with the political and protest strands of the singer-songwriter field, I was also trying to make comparisons with some political currency. On an aesthetic level, the work explored the interaction of foundsound and text. Inspired by the notion of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* being 'a shade away from a discourse consisting entirely of soundbites' (Sharratt, 1997: 277), I aimed to explore the artistic possibilities presented by the interface of textual and sonic materials. After all, acousmatic material lends itself to collage-like construction in a similar way to Eliot's poetic fragments, and techniques such as rendering metonymic scenes are an interesting prospect for an acousmatic composer with a background in songwriting.

I have also been a member of two groups: an independent band named Death to the Strange that had some modest successes; and a collective of which I am still a member, Patchwork Rattlebag, that despite operating primarily within the popular music sphere, maintains a healthy disregard for disciplinary boundaries. In the time that followed the completion of my master's degree, I was living on one of Salford's northern overspill estates, built to house families displaced during the "slum clearances" of the mid-20th Century. Many of these families had originated in the large areas of populace that surrounded Salford Docks prior to their decline during the middle decades of the century, precipitated by containerisation. These families ostensibly gave up 'the intimate life of the slums' for the 'more reserved, home-centred life of the typical middle-class suburb' (Cullingworth, 1959: 199).

Whilst living on an admittedly sporadic and semi-professional "portfolio" income (perhaps the word "income" is the more deserving of scare quotes here), it was the fortune of the estate in general that gave me powerful lasting memories of the continuing period of "austerity" in the United Kingdom. The community's experiences seemed to exemplify the

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injustice of the concept and also brought me to question frameworks for emancipation that are based primarily on the fortunes of a labouring working class. I am not aware that there is yet an agreed upon term for the historical condition in which many members of this type of post-industrial community found (and, I suggest, still find) themselves, but from a bleakly industrial and economic perspective, the term "surplus" seemed apt to me.[1] Of course, I intend to convey this as a reproach towards the machinations of political and economic power, and in no way a denigration of the community in question. Although this economic state of affairs permeated the lived experiences of people in the area, I believe that my attempt to put a name to the condition in fact tells us very little about the community itself.

It was from these considerations that the current study was born. I felt that there was potential for the type of acousmatic practice that I had been developing to explore the ways in which power permeates the lived experiences of those residing in areas similarly affected by austerity. I even felt there to be a certain affinity between attempts to explore what might be referred to as the 'subjugated knowledges' embedded in these communities, and the perhaps unusual proposal of sonic composition as means by which to explore them (Foucault, 2004: 7). Being aware of issues surrounding representation and the contestable premise of artists' claims to "give voice", it appeared that some kind of break with the authorial discourses surrounding my areas of practice felt inevitable. What was not at all clear to me was how I could make a statement about this as an artist without imposing new forms of institutional or representational power relations. I began to consider the following questions: What are the routes available for a reflexive practitioner? Is it possible to respect the agency of both parties in the artistic representor-represented dynamic? If so, to what

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[1] To put it another way, many people in the local area were subject to heavy economic 'disciplinarization' whilst experiencing little opportunity (Lazzarato, 2014: 209).

extent? What are the limitations of such an interaction? What singular aesthetic potentialities would such an interaction afford?

It was clear from the start then, that any such project would deal explicitly with at least two constellations of power relation. On the one hand, it would aim to explore the dynamics of domination and emancipation that characterise the charged political contexts of local austerity politics. On the other, it would require a reflexive consideration of the interaction between a community and an artist-researcher that perhaps, is sadly fated to patronise it whilst seeking it as a patron.

3.2. Overview

In this section, I will present an overview of the chapters that follow.

In Chapter 4, I survey the relevant literature on soundscape compositions. The field recording-based practices under discussion derive from a tradition referred to as "soundscape composition" by various commentators (Drever, 2002; Westerkamp, 2002; Freeman et al., 2011; Born, 2013; Stollery, 2013; Andean, 2014; Rennie, 2014; Gallagher, 2015; Anderson and Rennie, 2016; Spinelli, 2016; Waldock, 2016; Chapman, 2017; Findlay-Walsh, 2017 and Martin, 2017). The artists that created these works are referred to as "composers" (rather than "sound artists" or any number of closely related terms) in the current text. This does not imply that the artists in question necessarily refer to themselves as "composers".

Although it cannot be claimed that all of the soundscape compositions under discussion are overtly ethnographic in approach, each has relevance to at least one of the four stages of ethnographic study identified by Drever (2002). These stages are:

(i) Observing and participating;
(ii) Conducting interviews;

(iii) Utilising archives;

(iv) Write-up (sonic write-up).[2]

A discussion of considerations relating to the chosen place of presentation for these relevant works is also undertaken. Then, some areas for further study are identified through a close reading of the literature that has been categorised according to the four ethnographic stages. Finally, a brief discussion of austerity measures and their imposition on the area of study, West Everton, is undertaken.

A methodology is proposed in Chapter 5, based upon the four stages identified above. An approach to participation and interaction in the community is outlined. This approach is based upon the notion of the hermeneutic circle. The use of semi-structured interviews and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (modified to suit an ethnographic, soundscape interaction) is then discussed. Strategies for the artistic use of archives are considered before an approach to the creation of a sonic write-up is discussed.

An overview of preliminary artworks and some of the community interactions that influenced their creation is given in Chapter 6. This is followed by a detailed overview of the for the creation of the final artwork, *About Us – For Us*, in Chapter 7. In this chapter, community interactions, the conduct and analysis of interviews, the planning and creation of a Max for Live patch that applies rules derived from interview analysis to the sequence of playback for participants' statements, and the sonic write-up are all documented in an academic manner.

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[2] These stages are not direct quotes from Drever (2002), but summaries of descriptions made in the article. Furthermore, some modifications have been made to these titles in order to reflect changes that have occurred in the discipline since its publication. For example, category iii, "Utilising archives", goes beyond the idea of simply examining archives; it also encompasses contemporary pieces that aim to put the archives to work in sound.

A discussion of findings follows in Chapter 8. Here, the four research questions are addressed and the study's contributions to our knowledge of the discipline are examined in detail. The four stages of ethnographic study that served to organise the survey of the current literature in Chapter 4, are again called upon here to order the discussion of Research Questions A, B and C. Findings from a second interview with participants, analysed with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, provides material for the discussion of Research Question D.

Finally, a conclusion is offered in Chapter 9.

3.3. Research Questions

A. What can a soundscape composition process, that explicitly engages Drever's (2002) four ethnographic stages[3], contribute to our knowledge of the discipline?

B. How might a soundscape composition process, that explicitly engages Drever's (2002) four ethnographic stages, be applied to an artistic intervention that explores power and domination in an area that has been disproportionately affected by austerity?

C. How can the simultaneous demands of artistic convention, collaboration and technical competence be balanced in light of researcher-participant power relations?

D. What is the impact of the process for the participants?

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[3] (i) Observing and participating; (ii) Conducting interviews; (iii) Utilising archives; (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up).

4. Critical Context

4.1. Literature

4.1.1. Two traditions in sound art practice

There exist two notable and celebrated traditions that deal with sounds recorded outside of a studio setting: the acousmatic tradition and soundscape composition (Drever, 2002). Despite the moderately long histories of these traditions, ethical considerations pertaining to sound-based art practices are as yet underdeveloped and lack a tangible and cohesive theoretical framework (Blackburn, 2014). As a bourgeoning area of interest within sound art and sound studies, several authors have called for further consideration of matters of ethics and reflexivity (Drever, 2002; Feld and Brenneis, 2004; Demers 2009; Lane and Carlyle 2013; Andean, 2014; Blackburn, 2014; Rennie, 2014; Voegelin 2014 and Anderson and Rennie, 2016).

To understand these recent developments, we must look to the history of artforms that utilise sound recordings captured beyond the walls (and the musical assumptions) of the mainstream recording studio. In broad terms, Drever (2002) outlines the two distinct but interconnected cultures within sound art practice mentioned above: acousmatic music and soundscape composition. The former dates back to the practical and theoretical work of Pierre Schaeffer, whose search for a concrete music led to a conceptualisation of sound as object, informed by his idiosyncratic take on Husserlian phenomenological principles (Kim, 2010; Schaeffer 2012 and Herrmann, 2015). Closely associated with his notion of "reduced listening" (Kane, 2007; Kim, 2010 and Herrmann, 2015), the tradition that Schaeffer founded has been characterised by a focus on 'the intrinsic qualities of recorded sound' (Drever, 2002: 22).

The latter tradition, soundscape composition, can be traced to 1970s Vancouver and the formation of the World Soundscape Project (WSP) (Drever, 2002 and Rennie, 2014).

Developing alongside the related notion of acoustic ecology – the effects that the acoustic environment or soundscape has upon its inhabitants (Schafer, 1993) – soundscape composition is intrinsically linked to the representation of place. Drever (2002: 22) describes the WSP as 'a social science group that consisted almost entirely of composers', noting that the development of a musical genre from such a group is hardly surprising. Truax (1999) defines the concept of soundscape in terms of the relationship between a sonic environment and the society or individual that experiences it. Soundscape compositions employ field recordings as their primary artistic material. The WSP contributed compositions that are considered foundational to the genre, such as the group's collaborative works *The Vancouver Soundscape* (1997) and *Soundscapes of Canada* (1974), as well as individual works such as Hildegard Westerkamp's 1989 composition, *Kits Beach Soundwalk* (2010) (Drever, 2002; LaBelle, 2006; Kelman, 2010 and Martin, 2017).

The separation of soundscape composition from the acousmatic tradition can therefore be outlined in the literature. This separation is often more difficult to discern in practice however, as music deriving from both traditions tends to be combined in 'concert programmes, CD compilations and university syllabuses' (Drever, 2002: 21). Furthermore, Drever (Ibid.), suggests that soundscape composition has, in a sense, 'grown out of' acousmatic composition, a fact that has consequences for the way that the genre is both 'listened to… [and] produced'.

The "acousmatic" can be defined as 'a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it' (Schaeffer, 1966 cited in Kane, 2007: 17). Neither the notion of the acousmatic, nor the aesthetic propensity of its related artforms to divorce sound from context are necessarily conducive to reflection on ethical matters pertaining to the representation of place in sound. The same could be said for the aesthetic valorisation of manipulation, control and virtuosity that accompanies acousmatic music's progeny in the electroacoustic genres (McCartney, 2017). As noted above, a project of ethical reflection on representation

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has been embarked upon by several artists and authors, but a self-reflexive awareness of epistemological underdevelopment characterises the literature (Drever, 2002; Feld and Brenneis, 2004; Demers 2009; Lane and Carlyle 2013; Blackburn, 2014; Andean, 2014; Rennie, 2014; Voegelin 2014 and Anderson and Rennie, 2016).

4.1.2. Soundscape composition and value

Soundscape compositions do not seek to erase the origins of their constituent, recorded material (McCartney, 2016). In this sense, they are inherently contextual and expressive of relationship to the world (LaBelle, 2006; Truax, 2012; McCartney, 2016 and Truax 2017). Furthermore, Truax (2000) suggests that soundscape compositions are capable of enhancing the listener's understanding of the world and informing quotidian habits. If this is the case, then an understanding of the values that inform the genre is needed. From which perspectives are our worldly relationships, understandings and practices being informed?

Contrary to a widely held, tacit assumption that the presentation of field recordings constitutes a transparent and faithful replication of some sounding event, there is a growing appreciation of the role played by ideologies in the creation and re-presentation of soundscape compositions (Drever, 2002; LaBelle, 2006; Rennie, 2014; Andean, 2014 and Anderson and Rennie, 2016). McCartney (2015) identifies the prevalence of a certain notion of authenticity that derives from the genre's roots in acoustic ecology. She notes that the valorisation of acoustic environments that have not yet been "spoiled" by human intervention owes much the discipline's Canadian heritage. Schafer's (1993) designation of such environments as 'hi-fi' – i.e. environments in which individual sounds can be clearly heard without being masked by noise – owes much to recorded sound's reliance upon the

electronic notion of signal (McCartney, 2015).[4] Regarding noise as a threat to the

successful communication of information is, amongst other things, an 'ideolog[y] of the

studio'; a technological-aesthetic concept that sits well alongside North American notions of

wilderness and a romanticised notion of isolationism (McCartney, 2015: 165). Importantly,

such an outlook categorises the urban in a certain way, and therefore its recommendations

for sonic improvement run up against issues of social class. As McCartney (2015) explains,

the fact that people in areas blighted by lo-fi soundscapes must wait for the soundscape

artist's return in order to be provided with hi-fi examples, serves to highlight the

inaccessibility of what is considered to be "ideal" according to the axiological framework

under discussion.

The tendency to consider field recordings to be somehow neutral is the basis of other

commonly levelled criticisms. Drever (2002: 21) notes that accusations of both 'sonic

tourism' and 'fetishism' have accompanied descriptions of compositions as 'holiday snaps'.

This, he believes, is due to the application of acousmatic values to soundscape composition,

in which consideration of context is deemed extra-musical. Adherence to these aesthetics

results in compositions that tell us more about acousmatic practice and practitioners than

they do about place and context (Drever, 2002). Rennie (2014: 117) puts it slightly

differently, suggesting that adherence to traditional acousmatic principles involves the

privileging of aesthetic, spectromorphological concerns over the 'socio-sonic'.

Another consequence of field recording's supposed translational "transparency" is

discernible in discussions surrounding the manipulation of audio material. If field recordings

are impartial, does this mean that a composer's intermediation is detrimental to the apparent

objectivity of presentation? Hildegard Westerkamp's *Kits Beach Sound Walk* (1989)

includes a well-known exposition of such manipulations in which the composer, narrating to

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[4] Truax's *Acoustic Communication* (1984), for example, is an important work that frames the
soundscape in terms of communication.

the microphone during the soundwalk, highlights the ability to 'shock or fool' the listener and 'pretend' that certain sound sources are elsewhere. In what state then, is the recording perceived to be "truthful"? Can a subjective-objective split along lines of compositional mediation be maintained? Truax (2008: 106) would suggest not, emphasising that within soundscape composition:

> …a 'composer's knowledge of the environment and psychological context of the soundscape material is allowed to influence the shape of the composition at every level, and ultimately the composition is inseparable from some or all of those aspects of reality.

The notion of an 'objective sound-view' orients Tullis Rennie's (2014: 118) early efforts in developing what he describes as a 'socio-sonic' approach. This is, however, at odds with Conquergood's (1991: 183) notion, cited in Drever (2002: 24), that cultures should not be considered objects according to a visual paradigm, but rather as 'an interplay of voices [and] positioned utterances'. This implies that the study of culture through field recording-based composition is partial and perspectival. Rennie (2014) details how he begins to question this notion of objectivity during the process of creating a field recording-based work. In a later co-authored article, he goes further, emphasising the narrative nature of the act of field recording itself (Anderson and Rennie, 2016). Here the authors insist that soundscapes are 'as much documents of their makers… as of their associated location's environmental sound' (Anderson and Rennie, 2016: 225). This indicates a trajectory in Rennie's thought based upon practice, but more generally within soundscape composition, the question of permissible treatments and manipulation types remains. To what extent can a field recording be manipulated before it ceases to represent place?

The notion that to treat field recordings is to tamper with a neutral presentation is questioned by Andean (2014). In considering what is at stake in the use and manipulation of audio recordings, the author distinguishes between 'sound' and 'a sound' (2014: 174). The former is an acoustic and psychoacoustic concern, whereas the latter is a cultural and

semiotic construction. Although there are ethical considerations pertaining to both (think, for example, of the use of loud sound as a weapon or instrument of torture), it is within the presentation of sound-as-symbol that issues relating to representation reside. It is according to such considerations, for example, that our question of permissible manipulation arises. Andean (2014) goes on to argue that recording itself is a primary act of decontextualization, a view that echoes LaBelle (2006). This reminder of recording's status as an act of intermediation takes the discussion of representation and "transparency" to its most basic level. In comparison to this initial act of severance, Andean (2014: 178) feels that subsequent compositional choices are 'fairly cosmetic'. Furthermore, the author suggests that the removal of a symbol from one context and its later placement (recontextualization) in another is often the cause of ethical issues. LaBelle (2006: 211) however, points out that this is also the process by which recordings of this type '[come] to life', deriving much of their power from displacement.

Further to these considerations, we should remember that the recording equipment itself cannot be considered to be neutral. If, as Ritts (2017) suggests, the recordist can be considered to be a part of the recording equipment assemblage,[5] then so too can the programmes and logics by which they operate. Here, amongst other things, commercial considerations make their appearance, dictating, to a certain degree, the possibilities involved in recording.

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[5] The concept of assemblage is important to the current study. Spinelli (2016: 150) offers two definitions:

1. 'Assemblages, as conceived of by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), are complex constellations of objects, bodies, expressions, and qualities that come together and interact for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning and new territories...'

2. 'Assemblages emerge from the arranging of heterogeneous elements into a productive (or machinic) entity.'

4.1.3. Field Recording and Ethnography

In the absence of an ethical framework specific to arts that represent through field recording, it has been suggested that we look to other disciplines in which such a framework has already been developed. Blackburn (2014) notes a tendency within soundscape discourse to rely on theories established to address cultural borrowing in both other musics and the visual arts. Drever (2002), on the other hand, points towards ethnography as a practice that has both thought through the consequences of representing place and contended with the power relations inherent in such an undertaking.

So, what is ethnography? Drever (2002: 23) offers the following definition:

> Ethnography is a qualitative research method based on direct observation of and reporting on a community or social group's way of life: their values, beliefs and social rules. Unlike many other fields of social research, ethnographic research examines entire environments, looking at their subjects of study in context, on location.

This method furnishes data for anthropology. Drever (2002) goes on to give an overview of an example ethnographic process. Firstly, a researcher observes participants and participates in their daily lives. This stage is documented through materials such as photographs and, sometimes, sound recordings. Secondly, a researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants. Thirdly, the researcher examines archived data from any relevant discipline. Finally, the researcher produces a report in which their findings are presented. This process is undertaken reflexively – a requirement born of a post-colonial period of self-evaluation within the discipline of anthropology (Ibid).

Similarities to soundscape composition can be identified then, perhaps the most obvious of which being the utilisation of sound recording. Furthermore, 'both [ethnography and soundscape composition] involve a highly sensual and subjective form of data-gathering based around observation, listening and engaging' (Rennie, 2014: 119). To what extent have these similarities been utilised and developed? Regarding the ethnographic use of

field recordings, Rennie (2014) notes that it has not become a regular feature of the discipline. This is despite the pioneering work carried out by Steven Feld, who envisioned an 'ethnography in and through sound' (Feld and Brennies, 2004: 464). His method, 'acoustemology', was developed in studies such as that of the Kaluli culture in the rainforests of Papua New Guinea in 1976 and 1977 (Feld, 1996: 91). The term implies an interpretation of 'local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination' (Feld, 1996: 91). Feld's (1996) methodology is social, phenomenological and hermeneutic. Significantly, this implies a distinction between his approach (hermeneutic, interpretative phenomenology) and the descriptive, Husserlian phenomenology of the Schafferian acousmatic (Herrmann, 2015; Kane, 2007 and Kim, 2010). The framework we find in Feld does not aim at essences; listening cannot be "reduced" beyond the level of always-already interpreted, contextual, experiential and social-sonic significances that connect the listener to the world and position them within it. In addition to a write-up, Feld (1996) released a record, *Voices of the Rainforest: A Day in the Life of Bosavi Papua New Guinea* (1991), arguing that 'Murray Schafer's insight is really correct. Soundscape research really should be presented in the form of musical composition' (Feld and Keil, 1994: 328). Feld explained that this approach allows the researcher to circumvent the 'academic literalism of print mediation' and allow the listener to experience place (Ibid).

Feld later laments that the role of arts-making within anthropology did not expand (Lane and Carlyle, 2013). However, these ideas were picked up by Drever (2002) and motivate his call for soundscape composers to adopt an ethnographic approach informed by an anthropological framework of ethics. How, then, have recent soundscape practitioners knowingly or unknowingly adhered to, or implemented his recommendations?

Soundscape composition emerged from contingent, historical circumstances that are reflected in its principles. Within them, Rennie (2014) notes a tendency towards the ethical consideration of place over people. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the focus of the WSP was on acoustic ecology. Having said this, it is of course difficult to maintain a strict delineation between the natural and the social in field recording. Care over the representation of place is an attitude imbued with political significance; such a standpoint can only be understood in relation to the social. How, then, have artists that work with field recordings approached these political, place-based considerations as an aural form of observation?

Fiebig (2015) gives an overview of recent works that deal with the auditory documentation of places of political significance. His article reminds us that the act of recording and preserving our presence at a specific place and time in history is powerful. The works that the author discusses function as cultural artefacts for contemplation by future listeners.

One such project is Peter Cusack's *Sounds from Dangerous Places* (2012b). The project is an example of Cusack's (2012b: vii) 'sonic journalism' in which the sounds of place are given 'adequate space and time to be heard in their own right'. This is an objectifying notion that Cusack places in opposition to the artistic manipulation of audio recordings. Despite the objections that we can raise to this – i.e., the treatment of field recordings as transparent and neutral rather than subjective, partial and mechanical – Cusack's recordings of Chernobyl and the Caspian Oil Fields are imbued with political significance (Fiebig, 2015). Fiebig (Ibid.) goes on to discuss two other artists, Jacob Kirkegaard and Eliška Cílková[6], whose works have also focused on the Chernobyl site. Unlike Cusack, their compositions

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[6] See Kirkegaard (2008) and Cílková (2014).

are not committed to a sonic documentary approach, but their reliance upon the social

context of dangerous places is evident.

> The broken piano one hears in [Cílková's] Zone gains much of its emotional impact
> from the knowledge that it was in fact abandoned due to a nuclear disaster (Fiebig,
> 2015: 15).

The work affects by absence as much as presence. This is a notion that Anna Friz and

Public Studio make explicit in *What Isn't There* (2014), an audiovisual project based on field

recordings made at the site of former Palestinian villages (Fiebig, 2015). A similar approach

is also noted in Stéphane Garin and Sylvestre Gobart's *Gurs. Drancy. Gare de Bobigny.*

Auschwitz. Birkenau. Chelmo-Kulmhof. Majdaneck. Sobibor. Treblinka (2007), in which

recordings made at the sites of Nazi concentration camps are presented. These works

emphasise the social in the act of field recording by presenting the listener with sites that

were previously inhabited. As Gordon (2008) has argued, such sites are haunted by

lingering social relations, and our awareness of the historical contexts of the works under

discussion imbues them with significance. The recording strategies of these works

contribute a consideration of absent populations to a discipline that owes much to Feld's

hermeneutic, anthropological approach to documenting present sounds – i.e., presenting

'what it is that people hear every day' (Feld and Brenneis, 2004: 462).

The works that we have just discussed remind us that recordings of place are imbued with

social significance. There also exist works that have explicitly aimed to involve people in

political, field recording-based practice. One strategy has been to make recordings whilst

participating in political events. Tullis Rennie's *Manifest* (2013) is one such work, an

'acousmatic documentary… based on the sounds of protests recorded in Barcelona'

(Rennie, 2013). Rennie (2015: 18) describes his 'socio-sonic' approach to the work as a

combination of 'ethnography, field recording and electroacoustic composition'. An important

first step is to spend time on location in order to acquaint oneself with the context, a strategy that resonates with Feld's hermeneutic, phenomenological approach (Rennie, 2015). Participation and observation are simultaneous, and the resulting work is both art and documentary. Attempting to stay close to the event, the composer utilises 'many sounds with little or no processing' (Rennie, 2014: 123). This strategy brings the question of permissible manipulation to the fore again. As mentioned above, the consideration of field recording as somehow objective is questionable, but in Rennie's case, the attempt 'to remain passive and objective' certainly helps towards the realisation of a certain type of composition (Rennie, 2014: 118).

If not objectivity, what is achieved by this type of approach? Returning to Fiebig (2015), the notion of aura could be proposed. All of the works discussed in his article 'are tied to an idea of the genuineness of the documentary recordings they employ… [an idea which] also informs Benjamin's concept of the aura' (2015: 14). Through proximity to acoustic reality (removed by one step only), field recordings can be considered 'original artifacts', albeit artifacts that speak also of the recordist's presence (Ibid.). Through this presence, and through the act of recording, such works derive their status as reproducible, aesthetic, and political objects. Therefore, I would suggest that any discussion of objectivity is preceded by a notion of the genuine presence of a subjective point of view: a notion that can be considered a strategy of authentication. In this sense, the narrative act of field recording becomes central to a notion of authenticity (Anderson and Rennie, 2016; Findlay-Walsh, 2017).

Anderson and Rennie (2016) explore this notion of narrative in *Getting Lost* (2015). Part of an ongoing series of "sound diaries" in which the recordists verbally narrate thoughts and associations whilst in the field, *Getting Lost* combines the recordings of both composers. The presence of the two recordists is explicitly outlined as the work plays on the points of cohesion between separate events at separate locations.

Similarly reflexive, Findlay-Walsh's *Born On* (2015) focuses upon the experience of listening. The recordist walked whilst a handheld stereo recorder and mobile phone captured sound from his pocket. Additionally, in-ear binaural microphones were placed underneath headphones that played music back. In this way, a perspective on the recordist's listening was captured.

Returning to recordings of protest, we can consider Ultra-Red's *La Economía Nueva* (2001). The work, derived from recordings made during participation in demonstrations at the San Ysidro Port of Entry, employs liberal use of sonic manipulation. Efforts are guided less by a notion of objectivity than a reliance upon presence at these protests against the 'massive militarization of the border between California, USA and Baja California, Mexico' (Ibid.). Similarly, Radio Boy's "The Whisper of Friction" (2000), recorded at anti-globalisation demonstrations in London, follows a strategy that includes treatments and manipulation. The track contains rhythmic ideas derived from popular music, an approach that can be considered a hallmark of much of Matthew Herbert's (Radio Boy's) work. Again, the track's authentication derives from attestation to genuine presence in recording. In order to achieve this, Herbert's method includes the following rule:

> Only sounds that are generated at the start of the compositional process or taken from the artist's own previously unused archive are available for sampling (Herbert, 2011).

This, of course, is also a method of legitimation that can be considered one possible approach amongst many.

Christopher DeLaurenti has also created several works from recordings of demonstrations. The composer refers to them as 'protest symphonies' (Findlay-Walsh, 2017: 123). *Live at Occupy Wall Street N15 M1 S17* (2012) was recorded at Occupy Wall Street gatherings that took place in 2011 and 2012. Here the recordist's agency and presence are both heard and felt, embedded within the social context. The work documents

the artist's listening perspectives as a participant, as well as the maker of an aural document (Findlay-Walsh, 2017).

The general direction of the preceding paragraphs, leading from sonic observation of locales haunted by social relations to participation of the recordist in events with transitory human publics, leads us to the consideration of diverse points of view. How can the observation and participation of specific human populations be approached in the creation of a sonic work? If ethical issues arise when symbols are recontextualised, how can we make sure that works are relevant to the communities in question and not just to those in the sphere of sonic art (Andean, 2014)? Can we go beyond the narrative of recordist to include the narrative of local populations?

Michael Gallagher's *Kilmahew Audio Drift No. 1* (2012) involves local community members in both field recording and the identification of sounds for recording. In doing so, the composer dislocates the narrative of field recording from the authorial control of a single presence in order to offer multiple perspectives (Gallagher, 2015). An even more radical approach is taken by Jacqueline Waldock in *Welsh Streets* (2013). In order to document resistance to a regeneration project in Liverpool, the participants/recordists adopted what Waldock refers to as a 'trinitarian approach', in which local residents joined her as 'activist, artist and academic' (Waldock, 2016: 60). The project partners – residents that were expected to vacate their homes – made audio recordings in their own living spaces. Compositions comprising of these recordings constitute a political record of the shifting cultural significance of domestic sounds when the security of home is under threat. The emphasis on collaboration serves to dissolve the tendency to narrate from the perspective of a single recordist. As with some of the works discussed above, absence is significant in the work, facilitating 'reflection on what is missing from or what has been silenced within the soundscape as a result of this redevelopment' (Martin, 2017: 26).

Waldock's project facilitated community recording by providing technology to local residents. Access to specialist technology can be a prohibitive factor when seeking to multiply perspectives in field recording. Another way to approach this is to provide a method for recording that relies upon technologies that participants may already own, like a smart phone. This is the approach taken by the creators of UrbanRemix, which is:

> 'a platform consisting of mobile-device applications and web-based tools to facilitate collaborative field recording, sound exploration, and soundscape creation' (Freeman et al., 2011: 272).

With this platform, the researchers gave teenagers an opportunity to experience the process of field recording (Freeman et al., 2011).

4.1.3.2. (ii) Conducting interviews

The final examples of the previous section illustrate a movement away from traditional notions of individuated authorship and auteurship. This resonates with Drever's (2002: 25) assertion that:

> A contemporary ethnographic approach to soundscape composition may require that the composer displace authorship of the work, engaging in a collaborative process, facilitating the local inhabitants to speak for themselves…

Given the understanding of narrative discussed above, this interplay of voices – comparable to the 'babble of many voices' (Davidson, 1997: 125) in Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land* that sparked my interest in a fragmented, field recording-based practice (Eliot, 1963) – can be thought of in terms of both vocalisation and the act of recording. Martin (2017: 22) asserts that:

> [A] spoken word narrative underlines the exact location of a specific soundscape, revealing more about the original context of the soundscape to the listener. Spoken words such as excerpts from interviews and conversations reinforce a sense of place and identity.

This is an idea that has informed soundscape studies such as Linda O'Keeffe's (2014) engagement with Smithfield, Dublin. In dealing with a regeneration project, the researcher utilised interviews with local residents and soundwalks with local teenagers that were followed by discussions. These interactions highlighted the effects of changes, particularly those of a sonic nature, on local inhabitants (Martin, 2017).

Two works by Brona Martin, *The Thing About Listening Is…* (2013) and *A Bit Closer to Home* (2014a) also utilise soundwalks to begin a dialogue on changing local soundscapes (Martin, 2017). As in the work of O'Keefe and Waldock, sonic absence is addressed as the artist asks local soundwalk participants to reflect on any changes to the soundscape that have occurred since the 2008 economic crisis (Ibid.). In these works, 'local dialects reveal a little more about the exact location of the recordings' (Martin, 2017: 23). In conjunction with the notion of recordist's presence, this can be thought of as a further authenticating strategy upon which the work relies. Furthermore, Martin utilises different strategies in order to present spoken materials. Sometimes sonic manipulations are applied to interview material. At others, interviews are presented in a seemingly unprocessed state 'so that the meaning of the sentences can be conveyed to the listener' (Martin, 2014b). These approaches were derived from Lane's (2006) survey of compositional treatments of the spoken word.

Absence also marks the interview-based work of Pete Stollery in *Resound* (2005). Part of the Aberdeenshire-based *Gordon Soundscape* project, the composer considers *Resound* to be a '[s]ound documentary' in which five interviewees discuss sounds of the past (Stollery, 2013: 290). The interviews are juxtaposed with contemporary field recordings, creating a contrast that works across sound and language.

Gallagher's *Kilmahew Audio Drift No. 1* (2012) utilises both types of narrative. The composer relies upon interviews with local residents as well as the afore mentioned recordings made by them. As part of a practice that the composer terms 'audio geography',

Gallagher feels that it is important to link the recording of interviews to site (Gallagher, 2015: 467). The Kilmahew location is used wherever possible, and the understandings derived from the interviews are then fed back to inform subsequent recording sessions. As with the field recording-based works discussed by Fiebig (2015), presence can be considered an authenticating factor in the choice of interview locations.

As mentioned above, Rennie (2014) notes that soundscape compositions have tended to focus more on the representation of place than engagement with people. This is an issue that Rennie engages in his own work. *Manifest* (2013), discussed also in the previous section, includes the use of interviews made 'on-the-fly' during protests in Barcelona (Rennie, 2014: 118). The composer considers a possible dynamic tension between the information divulged in the interviews and the 'objective sound-view' that we have already considered; do the perspectives of the interviewees add to, or detract from an authenticating discourse? Rennie then moves us from a scientistic perspective to an ethnographic one.

As with field recordings, processing on Rennie's (2013) interviews are kept to a minimum in order to allow a 'fair representation of the event' in which 'the chosen words of the speakers and the overall emotional sonic qualities of those voices' are retained (Rennie, 2014: 123). In a sense, the objective sound-view is utilised as a strategy that opens onto the subjective; as both events and verbal interactions take their course, the role of perspective and contingency becomes impossible to ignore.

Peter Cusack's 'Favourite Sounds' project makes use of online maps to document the sounds of various places (Cusack, 2012a). Cusack's works sometimes involve interviews with local residents, as is the case with *Favourite Sounds: Birmingham* (2010). In this work, Cusack focuses upon immigration, asking interviewees to reflect on the soundscapes of both areas of Birmingham and the country from which they migrated

(Rennie, 2014). The interviews are featured on the audio map, contributing to a representation of people and place oriented around inherently political concerns.

The field recording-based works of Eduardo Spinelli are notable for the treatment of interviews in editing.[7] In an approach that shares certain similarities with Gallagher's (2015), Spinelli juxtaposes interview fragments and 'montages of field recordings' (Spinelli, 2016: 8). Both techniques, that Spinelli refers to as 'schizo-narrative' and 'sonic chorography' respectively, involve the rearrangement and juxtaposition of audio (Spinelli, 2016: 4). The composer describes the techniques in the following way:

> [S]chizo-narratives: an editing technique where fragments of interviews are reorganised to create unexpected and non-linear narratives, and sonic chorographies: the use of field recordings to represent not only the fragmentary delineations of a soundscape but also to operate a re-scaling of the elements depicted to highlight crucial aspects of the socio-political fabric of a specific place (Ibid.).

Schizo-narrative creates composite statements by breaking up interview recordings into many fragments and applying aleatory processes 'to construct a new, unexpected, broken and non-linear narrative, more removed from of [sic] its original context and its original unfolding and oscillating between rational and nonsensical stances' (Spinelli, 2016: 13). This encourages reflection on what Spinelli terms 'acousmatic identities': the perception of identity in a sonic work (Spinelli, 2016: 12).

Spinelli's techniques apply Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts to field recordings and interview material. We can view them as experiments in the production of subjectivity, a topic to which the co-authors' combined and respective works, particularly those of the later Guattari, devote much attention (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Guattari, 1995; 2012 and 2015). In an ontological sense, Spinelli's work with field recordings is located at the foundations of the political. At a higher level, political themes are also at times engaged.

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[7] See Spinelli (2010 and 2013).

For example, the 'sound subjects'[8] in *Lands and Genotypes* (2010) speak – in a fragmentary, political-subject-forming way – to their experiences as 'a Basque person whose parents suffered under the repression of Franco's regime; and... a Turkish person whose family history shares a somewhat similar narrative' (Spinelli, 2016: 238).

In a site-specific installation named *A Life, A Presence, Like the Air* (2017a), Caitlin Shepherd also engages with explicitly political topics through recorded interviews. Voices of interviewees from Bristol, Newtown, Machynlleth and Stoke-on-Trent feature prominently within the work, addressing themes of home and social housing (Angelidis, 2017). Lived, everyday participant experiences are interspersed with the artist's narration in order to challenge the dominant narratives of 'social policy and media representations' (Ibid.). Interviews are conducted in either participants' homes or at public locations that form part of their daily lives, an approach that echoes Gallagher's (2015).

Shepherd's narration contextualises the interviews whilst offering a reproach to exploitative housing practices through which the notion of home is threatened by economic insecurity. The artist outlines an historical perspective on social housing in the UK and issues a general call to action (Angelidis, 2017).

4.1.3.3. (iii) Utilising archives

Composers often conduct research into historical and anthropological matters that relate to their works (Wilkins, 2006). This is also true of soundscape compositions, in which the presence at a location or event serves to authenticate works. For example, Feld's seminal study in Papua New Guinea was preceded by engagement with existing field recordings and films of Bosavi. Situating his work amongst existing ethnographic accounts of sound and

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[8] 'I call "sound subject" the person(s) interviewed for the work' (Spinelli, 2016: 12).

sensory orientation in the region was important for the sonic ethnographer (Feld, 1996; Feld and Brenneis, 2004).

That archival research is used to inform arts-based interactions is of course no surprise to academics. This is particularly true in field recording-based disciplines, where historical development has been closely related to the academy. The fact that practitioners assume the necessity of going to the archives is highlighted by the inclusion of background information without citation in documents associated with several of the works already discussed (Garin and Gobart, 2007; Kirkegaard, 2008 and Cílková, 2014).

Some of the other works cited are accompanied by more revealing accounts of interaction with the archives, however. The Jacqueline Waldock-initiated *Welsh Streets* (2013) is born of an historical and sociological scenario. A brief overview of this context is given in Waldock's (2016) article, where local history, press coverage and council documents are cited. Interestingly, the field recording equipment given to community members during the project remained in their possession after the work had been completed. Waldock (2016: 65) points out that their continuing work as recordists constitutes the creation of 'a community led archive', reminding us that audio plays a role in generating the documentation that enhances ethnographic understandings of place and context.

Brona Martin defines her interview-based work in *A Bit Closer to Home* (2014) as an aural (recorded) rather than oral (transcribed) document (Martin, 2017). This useful distinction is owed to Truax's (1999) taxonomy. Although oral histories sometimes rely upon sound recording in creation, their emphasis is upon text as a final product. Aural histories on the other hand contribute to archives in the form of audio recordings. The interview-based works discussed in the previous section can be considered examples of this.

A specific example of work derived in part from such histories is Cathy Lane's *On the Machair* (2008). In this piece, a 1970s School of Scottish Studies oral history archive

recording sits alongside more contemporary interviews and field recordings (Lane, 2015). Like Waldock (2013), Lane focuses on a story of dispossession: that of the crofting[9] community that were either 'forcibly cleared from the land' in North Uist or left as economic migrants (Lane, 2015).

O'Keeffe's sonic ethnography in Smithfield, Dublin was also built upon historical and sociological information. In order to outline the class-based sonic implications of regeneration, the researcher drew upon historical and sociological documents from as far back as the nineteenth century. Additionally, the rationale of planners was understood through interactions with council- and business-produced reports (O'Keeffe, 2016).

Archival research forms part of Gallagher's method in *Kilmahew Audio Drift No.1* (2013). In order to understand the context for recording, the artist drew upon two texts, Watters (1997) and Wennell (2007). These documents are used to outline the architectural and spatial history of Kilmahew, providing a foundation for the composer to build the contemporaneous sonic narrative discussed in previous sections (Gallagher, 2015).

Stephen Davismoon draws upon archival information in *God's Own Caught in No Man's Land* (2016a). The work is a 'contemporary oratorio' that commemorates the deaths of soldiers in the Salford Pals Battalions at the Battle of the Somme (Edge Hill University, 2016). In the work, soundscape elements are juxtaposed with orchestral instrumentation. As with the works we have discussed above, field recording locations were chosen according to a strategy of authentication via presence (albeit a presence doubled by the past presence of absent others). In order to identify locations for field recording, the composer traced the movements of the Pals in the lead up to the battle, drawing upon sources such as historian Michael Steadman's *Salford Pals: A History of the Salford Brigade* (2007) and

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[9] Of crofting, Lane (2015) informs us: 'Crofting is a unique social system now only found in the Scottish Highlands and Islands. It is an ancient system of land management and a way of life involving small scale food production, fishing and animal husbandry which has ensured that unique environments and habitats have been protected'.

Whaley, Morrison and Heslop's *A Guide to the Archaeology of the Twentieth Century Defence Sites of Tyne and Wear* (2008) (Davismoon, 2016b).

Under the supervision of Stephen Davismoon at the University of Salford in 2011 and 2012, I created the work that was eventually made available as *Fragments of the Ship Canal Project* (2017). In order to do so, I drew upon contrasting historical accounts of the creation of the Manchester Ship Canal, as well as documents containing information about recording locations such as maps. Through a method that owes something to allusive practices in modernist poetry, these fragments informed both the themes and composition of the work.

Reversing the direction of flow set out in the previous examples, Cusack notes that sounds overheard on his visit to Chernobyl whilst working on *Sounds From Dangerous Places* (2012b) were a catalyst for further, archival research. Having heard the sound of electricity flowing, the composer was surprised to find out that the energy was *entering* the former nuclear power plant site in order to preserve the reactors (Cusack, 2016). Coupled with further reading, this became a symbol for him: 'a sonic manifestation of the massive drain on Ukraine's resources that Chernobyl represents' (Cusack, 2016: 2). This can be seen as an example of research provoked by following 'sonic threads' (Ibid.).

Emmanuel Spinelli's compositional practice goes so far as to utilise archives as 'primary source material' (Spinelli, 2016: 8). In "Anseriformes Twins" (Spinelli, 2010), family archives – namely VHS tapes from domestic events – provide audio material from which the idioglossia (private language) of twin brothers is presented in the work. This impulse to go beyond contextualisation and put the archives to work also characterises *The Golem of Hereford* (2013). Whilst researching the Hereford Mappa Mundi – a medieval, calfskin map that plotted the known world circa 1300 (Hereford Cathedral, 2013) – Spinelli's archival investigations led to his discovery of a small thirteenth century Jewish community in Hereford that disappeared from records after a general expulsion of Jews from Britain (Spinelli, 2016). For the composer, archives do more than orient the eventual work. The

nature of both field recordings and schizo-narratives as 'assemblages of sounds' become representative of knowledges; sets of symbols whose collective depiction of place and time make them act as archives (Spinelli, 2016: 166-167). They represent through certain fragments at the expense of others, in a manner that is comparable to mapping.

A similar approach can be heard in Iain Findlay-Walsh's *The Closing Ceremony* (2016). The composer combines his own field recordings with audio ripped from YouTube videos of the closing event of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. These fragments, that the composer refers to as 'aural selfies', also function as primary artistic material and constitute archives being put to work (Findlay-Walsh, 2017: 125).

Finally, in a varied publication that was created as an accompaniment to *A Life, A Presence, Like the Air* (2017), Caitlin Shepherd assembles fragments of interviews, photographs, philosophical quotations and sociological commentary (Shepherd, 2017b). This serious and artistic engagement with extra-musical fragments contextualises the installation, drawing upon both archival and original media in order to re-present them in a new archival arrangement.

4.1.3.4. (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up)

As a means to release ethnographic research from a visual and objectifying perspective, Drever (2002) wonders if going forward, the creation of a soundscape composition might become a widely accepted alternative to a written report. To this end, many of the works that we have discussed present us with one type of sounding report or other (Feld, 1991; Radio Boy, 2000; Ultra-Red, 2001; Stollery, 2005; Garin and Gobart, 2007; Kirkegaard, 2008; Lane, 2008; Spinelli, 2010; Cusack, 2012b; DeLaurenti, 2012; Gallagher, 2013; Martin, 2013; Rennie, 2013; Spinelli, 2013; Waldock, 2013; Martin, 2014a; O'Keeffe, 2014; Public Studio, 2014; Cambridge University Press, 2015; Findlay Walsh, 2016 and Shepherd,

2017a). In several cases, the sounding presentation is accompanied by written documentation that is in some way supplementary. The existence of such written accounts may be thought to weaken the notion of audio presentation as a possible stand-alone alternative to the write-up. However, it is also indicative of the kind of enduring societal and disciplinary expectations and conventions that framed Drever's (2002) discussion.[10]

The notion of a sonic write-up can be traced back to the WSP. Sounds captured by the ecologically oriented practitioners of this influential group were often presented in sound, and careful consideration of both editing and sonic treatments pervaded their approaches (Rennie, 2014). Again, we can note that the idea was also pre-empted by the work of their anthropological counterpart, Steven Feld. Operating at a time when the question of 'border zones between art and anthropology' was being considered by various writers, Feld felt that field recording could provide 'a crucial bridge' between the disciplines (Anderson and Rennie, 2016: 226).

Identified as a possible alternative, can we say that a sonic write-up is equivalent to an ethnographic text? And if so, why has its utility gone unrecognised beyond an, admittedly niche, group of practitioners for so long? Rennie (2014) argues that it is precisely this underdevelopment that obstructs our ability to make confident generalisations about the utility of the sonic write-up. Whereas more conventional ethnographic methods of presentation can rely upon a well-instantiated literature that has put significant stock in taking itself reflexively to task, sonic-composition-as-ethnography has generated less copy and is therefore more difficult to examine.

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[10] The current text, for example, is an academic artefact that is required for completion of a programme of study. The extent to which a sonic report can replace a written one might make an interesting topic for further research but is beyond the scope of this study. On this topic, Rennie (2014: 122) urges us 'not to delude ourselves in thinking that the presentation of ethnographically inclined composed sound might be any more transparent than a written report'. In support of this, we can note that in anthropological texts, soundscape considerations tend to be discussed in supplementary rather than oppositional terms (Samuels et al., 2010).

How then, has Rennie approached such work? *Manifest* (2013) is an experiment in sonic write-up. When reading the composer's reflections on method, it is apparent that the process of constructing the work played an important role in developing his 'socio-sonic methodology' (Rennie, 2014: 117). As we have seen, Rennie begins to engage with the field and, finding himself informed by contingent interactions, begins to think of his work in anthropological and journalistic terms. The composer considers the subsequent sonic presentation to be:

> [A]n acousmatic documentary or a composed (musical) anthropological aid. The difference between this piece and other potentially similar-sounding aural-mimetic acousmatic works is the applied and reflexive ethnographer's approach, the socio-sonic methodology from fieldwork to final composition (Rennie, 2014: 123).

In relying upon field recording practice to develop such an approach, Rennie notes that academic methods for the chronicling of process have not been engaged with. He issues a call for further research in precisely this area, an undertaking that would help legitimate the discipline's claim to the status of 'viable academic research' (Rennie, 2014: 123).

Concern for reflexivity is central to Rennie's later collaborations with Isobel Anderson. Their approach to 'self-reflexivity' in the act of recording has been discussed above, and the concern is further extended to 'representation' (Anderson and Rennie, 2016: 222). The presence of the recordist/composer in the work is central to the wider "Sound Diaries" project from which *Getting Lost* (2014) emerged. In their article, the authors trace the progress of 'self-reflexive narrative' in field recording-based works in order to ground discussion of their composition. Contrary to a tradition in which fleeting thoughts, vocalisations and narrative details in both recording and presentation are automatically suppressed, Anderson and Rennie foreground such elements as an alternative to ethnographic note taking (Anderson and Rennie, 2016).

Iain Findlay-Walsh's *Born On* (2015) and *The Closing Ceremony* (2016) also explore self-narrative in presentation. The composer works 'deliberately and self-consciously along

autoethnographic lines' in order to create works that he terms 'sonic autoethnographies' (Findlay-Walsh, 2017: 122-123). Several ways in which the presentation of recordings speak of the recordist are identified. These methods resonate with the 'excessively self-referential texts' of autoethnography in which the experience of the researcher in the moment takes centre stage (Ibid.). Emphasis on microphone handling noise and strategies of re-recording whilst editing audio in the studio are two ways in which the composer seeks to sonically present the artist in the act of arts-making. Findlay-Walsh refers to these recordings of recordist's listening context as 'an audio document of the event' (Findlay-Walsh, 2017: 124).

DeLaurenti's *Wallingford Foodbank* (2008) is also discussed by Findlay-Walsh (2017). In this work, an editing strategy that refrains from suppression of handling noise positions the recordist's body within the re-presented context and affirms the product as a narrative in the first-person. This is apt, as the artist is documenting himself as a foodbank user (Ultra-Red: Public Record, 2009). As with the two Findlay-Walsh (2015; 2016) works, DeLaurenti's recording artifacts reach the listener as the work of an activist in action. His approach resonates with Feld's ethnographic methods that self-consciously document the researcher through the sounds and contingencies of movement and action; the presentations are as much a document of the agency of a recordist in recording as they are a re-presentation of the context under study.

4.1.4. Considering an additional place: the site of presentation

The site of presentation constitutes a further consideration for ethnographic soundscape practice. What are the ethical implications of re-presenting audio that has undergone the dislocative act of sound recording in another place? Do we run the risk of capturing sound-

as-symbol in one context, only to place it within another that is ethically contentious, just as Andean (2015) warns us?

The soundscape literature that had been reviewed in the preceding sections is, in general, rather quiet on the matter. This may not be such a surprising revelation in a discipline that has yet to flesh out an ethical framework of its own (Blackburn, 2014). This is not necessarily to say that practitioners do not consider such matters, but it does at least suggest that we are not habituated to publishing the details. But just as Gallagher (2015) has identified a rationale for interviewing at recording site, I would suggest that there is also an ethical requirement to do the same with the site of presentation. So, what has been said, and what can be said, of the sites of presentation for the works under discussion?

Of the works that have already been discussed, the vast majority have been produced for stereo playback and are accessible on online platforms or CD (Feld, 1991; Radio Boy, 2000; Stollery, 2005; Garin and Gobart, 2007; DeLaurenti, 2008; Kirkegaard, 2008; Lane, 2008; Spinelli, 2010; Cusack, 2012a; 2012b; DeLaurenti, 2012; Martin, 2013; Rennie 2013; Spinelli, 2013; Waldock, 2013; Cílková, 2014; Martin, 2014a; O'Keefe, 2014 and Cambridge University Press, 2015). The designation of a site of presentation, then, is determined by the listener's circumstances. This has the advantage of increasing the availability of the finished works, which are in many cases available for free. Cusack's *Favourite Sounds* (2012a) has an added consideration. The recordings are presented on an interactive Google map. Here the visual display of cartographic information helps to contextualise the sounds of place for the listener.[11]

Examination of the available documentation reveals some implicit considerations relating to the site of presentation for a few of the works. Davismoon's *God's Own Caught in No Man's Land* (2016a) was performed at Peel Hall, Salford University on the 1st of July,

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[11] Both Martin (2013 and 2014a) and Spinelli (2013) include non-interactive maps in their artwork, and Anderson and Rennie (2016) theorise mapping as a narrative act.

2015 – the Centenary of the Battle of the Somme. The venue is located close to a statue

memorialising the Lancashire Fusiliers, as well as sites at which recordings were made. In

making recordings at places that the Pals Battalion visited in order to 'make a sonic

ecological link between Salfordians of 1914/16 and 2014/16', the composer has clearly

made a commitment to re-present the sounds at a specific location (Davismoon, 2016b).

Similarly, Public Studio's presentation of *What Isn't There* (2014) as an audiovisual

installation in a space located on an alleyway in Toronto, speaks to site of presentation-

based concerns. Even without access to an explicit overview of rationale, it is clear that the

presentation of sounds and images from former Palestinian Villages in Canada constitutes a

juxtaposition of place. Less can be said of the quadraphonic version of DeLaurenti's *Live at*

Occupy Wall Street N15 M1 S17 (2012), but at the very least, we can assume that

considerations relating to the organisation of sonic space accompanied the spatialisation.

The rationale for the presentation of Shepherd's *A Life. A Presence. Like the Air*

(2017a) is articulated more overtly (Angelidis, 2017). For the artist, both spatiality and site

are considered to be fundamental to the work. Spatial arrangements, of the type sometimes

referred to as "Euclidean" or "Cartesian" (Born, 2013 and Ouzounian, 2013), are evidenced

by the domestic room-like structure (built by Dan Halahan) in which the sound installation is

experienced. Behind this spatial arrangement, no doubt, are spatialisation considerations,

though the rationale for speaker positioning is not provided in the available literature.

However, the social aspects of space are also attended to. In situating the work in public

spaces such as the play area at Waring House, Redcliffe, the artist ensures that the work

engages with daily life. Shepherd asks, 'What is the difference for people listening alone

with a headset on and listening together to broadcast sound?' and, 'What happens to public

spaces when people gather to listen?' (Angelidis, 2017). In this sense, sonic space is

treated as inherently social (Born, 2013). It also resonates with LaBelle's (2006: 15)

definition of site-specific practice[12], in which 'the given parameters and situation' at site are drawn upon and 'incorporat[ed]... into the making and presentation of the work itself.'

The use of in-ear binaural microphones in Findlay-Walsh's *Born On* (2015) was discussed above and framed in terms of self-reflexivity. The resulting work, recorded whilst walking in an urban environment, is intended for headphone playback, blending the already multiple contexts of the work (self-reflexive capture of the recordist's moving body, the environmental sounds of urban settings, the music of a portable headphone device played back to the recordist through headphones) with the corresponding contexts of the listener. A similar effect is intended for the audience of *The Closing Ceremony* (2016) by the same artist. The work, diffused live via a 5.1 multichannel system, presents the concert audience with fractured and reconstituted aural material recorded at another event: the closing ceremony of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (Findlay-Walsh, 2017). In both works, the artist's focus on listening perspectives deeply impacts the choices relating to its site of presentation.

Finally, Gallagher's *Kilmahew Audio Drift* (2013) is worthy of consideration. As with Findlay-Walsh's *Born On* (2015), Gallagher's work is intended for headphone playback whilst walking. Gallagher (2015) explicitly links his work to the wider practice of sound or audio walking. The dislocation in this work is reserved for temporal rather than spatial matters, as the artist designates the site of recording to be the site at which the work should be experienced. Bringing the sounds back to the place as literal '*revenants'* creates 'uncanny affects' (Gallagher, 2015: 468). It would seem that, by performing the dislocative act of recording and then dictating the terms of its re-presentation in place, the artist has, through the stipulation of conditions that would ostensibly inspire cohesion, created

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[12] Perhaps "site-generic" is a more appropriate term given that the work has been installed in at least three different locations. See Wrights and Sites (2001).

something that is all the more disjointed. This resonates with the observation of LaBelle (2006: 211):

> It is my view that in place-based, site-specific sound work, place paradoxically comes to life by being somewhat alien, other, and separate, removed and dislocated, rather than being thoroughly mimetically real. For the recording of environments gives definition to a specific place, revealing its inherent characteristics and events while operating to displace such specifics, to locate them elsewhere. That is to say, as a listener I have just as much displacement as placement, just as much placelessness as place, for the extraction of sound from its environment partially wields its power by being boundless, uprooted, and distinct.

4.1.5. Next steps

Reflecting on his article, Drever (2002) acknowledges that much of what he has proposed is theoretical. In order to build upon this, the author states the need for practical compositional work. Likewise, Rennie (2014: 123), in noting that his project lacks the kind of rigorous approach to the documentation of process that would 'render transparent to the reader/listener the process of how we gathered the data, how it was analysed and composed with', calls for further compositional engagement.

The current chapter has categorised practical works in this area according to the four stages of ethnographic study outlined by Drever (2002). The works that we have discussed address the 'next step[s]' for the discipline in various ways (Rennie, 2014: 123). What is still missing, however is the undertaking of an arts-making process that reflexively and explicitly addresses each stage of the process. This is the approach that the current study will take.

At a more specific level, we can note that questions of power relations remain in several areas. As is also the case in written ethnographic engagements, relations between researcher and participants tend to privilege both the researcher's interests and their perspectives in the creation of representations (Andean, 2014; Rennie, 2014 and Yassi et al., 2016). Explicit exploration of these relations is needed to build upon even the most

radical approaches discussed in this chapter. For example, how deep can a recordist's participation in localities be? In participating, sometimes as an activist, how do external ethical frameworks (such as university regulations) afford or limit actions and interactions? To what extent does the researcher bring their pre-existing perspectives to bear upon a scenario? How do these perspectives translate into and colour recordings and presentation? What steps can be taken in order to merge the perspectives and interests of all parties?

Similarly, when Gallagher (2015) facilitates the multiplication of perspectives by conducting interviews with fourteen interviewees, we could ask about the steps he took to address the researcher-participant dynamic at interview. How did the perspectives gleaned from these interviews inform a compositional process that relied upon the technical and theoretical knowledge of the researcher? How did the researcher address their own status as a non-local amongst local residents with specific and embodied local knowledges?

In putting the archives and aural histories to work, how did Findlay-Walsh (2017) and Spinelli (2016) decide upon and frame the materials? To put it differently, how did they settle upon terms of inclusion/exclusion? In what way was the researcher-composer's hand active in their presentation of juxtapositions? What were the nature of Spinelli's aleatory processes that were performed upon selected material? Are there circumstances in which his juxtapositions could misrepresent the subject of an aural history or schizo-narrative in a way that he deems unacceptable?

And finally, in Waldock's (2013 and 2016) exemplary collaboration, what were the dynamics of interaction between researcher and participant/activists in the studio? What approach was taken to the line of questioning that led and facilitated the participant's editing, deletion and enhancement of certain sounds? How did the researcher's technical knowledge shape the participants' possible choices? To what degree did the understanding

of schemata for the presentation of sonic material rely upon the assumptions of the researcher's inherited artistic traditions?

These types of question are to be expected in an area of study that is considered to be in its infancy (Blackburn, 2014). In taking a systematic approach to a reflexive exploration of process, the current study aims to contribute to our understandings of such matters.

4.2. Austerity and West Everton

The current study was born of concern for local areas that had been negatively impacted by austerity. Having developed a field recording-based compositional practice, I was keen to apply and conduct a sonic exploration of lived experience in such an area. But what is austerity?

"Austerity" is a term that is '[o]ften used as shorthand to discuss financial cutbacks' (Harries et al., 2020: 20). These cutbacks are aimed at public spending, specifically public services and the welfare state. In the UK, these cutbacks began in 2010. The 'ostensible' rationale for these fiscal reductions is a response to the global financial crisis of 2008 (Ibid.). However, many commentators (see for example, Blyth, 2013; Merriman, 2013; McKenzie, 2015; Seymour, 2015 and Cooper and White, 2017) have contended that the cutbacks are in fact ideological. Harris et al. describe the aim of austerity to be the 'further embed[ding of] the entrepreneurial rationality of neoliberalism' (Harries et al., 2020: 20). This has had a negative impact on the poorest areas, a fact that has been highlighted by a UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty (Arie, 2018).

The ideological nature of the harmful austerity project leads one to speculate on the nature of its imposition. How does power operate in order to guarantee its perpetuation? What forms of domination are required in order for those experiencing its effects to rationalise its impact? How is austerity experienced as a daily phenomenon? What is the sound of an area impacted by austerity? In order to explore these questions, I had to decide upon a suitable place to conduct an ethnographic soundscape composition study.

The West Everton area was chosen for the study because of the demonstrably negative material impact that welfare reform, an integral part of the austerity project, has had upon it (Cooper and Whyte, 2017). According to both the 2015 and 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, four of its five constituent Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) were ranked amongst the highest 10% of those generally deprived nationally (Department for

Communities and Local Government, 2015 and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019).[13] Burns (2017) calculated that this put 83.3% of people living in the area under this category. Back in 2016, Beatty and Feathergill (2016) anticipated that by the year of writing, West Everton would rank amongst the highest sufferers of overall financial loss amongst all local districts within the UK.

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[13] A rank of 1 indicates the most deprived LSOA nationally. A rank of 32,844 indicates the least deprived. The LSOAs are also categorised in ten broad groups (equal in number) referred to as "deciles". LSOAs in decile 1 are within the most deprived 10% nationally. The LSOAs that lie within and cross the West Everton area are ranked:

2015: E01006648 – rank 2130, decile 1; E01006646 – rank 636, decile 1; E01033764 – rank 72, decile 1; E01033758 – rank 6121, decile 2; E01006647 – rank 116, decile 1.

2019: E01006648 – rank 2388, decile 1; E01006646 – rank 521, decile 1; E01033764 – rank 116, decile 1. E01033758 – rank 7769, decile 3; E01006647 – rank 121, decile 1.

5. Methodology

5.1. Overview

The current study implemented a variety of methods in order to apply the four stages of ethnographic research, outlined by Drever (2002), to an ethnographic soundscape composition-based engagement with the local area and community:

(i)   Observing and participating;

(ii)   Conducting interviews;

(iii)   Utilising archives;

(iv)   Write-up (sonic write-up).

The area and community, West Everton, was chosen because of the impact that austerity has had upon it. The entire study can be considered a practice-based, artistic research study. In order to facilitate a deep engagement with the community (i), a hermeneutic phenomenological approach was adopted in order to observe and participate within the local area. This resonates with the methods of Feld (1996) in his pioneering study. A hermeneutic approach to interviews (ii) was also adopted in order to explore participants' lifeworlds. Archives (iii) were drawn upon to enhance understandings and inform engagement with the area. The use of archives within the resulting artwork, a theme in the literature that has developed since Drever's (2002) article, was also considered. Preliminary works were created in order to develop artistic approaches. Finally, composition was substituted for a traditional text-based write-up (iv). Creation of the work was informed by all of the prior stages and an effort was made to maximise participant contributions and displace individual authorship.

5.2. Ontology

A certain understanding of reality is implicit when adopting a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to (i), (ii) and (iii). Deriving from the interpretative tradition of phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics dates back to Heidegger (2010). Whilst retaining Husserl's focus on the study of lived experience (the lifeworld), Heidegger theorised human being as a being inextricably caught up in its existential context or "world" (Ibid). Being caught up in, or indeed constituted by the world – characterised as an overall 'system of Relations'– human being, or being-there ('*Dasein*'), has the nature of 'Being-in-the-World' (Heidegger, 2001: 121). For Heidegger, the fact that this type of being is concerned about its own being implies an ontologically circular structure. This circularity is considered to be the 'essential fore-structure of *Dasein* itself' (Heidegger, 2010: 148). I will return to this notion of circularity in the following section.[14]

5.3. Epistemology

Returning to the hermeneutic approach adopted for (i), (ii) and (iii), we can note that the circularity in Heidegger's (2010) notion of being (nature of reality) has implications for the way that knowledge is conceptualised in the study. Gadamer (2004) developed the notion of the hermeneutic circle from the basis of this circularity. The hermeneutic circle is based upon the constant interaction between preunderstanding (or fore-structures) and understanding (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009). It can also be understood as the cyclical

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[14] In the current document, I sometimes refer to categories from the work of Guattari (1995 and 2013). Their inclusion owes something to the focus of the study on power and domination, which accompanies the consideration of austerity. It was also influential for artistic considerations for *Cartographies*. A final contributing factor was the need to think through the relevance of a-signifying data flows to the presentation of local subjectivities in sound – i.e., a production of subjectivity (*About Us – For Us*). The ontological extent of the existential in Guattari's work is not as all-consuming as in Heidegger's. Instead, 'existential territories' constitute one pole of a four-poled modelisation that Guattari (2013) uses to think through the production of subjectivity (see Figure 8).

relationship between a part and the whole, in which understanding of each informs understanding of the other (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009).

Pattern of interpretation   Sub-interpretation

WHOLE

PREUNDER-
STANDING

UNDER-
STANDING

PART

Text   Dialogue
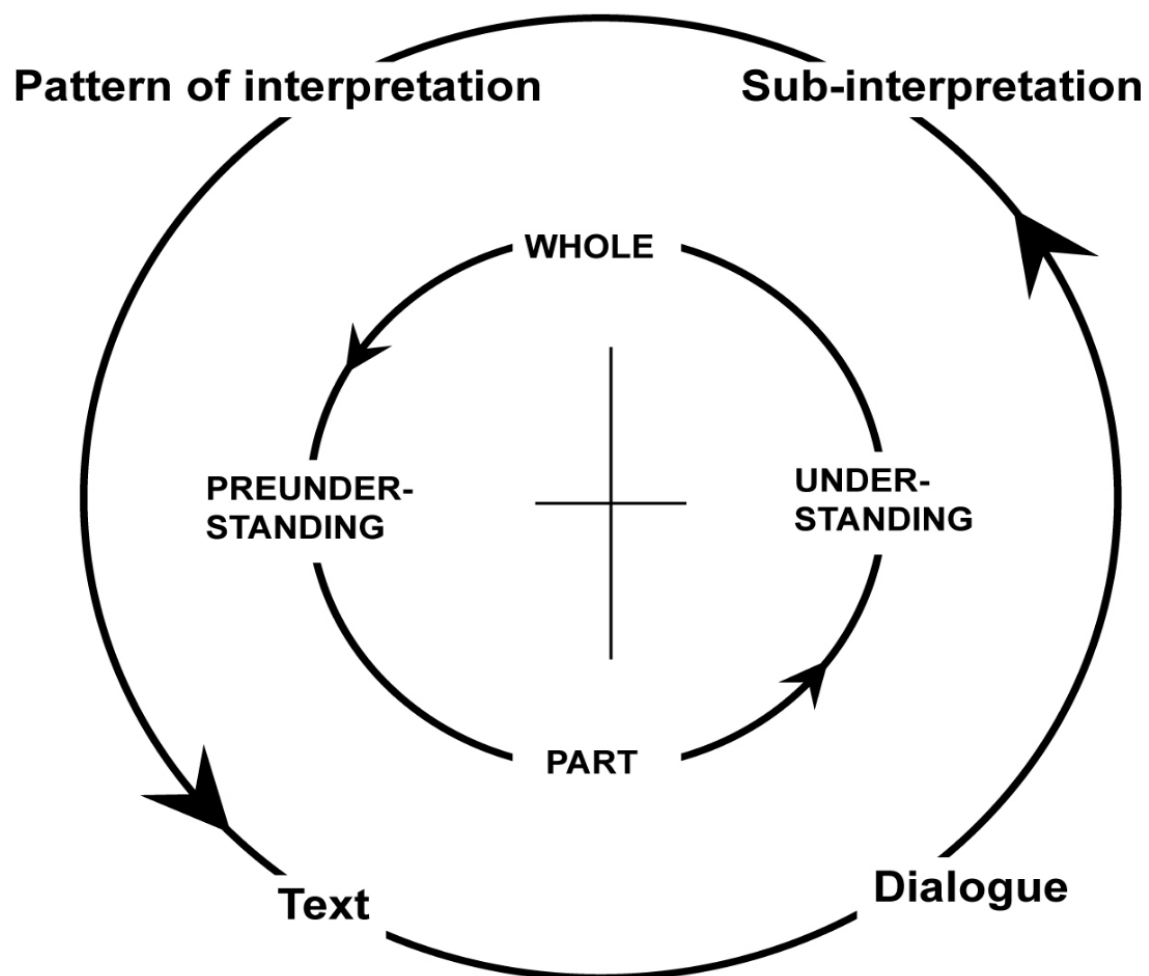
Figure 1: The hermeneutic circle (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2009: 66).

Knowledge is always a matter of situated interpretation that builds upon existing preunderstandings. This way of conceiving knowledge implies that full understanding is never really achievable. What can be achieved however, is a better, more replete or saturated "preunderstanding" of a phenomenon. In order to do so, knowledge of our own preunderstandings (or, prejudices) is needed. Only then can new understanding be

attempted by remaining open (to the other, the text etc.) and attempting a mediation, or 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer, 2004: 370).

The choice of hermeneutic methodology is not only consistent with the foundational sonic ethnographic sonic study of Feld (1996), but also provides a framework for the systematic consideration of reflexivity. This was all the more important for a study that aimed to explore power and domination in an area that has been impacted by austerity. Care had to be taken to acknowledge and assuage the effects of introducing a new, dynamic, intersubjective, power-laden relationship between researcher and participant.

5.4. Research design

5.4.1. (i) Observing and participating

Observation and participation in the local area was considered to be a hermeneutic engagement. From an initial position in which the researcher's preunderstandings of the area were ill-informed, direct involvement in the day-to-day functioning of certain aspects of community life was undertaken in order to facilitate the development of understandings. These understandings were inescapably partial and therefore political, requiring the researcher to dispense with any notion of a theoretically "objective" viewpoint.

Sonic understandings were improved by audio recording, writing about sound and other methods for mapping the soundscape. The soundscape was considered to be inherently social, and aural observations were informed where possible by community perspectives and interactions. A written journal of engagements was also kept. In conjunction with sonic methods, the journal provided a lasting document of the spiralling development of preunderstandings throughout participation in the local milieu.

5.4.2. (ii) Conducting interviews

Gallagher (2015) has noted the importance of conducting interviews in the place under observation. Beyond this, documented consideration of interview methodology is hard to come by in the literature. However, the relation between researcher and participant at interview is markedly power-laden, and the choice of method for conducting and analysing interviews must be made with due consideration of reflexivity. In order to address these concerns, and with the need for continuity in mind, I settled upon Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), as expounded by Smith et al. (2008) as a suitable method.

IPA is grounded in philosophical hermeneutics and has an idiographic focus (Smith et al., 2008; Larkin and Thompson, 2011 and Wagstaff et al., 2014).[15] The process that I will outline follows, for the most part, the method laid out in Smith et al. (2008). Where significant modifications were deemed necessary, details are given below. In the current study, two interviews were planned for each participant. The purpose of the first interview was to provide material to inform the creation of the sonic write-up. The second interview, designed to be considerably shorter in length, was used to determine the impact of the engagement upon each participant.

5.4.2.1. IPA Data collection

5.4.2.1.1. Purposive sampling

Participants were selected purposively (Smith et al., 2008 and Larkin and Thompson, 2011). Lived experience in the local area was the phenomena under investigation and provided the

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[15] The use of IPA in arts-based research has been limited. A significant example of its use is provided by Sadkowska's (2016) implementation. In this model, the artist-researcher utilised selected fashion artefacts, as well as interview material, in analysis. A further exploration of interview themes was then made in the form of practical explorations on second-hand suit jackets.

criteria for recruitment. Smith et al. (2008) recommend the recruitment of three to six participants in order to explore the phenomena in detail. Two male and two female participants were sought. Recruitment decisions were made according to geographical considerations in order to provide homogeneity in the sample. Participants were adults that were able to give informed consent to participate in the study. All participants were given the choice to be either credited for their involvement or remain anonymous.

Local community hubs were contacted in order to recruit participants. Community leaders were approached in order to recommend participants and provide a link to local support networks should the participants experience any distress during the interview.

5.3.2.1.2. Contextualisation of interview

Contextualisation of interview material is allocated just one paragraph in Smith et al. (2008). In this paragraph, the authors note that this is 'sometimes useful' (Smith et al., 2009: 73). In the current study it was considered to be indispensable, however. The hermeneutic development of preunderstanding facilitated by a deep engagement with the community (i) and understanding of archival information on the area (iii) were thought to be a prerequisite for understanding the lifeworlds explored by participants. The co-creation of these lifeworlds through IPA could then further inform preunderstandings garnered from archives (iii), observation and participation (i) – forming a circle between part and whole.

5.4.2.1.3. Semi-structured interviews

The interviews were semi-structured. This approach requires the researcher to have a 'few general questions' ready, but, to a certain extent, 'allow the interviewee to digress along any lines he or she wants to' (De Chesnay, 2014: xvii). In this way, the participant was recognised as the expert on the topic and their lifeworld was explored.

Each participant was interviewed individually. Open-ended questions were used in order to encourage the participant to reflect upon and explore their experiences (Larkin and Thompson, 2011). 'Over-empathetic', '[m]anipulative', '[l]eading' and '[c]losed' questions were avoided (Smith et al., 2008: 60).[16] No direct questions on the topic of austerity, power or domination were asked as it was felt that this would be leading. Finally, in accordance with Gallagher's (2015) method, interviews were conducted within the participants' lived environments. This allowed them to participate in a familiar setting whilst also retaining the sounds and social dynamics of their lifeworld during the conversation.

5.4.2.1.4. Recording and transcription of interviews

The interviews were then recorded by microphone and video camera. A transcription of the audio recording was made for each participant's interview. The use of audio recordings is a standard practice in IPA whilst the use of video recording is not. Audio is used to furnish a transcription and to help the researcher become familiar with the interview (Smith et al., 2008). The transcription of the audio recording is then considered to be the primary data. However, in the current study, the transcripts were considered complementary to the audiovisual material in the early stages of analysis. An explanation for this modification is given in the following section.

The written transcription was made in such a way as to retain the speech patterns of the participant. This was also a modification that was made during the current study. Line breaks were dictated by pauses in the participant's flow of speech, and no attempt was made to make the statements fit into the dominant, preconceived conventions of grammar (neat sentences). Stammering, as well as abortive words and statements were also

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[16] Interview questions can be reviewed in Appendix 1.

transcribed phonetically. In this way, the singularity of the participants' speech was respected, and an extra effort was made to assuage an often unthought type of power operation: the demand for conformity to the received conventions of the written word.

5.4.2.2. IPA Data analysis

5.4.2.2.1. Watching/listening and re-watching/re-listening

The first stage of analysis requires the familiarisation of the interpreter with the interview (Ibid.). Again, this would usually imply gaining familiarity with the written transcript. In the current study however, this stage of analysis was conducted by repeatedly reviewing the audiovisual material recorded at interview. As with the modifications to the written transcript described in the previous section, this alteration was made in order to assuage certain kinds of domination: firstly, the primacy granted to written language over spoken, and secondly the primacy of language over all other forms of communication (tone-of-voice, body language, physical gestures etc.).

These efforts were made in an attempt to avoid abstracting a concrete "language spoken" that is situated in the past, from the living, meaning-generating communication of the audible, embodied and situated interview (Murray and Holmes, 2014). IPA has been criticised for assuming that subjectivity is fixed, prior and coherent (Ibid.). If subjectivity is asserted or constituted in the moment, then much of the data that communicates this subjectivity is lost when a written text is abstracted from other types of signification that constitute the scenario. The modifications were my attempt to address this issue.

5.4.2.2.2. Free coding

IPA's idiographic approach requires that interpretative activity begin at the level of the specific case (Smith et al., 2008). The 'free' (or 'open') coding of each interview is a way to

enhance the ongoing reflexive task of identifying preconceptions (Larkin and Thompson, 2011: 106). In the current project, this was achieved by reviewing the audiovisual material whilst writing down or recording any notion that suggested itself on a transcript. Again, this is a departure from the usual focus of IPA on the transcript alone.

5.4.2.2.3. Detailed analysis

The next stage of IPA is to analyse a new transcript line-by-line (Smith et al, 2008). Again, the current study deviated from the orthodoxy here and utilised audiovisual material. Detailed annotations were made on the written transcript whilst listening to and watching the recorded interview.

Initial exploratory comments were added to the right-hand margin of the transcript. Smith et al. (2008) recommend that descriptive, linguistic and conceptual comments be made at this stage. Descriptive comments summarise what the participant is communicating. Linguistic comments refer to the way in which the participant is communicating. Conceptual comments provide an interrogation of what is being communicated through the theoretical knowledge of the interpreter. Amongst these comments, 'objects of concern' (what matters to the participant) and 'experiential claims' (what those things mean) are then identified (Larkin and Thompson, 2011: 106).

Another two modifications were made here. Firstly, the exploratory "linguistic" comments were replaced by "enunciative" comments. Once again, the acknowledgement of a tendency for language to dominate other forms of expression was behind this decision. Secondly, a new category of explorative comment was added: "sonic-spatial". This category allowed for (and deliberately privileged the documenting of) matters to do with sound and space. It was thought that this would help to build a sonic impression of the participants' lifeworlds.

5.4.2.2.4. Identification of emergent themes

Emergent themes were expressed with short titles that summarised those themes that recurred throughout the transcript. In order to decide upon emergent themes, both the transcript and all exploratory comments were taken into consideration. They were identified by moving iteratively between the section of data under consideration and knowledge of the interview as a whole. The audiovisual material was discarded at this stage of the analysis. Emergent themes were noted on the additional (left-hand) margin of the transcript. Whilst this process was being undertaken, a separate document was created, providing a key to all emergent themes (Smith et al., 2008).[17]

5.4.2.2.5. Comparison of emergent themes

The comparison of emergent themes is a further interpretative level. This stage of analysis is approached differently by different researchers (Ibid.). In the current project, each emergent theme was loaded into a Max for Live patch that corresponded to the relevant participant. Connections between the themes were identified. Some of these links were explicitly listed in the emergent themes' key documentation during interview. Some links were suggested by the frequent proximity of themes within the interview. Others still were set in opposition to one another, representing a distinction or even dichotomy put forward during the interview.

In reorganising the emergent themes on the screen, superordinate themes began to emerge. I made use of Max's ability to connect themes via patch chords, and visual representations of a participant's lifeworld were slowly constructed. Once these groups of emergent themes were settled upon, a name was given to the cluster. This name was considered to be the title of a "superordinate theme".

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[17] See Appendix 5.

5.4.2.2.6. Comparison across cases

Superordinate themes derived from the analysis of each participant's interview were compared, and final overarching themes were identified. A write-up of analysis findings would usually follow this (Ibid.). However, in the current study, a write-up is replaced with a soundscape composition.

5.4.3. (iii) Utilising archives

Archived information was used to inform the choice of area to work within. Consideration was given to the 2015 Multiple Indices of Deprivation, which ranked locales according to Lower-layer Super Output Area (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015). Historical information was drawn upon in order to contextualise the area. Contemporary documents were then consulted in order to help me understand the present-day context of the area. These efforts overlapped to some degree with efforts to enhance preunderstandings by observing and participating within the area first-hand (i).

Local and participant generated archives were considered for inclusion within the sonic write-up (iv). The aural histories generated by interviews (ii) were also considered for use.

5.4.4. (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up)

Soundscape composition was utilised in order to present findings in place of a traditional written, ethnographic document. This composition, *About Us – For Us*, can also be considered a replacement for the "narrativization" stage in which IPA analyses are generally transformed into a written report (Smith et al., 2008). This sonic write-up is the primary report for findings relating to issues of power, domination and austerity in the area. The

discussion in Chapter 8 of this document on the other hand, deals primarily with matters relating to the study as artistic practice-based research.

Collaboration was intended to be a feature of the work. It was hoped that this would undermine the authorship often arrogated to the artist-researcher and allow the community and place to "speak in multiple voices". Explorations of the affordances and limitations of this exercise, including considerations relating to technical knowledges and access to technology, form an important part of this study. The intention was for the work to grow out of the engagement with place and community facilitated by the previous three stages (i, ii and iii), as well as artistic trajectories developed in preliminary works. These works can be considered evidence of a progression that led to the eventual work, but it should be noted that the inclusion of any ideas furnished by them in the final sonic write-up was optional. This is because the engagement was conducted with an attitude according to which participant contributions should be considered paramount.

5.4.5. Site of presentation

Consideration of the eventual site of presentation occurred during the process of creating the sonic write-up. This was a necessarily fluid process for two reasons. Firstly, the site of presentation was felt to be linked inextricably to the experience of the work as a whole. As Chapman (2017) reminds us in relation to sound installation art, a listener at a physical location is faced with three simultaneous strata: the spaces of recorded environment(s); the virtual production environment (e.g., a Digital Audio Workstation or "DAW"); and the space of presentation. Works that represent place through field recording may in fact have an expanded responsibility toward the third of these strata. Secondly, the contingencies presented by global and local events can affect plans for the presentation of a work. This

was demonstrated to an unusual degree by the COVID-19 pandemic in the process of

creating the current work.

6. Preliminary Works

6.1. Site investigations in West Everton

6.1.1. Approach

In this chapter I will discuss both my engagements with the local community prior to the commencement of the final work (*About Us – For Us*), and my preliminary artistic work. As discussed in Chapter 3, the development of preunderstandings and fore-structures was an important consideration for the study. This is a prerequisite for any hermeneutic engagement in which a 'fusion of horizons' is aimed for (Gadamer 2004: 370). These fore-structures were important, not only for the interpretation of interviews according to an IPA methodology (Smith et al., 2008), but also to facilitate a meaningful engagement with the participants in the creation of the final work. By utilising such a methodology, it was hoped that the development of preunderstandings could, to some extent, assuage the power imbalance that threatens to characterise a researcher-participant relationship. In the sections that follow, I discuss the various means by which the acquisition of preunderstandings were attempted from my earliest interactions with the area.

6.1.2. History and Context

West Everton forms a part of the larger Everton area. The Everton area and community have roots that predate the Doomsday Book (Syers, 1830). In its current context, West Everton 'makes up part of the larger Everton ward and, geographically, is on the edge of Liverpool City Centre' (Bewick and Burns, 2009: 32). As mentioned above, the area is

located at the confluence of five Lower-layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that are subject to deprivation.[18]

It is against this backdrop that the In Harmony Liverpool Project was launched in 2009. Inspired by the Venezuelan *El Sistema*, In Harmony England (2009, cited in Bewick and Burns, 2009: 5) is an orchestral…

> …community development programme aimed at using music to bring positive change to the lives of very young children in some of the most deprived areas of England, delivering benefits across the wider community.

The period prior to its implementation was tragically marred by the murder of a teenage boy outside the Shrewsbury House ("Shewsy") Youth Club (Bewick and Burns, 2009). It is clear that some community members regard this tragedy to be emblematic of the associated drug and crime issues that were troubling the area at the time.

In Harmony Liverpool is offering a unique and important experience that furthers personal and communal development. Despite this, deprivation continues at much the same level (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015; Burns, 2017 and Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government 2019). A study by Kennet et al. (2015: 633) found that 83.5% of 2011 Liverpool households acknowledged the impact of austerity, while 43.9% felt that this impact was 'very/fairly big'. More recently, the Everton area was included in the latest roll-out of Universal Credit, a development that is expected to further existing deprivation in the community (Mullin, 2018).

6.1.3. Community interaction, sonic engagements and recordings

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[18] See Section 4.2.
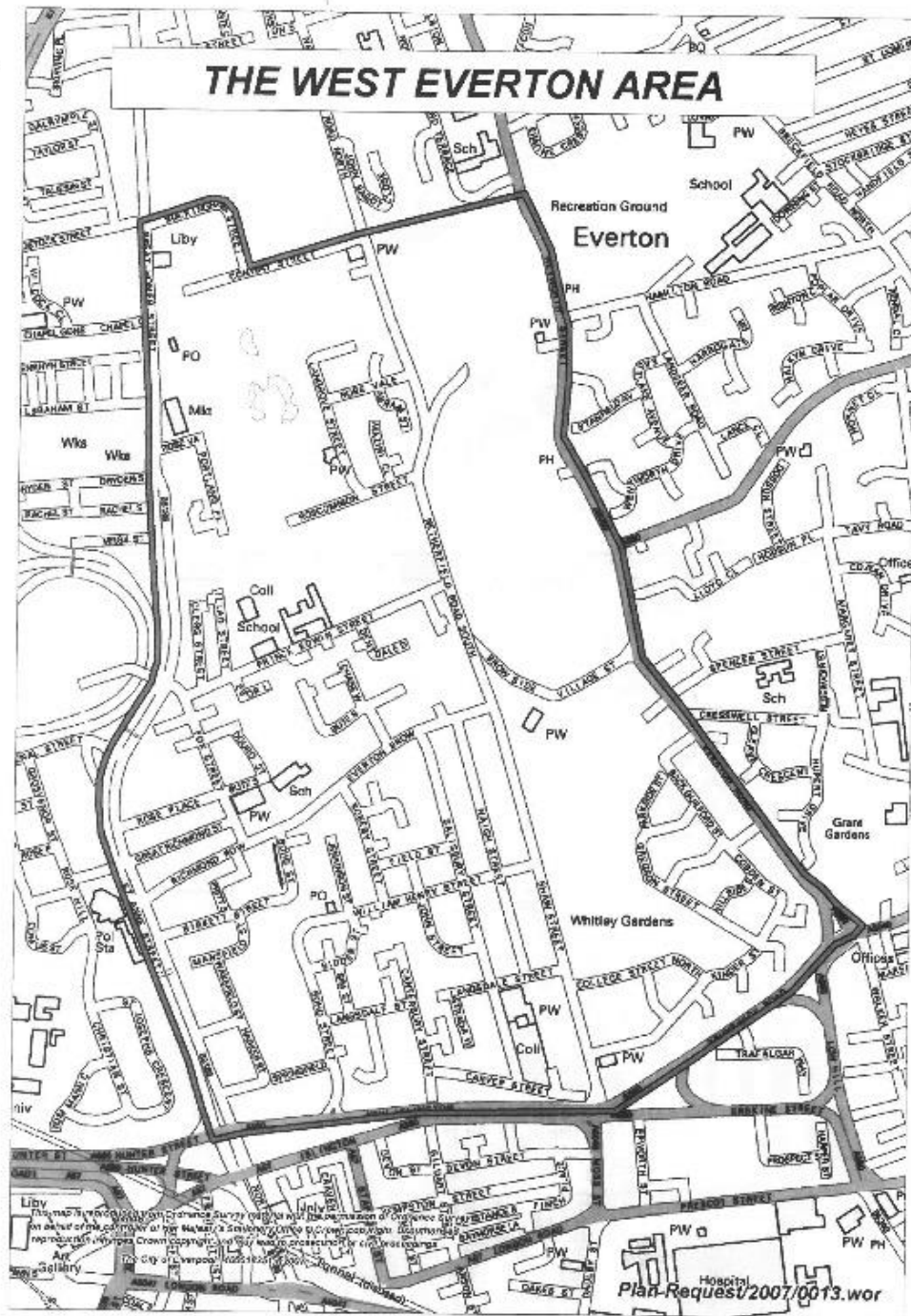
Figure 2: Ordnance Map given to me by Ann Roach of West Everton Community Council.

I began to visit the West Everton area regularly in July 2018. The first of these visits was on the 5th of July 2018, when I was invited to attend the West Everton Lunch Club at St Peter's Church. The church occupies the same building as the Shewsy Youth Club, a union illustrative of a multifaceted approach to community interactions discernible in the area. The Lunch Club is a regular event at which a guest speaker makes a presentation to community organisers. On this occasion, Peter Garden, Executive Director of Performance and Learning at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic had been invited to speak about In Harmony.

Here is an extract from my personal journal of the time:

> Walking along Shaw Street to the engagement, a little apprehensive to attend as an outsider, I pass two young men earnestly discussing cannabis. This conversation could have been overheard back in Little Hulton (from where I had recently moved), except, of course, for a distinctive difference in accent and dialect. The interaction exhibits a comparable cultural capital – masculinity, casual and communal disregard for a network of legality, appropriately distanced camaraderie. All of this, and more, is carried by the deliberate rhythm, the occupancy of a comfortable yet low region of the tessitura, the partial restriction applied to the lilt of vowel sounds, the hard and forward sibilancies, the predictable yet animated eruption of each fragment of phrasing. In walking, their movements project a confidence derived from a familiarity with site, rising up with a spring from the pavement, interacting with and cutting a purposeful direction through the familiar surroundings, shoulders swaying, heads controlled (Personal Journal, 05.07.2018).

Peter Garden speaks to the Lunch Club about the development of In Harmony, nine years on from its formation. The project includes all pupils at Faith Primary School, a Christian institution of dual denomination that grew out of a local emphasis on cooperation between Catholicism and the Church of England. Rehearsals take place at the Friary on Bute Street, home of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Peter speaks about the implications of changes to the structure of financial backing for a project that had initially been fully government-funded; the expectations have gone up, but the funding has gone down.

Also present at the meeting were Reverend Henry Corbett (whose invitation I had accepted), Councillor Jane Corbett, Ann Roach – Centre Manager/Community Development

Manager/Family Worker at West Everton Community Council, Zoë Armfield – In Harmony's then Liverpool Manager and John Dumbell – Team Leader at The Shewsy Youth Club.

In the question-and-answer period that followed Garden's speech, community members further contextualised the situation into which In Harmony was introduced in 2009. A desperate state-of-affairs was depicted in which gangs fought overt battles over the custom of drug-users attracted from across the region by low prices. Scenes in which drug-users erected tents on the nearby play-area and were even reported to sleep in pensioner's bins provided a powerful metonymic rendering for me. In a conversation after the meeting, Ann alluded to signs of a contemporary resurfacing of such issues that are evident to those with sufficient local knowledge.

After the meeting, Jane drove us to the West Everton Community Council (WECC) building on Bute Street. This was to become the foundational point from which my engagement with the area took shape.

> …from the fluid limits of this centre, distant and constant city sounds bound a settled space, an inaudible eye in which a haunting local calm is populated by the absence/presence of a too recent and active history… (Personal Journal, 05.07.2018)

WECC, an organisation that celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2019, provides a hub for the local community. The building hosts community projects, events and local councillor surgeries. In addition, the organisation provides care worker services and most recently a foodbank. In 2015, a fire destroyed part of the building (Hughes, 2015). This was suspected to be an arson attack by various members of the community. WECC's website states its mission thus:

> West Everton Community Council (WECC) is a resident led community organisation that works to ensure residents have a voice at all levels in identifying and responding to issues that affect the West Everton Community. Based on the principle that "nothing about us, without us, is for us", WECC works collaboratively with those who encourage and support community led ideas, solutions and projects (West Everton Community Council, 2019).

The decision to conduct the current study in West Everton was solidified on the morning of the 3rd of August 2018 at a meeting with Professor Stephen Davismoon, Reverend Corbett, Councillor Corbett, Ann Roach and Adam Byrne at WECC.

When the meeting ended, I drifted in the local area, following Debord's original recommendations for the dérive and allowing myself to 'be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters [I found] there [in order to explore its] psychogeographical contours' (Debord, 2004). Occasionally, I stopped at places of particular sonic interest in order to listen.

> Outside in the sun, gulls cry, foregrounded against a bubbling of Cagean-city-traffic-silence. I head up Everton Brow, into the park and to the top of the hill by St. George's church. A few locals pass, walking dogs. My route takes me past some parked cars on Rupert Lane. Several people have stopped there to take in the impressive scenery. There is a clear view of the city and bay below. A (post) industrial soundscape rises up and shapes it. Distant road noise spreads itself to become a ground that is punctuated by the intensifying groans of individual vehicles as they accelerate and move upwards through the gears. In accompaniment is the booming and rending of passing aircraft, the occasional rumble and clatter of distant trains, the resounding crash of metallic materials on unseen worksites, and the songs of local birds. Flowing down the hill I pass through untended public space in which an amphitheatre-shaped structure is adorned with colourful graffiti. I arrive at a retail park on Great Homer Street that was the subject of a significant community dispute over the construction of a new Tesco store. Drifting back, I discover a swastika that has been scratched into a metal back-alley gate half-way up the ascent from Netherfield Road North to Northumberland Terrace. The gate into which this inflammatory symbol is carved blocks access to the back gardens of Atherton Close and is located some ninety to a hundred yards north and outside of the West Everton boundary (Personal Journal, 03.08.2018).

I visited WECC a further five times in August 2018, getting to know the staff and a diverse group of local residents. I was struck by the welcoming attitude, lack of hierarchy and strong community spirit that surrounds the hub. During this time, I made plans for my first recordings.

On the 31st of August 2018 I made recordings at WECC as children made their penultimate or final visits before returning to school the following week. It was a warm summer day; the sky was clear with a slight summer wind. Recordings were made with a

Zoom H4n field recorder between 11am and 3pm. For outside recordings, the two unidirectional microphones in X/Y configuration were set to 120 degrees in order to achieve the widest possible stereo image. This allowed me to include the distal (liminal) sounds that had characterised my initial sonic impressions of the area. Contrastingly, indoor recordings were afforded more focus by use of the 90-degree setting. I made recordings at locations in the old playground and grounds of the WECC building. These recordings included:

- Children playing;

- Trees in the wind;

- Insects passing the microphone;

- Alarms and sirens;

- Aeroplanes passing;

- Distant and close traffic;

- Background noises of regular frequency that manifested at certain recording locations;

- An electric piano duet improvised by children.

I next recorded on September the 12th with a Zoom H2n. Having identified the location during my drift on August the 3rd, I made two mid-side recordings of the city soundscape from the top of the hill in Everton Park, at a location close to St. George's church and The Beacon CE Primary School. This position overlooked the Mersey's industrialised east bank, as well as the estuary itself as it flowed into the Irish Sea. It was a warm and clear day. Having made these recordings, I then travelled down the hill to make recordings in several directions from the roof of WECC (that formerly served as an elevated playground).

As autumn became winter, the focus at WECC shifted towards the coming roll-out of Universal Credit. A foodbank was being planned in response to the new benefits system that, according to 'the UN's special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights [was] "gratuitously punitive" and pushing people into hardship, depression, and despair' (Arie, 2018: 1). In November, prior to the roll out, Ann was already finding that local people were going without toilet roll and sanitary products.

I spoke to Councillor Jane Corbett after the Universal Credit meeting on December the 5th, 2018 – the day of the roll-out. She was one of the community leaders organising local efforts to limit the damage and, on that day, had been interviewed on the topic for the day's Liverpool Echo (Mullins, 2018). The foodbank constituted a central facet of WECC's response to that phase of welfare reform.

The following day I attended a session with Urban Workbench, a community learning hub that works with resistant materials and creates art interventions (Urban Workbench, 2019). Their project in the run up to Christmas would be the building of shelves for the foodbank. Angelo Madonna and Steve Threlfall agreed to have me attend and make audio recordings during the project.

The project consisted of six sessions, during which I participated whilst constantly making audio recordings with the Zoom H2n. I captured:

- Discussions;
- The moving of furniture, materials and equipment;
- Drills, circular saws, mallets and sweeping brushes.

In December I also continued my drifting and listening activities, developing the method that I began to formulate during my first explorations in the area. On the 17th of December I

made more audio recordings, as well as drawings depicting sound trajectories and a detailed journal account of my sonic mapping activities.

On the 18th of January I made further recordings of In Harmony rehearsals (both infant and junior school-aged ensembles) at the Friary. I used a Zoom H2n at several locations in the large rehearsal space, capturing:

- Staff setting up the space;

- Children entering the space and hanging up coats;

- Children getting out and tuning their instruments;

- Instructions from session leaders;

- Communication in solfège between session leaders and children that act as mnemonic devices;

- Call-and-response exercises;

- Singing;

- Instruments of the string orchestra;

- Brass instruments;

- Percussion instruments;

- Rehearsal of pieces for In Harmony's 10th Birthday concert;

- The full junior ensemble from the organ balcony.

6.2. Preliminary compositional work

6.2.1. *What Does Who to What?*

What Does Who to What? is a preliminary work: an audiovisual installation that attempts to animate and then exploit social relations at site in order to explore the affect that this has

upon subjective self-positioning. The work was created in response to a request for an installation related to the current study for ArtsEqual at Edge Hill University on the 13th of June 2018. Building upon this initial experience, the work was subsequently updated and amended for installation at Angel Field Festival, Liverpool Hope University from the 26th to the 30th of March 2019.

What Does Who to What? was a collaboration with Chantelle Valentin. Chantelle created the video content. It was designed for installation in a dark room in a gallery/university/exhibition setting. As the request for an installation was made during the review of the current study by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee, use of research participants was ruled out. Breaking from my stated engagement with field recording and soundscapes, I took the opportunity to explore manifestations of domination that can occur at site in a gallery/university sound installation setting, as well as their impact upon the audience members. The work can be considered an artistic exploration of Born's (2013: 32) four planes of the social mediation of sound, conducted by accentuating the 'intimate microsocialities of… sound installation site' (the first plane).

Rows of chairs faced a stage. At either side, two speakers were playing an evolving composition. The video content played behind the stage on a screen. A microphone, placed on a stand, was positioned at the front of the stage, suggesting that a performance would take place. In planning the layout, I had assumed that, without further prompting, an audience member would usually take a seat facing the stage.

The music was both ethereal and erratic. In terms of influence, the uncanny stasis characteristic of the stretched and granular sound world of Alva Noto's *Xerrox Vol. 2* (2009), the glitching, microsonic textures of Oval's *94 Diskont* (1995), and the eerie sense of

timeless musical climax discoverable in time-stretched versions of existing published works[19]

were all important.

Two audio tracks played clips that had been loaded into the Ableton Live 9 session

view. The content of these clips was derived from a recording of an electric guitar that had

been heavily processed by a granular delay (Soundhack Bubbler VST plug-in). The original

electric guitar recording was taken from *Abschattungen* (2019), a piece that I had written for

Patchwork Rattlebag (a group that both Chantelle and I remain a part of). The guitar part

was arpeggiated, repeating Emaj7/C# to Amaj7 over an alternating metre of 7/8 and 4/4.

Variation in grain sizes (23.6% and 40.3%) and low-pass filter frequencies (2 kHz and

1.8kHz), alongside the utilisation of high grain densities (both 200%), granular pitch shifts of

1 and 2 octaves (plus random octave pitch shifts applied to each grain), and completely wet

mix outputs combined to transform the instrumental recording into two separate digital-

sounding musical elements that comprised a fluctuating foreground, as well as a high,

sustained string-like background. These elements were further manipulated with Ableton's

built-in Beats Warp Mode time-stretching function. This setting was designed for

metronomic music in order to retain rhythmic proportion according to the grid, but when

applied to samples at extreme length it creates mechanical artefacts (glitches) that give a

definite sense of technological mediation. The clips loaded into the tracks were cut where

important changes of feature were identified. Compression, set to a ratio of 2:1 with a

relatively slow attack (12.5ms) and a release of 50ms was applied to Track 2 when Track 1

exceeded -27.3 dB via a sidechain. This served to background the more erratic musical

content according to the more predictable development of Track 1's musical material. Both

of the tracks (1 and 2) were finally outputted to Return Track A (rather than the Master

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[19] A time-stretched version of Radiohead's (2001) "Pyramid Song", uploaded to YouTube by dumaramutsi (2014), is an interesting example of this trend.

channel strip), where a double-tracked vocal sample (my own voice from the first verse of *Abschattungen*) that had been stretched to fifty-times its original length with Paulstretch, was added to them as an external carrier by means of Ableton's Vocoder device. Whilst the vocal element developed steadily (looped in Ableton's Arrangement view), the two tracks of granular clips arranged in the Session View occasionally diverged from a linear development, leaping to any other loaded clip according to a probability of 16/1. Along with the glitches and alternating metre already mentioned, this additional chance element made the unfolding of the music semi-stable and afforded occasional erratic changes (jumping from a period at a loud dynamic to a softer one for example).

The video, created by Chantelle Valentin, consisted of variations on a vertical black line that divided the screen in to two equal parts.[20] Chantelle's video explored how the central division, smaller in width than the two large planes that it separated, managed to dominate the screen.[21] At the same time however, light from the projection of these two vertical, white planes (ostensibly background elements) drew the audience's focus towards the stage area in the otherwise dark room. This further consideration demonstrated how interactions with other elements in the installation-assemblage were capable of altering the status of aspects within the video as either foreground or background. This surely made the relationship of domination a matter of perspective.

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[20] See Figure 3.
[21] Merleau-Ponty (2002: 4) asserts that perception is always 'a figure on a background'. We can therefore consider the video's foreground and background to be co-constituted. Furthermore, the perceptual domination of one over the other presupposes the relationship between the two.

Figure 3: Image taken from What Does Who to What? video content.

For the installation, the video was separated into sections and loaded into a dedicated track in the Session view of Ableton Live. A clipPlayr(audio) device was loaded to this audio track, making video playback of clips possible when sent to a VIEWR device (main video output device) on a separate track. These devices are part of the VIZZable 2.1.1. Max for Live pack. When a video clip ended, Ableton Follow Actions instructed playback to begin on any other video clip. The changing of visual scene was not linked to the changing of audio scene.

Faced with this assemblage, we may ask: what is it that one must overcome in order to approach the interactive part of the installation (stage, screen and microphone), and how does one overcome it?

The erratic nature of the sound, the random playback of video sections of varying length, and the uncoupling of audio and video from one another were all intended to suggest the inclusion of the audience members' bodily agency in the installation-assemblage. Moving in a space designed for accident and coincidence, the audience was gently encouraged to ask themselves, "did I cause that?"

If their curiosity was piqued and the invisible barriers were overcome, audience members, upon mounting the stage, found that their footsteps caused splashes of digitally degraded, low-fidelity sound to emit from the speakers, and kaleidoscopic visualisations to appear momentarily on the visual display. In this way, bodily transgression of the invisible and obscure boundaries that dominated the room's assemblage was rewarded as the audience member's agency became part of the installation and they became an active participant. The contingency of this sense of agency upon pre-existing factors was underlined, however. If a participant attempted to put the assembled apparatus to work and speak through the apparent microphone and public address system, rather than amplifying their own voice, they instead caused an as-yet-unheard recording of multiple, international newscasts to rise above the music for the duration of the speech act. In this way, the notion of existential freedom as a determined 'sphere of possibilities' or 'play space' in which to act was made manifest within the space (Nichols, 2014: 178). Furthermore, the tensions between *parrhēsia* – conceived as the opening of new existential possibilities by rising in an assembly and speaking the truth – and the micropolitical functioning of discourse were played upon figuratively by the assemblage (Foucault, 2005; 2012 and Lazzarato, 2014).

This interactive aspect of the installation was afforded by two microphone inputs that were linked to chains of effects within Ableton Live. Firstly, a piezo contact microphone was

taped to the underside of the temporary staging in order to register footsteps. The signal from the contact mic was routed to a sidechain gate that was supressing a noisy version of the musical material derived from the granular delay process described above. This audio material was generated by altering the Bubbler's bounced output with Soundhack's classic Phase Vocoder. The sample's time segments were multiplied with a Von Hann windowing function and a random wave pattern was chosen as a scaling function, resulting in an irregular, degraded, glitching and pulsing sonic landscape. The gate opened when the signal from the contact microphone exceeded a certain threshold (prone to vary depending on the stage material and installation specifics). Attack time was set to 2.4 ms, hold to 38.7 ms and release to a relatively long 304 ms. Limiters were placed at points throughout the signal chain just described.

After the gate had been opened, the signal was sent to a scope(audio) device that caused a waveform-type image to be sent to rest of the visual effects chain. Each located on a track of their own, these VIZZable 2.1.1. effects were:

- blurr – Blurred the image;

- clrMapr – Altered the relationships between colours within the image;

- hueshiftr – Altered the hue of the image;

- kaleidr – Refracted into a kaleidoscopic image;

- fisheyr – Simulated the effect of a fish-eye lens.

The visualisation was then sent to a 4mixr device to be mixed with the video output of the clipPlayr(audio). This mixed output was finally routed to the VIEWR and sent to a projector. The gate, opened only when signal from the contact microphone exceeded the set threshold, now allowed for a burst of digitised sound and a kaleidoscopic image to erupt when a participant's foot contacted the stage.

Unlike the surreptitious contact microphone, the Shure SM58 was intended to be seen by the audience-participants. The input from the dynamic microphone was restricted by an EQ Three device that cut frequencies below 165 Hz and above 200 Hz to -infinity dB. This measure was taken to reduce the chance of extraneous, non-vocal sounds triggering the system. Although the fundamental frequencies of female and child voices can exceed the specified range, the extreme restriction of frequency range was deemed necessary. An analysis of the set-up, conducted by noting the response of a range of voices and sine waves with the Spectrum device, showed that the upper possibilities for female fundamental frequencies still registered quite strongly (Murphy and Howard, 2007).

On a separate track, an amalgam of nine recorded newscasts ran silently. These newscasts were recorded on the 20th and 21st of May 2018 and bounced to a single wave file.[22] A sidechain gate opened when input from the SM58 exceeded a certain threshold (again, generally low but adjusted according to the specifics of the installation space). The gate privileged 170 Hz by means of a bandpass filter with Q set to 0.21. The signal was then boosted by 3.6 dB at 590 Hz and 3.74 kHz and a high shelf cut was applied above 8.66 kHz.

As mentioned above, the output of Tracks 1 and 2 (musical elements) was routed to Return Track A where a Vocoder device awaited it. An EQ Three device then removed a band between 85 Hz and 255 Hz. This was done in order to prevent sound from the speakers activating the SM58 microphone/newscast chain. The soft edges of the EQ Three (noted above) were compensated for by another cut between 86 Hz and 232 Hz with an EQ Eight device. A subtlety in the bottom end was accentuated by a small boost at 40.9 Hz and a high shelf cut was applied above 1.25 kHz. Return A was then outputted to Return B

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[22] These newscasts were streamed online. The recordings were captured from: Al Jazeera (UK/Global/Qatar), TN24Horas (Argentina), BBC News (UK), CNN (USA), Moscow 24 TV (Russia), NDTV (India), Rai News (Italy), Sky News (UK) and YTN Korea (Korea).

where a limiter and two sidechain compressors awaited it. The first compressor reduced the signal by a ratio of infinity:1 when the contact microphone signal chain -36.5 dB (with attack set to 0.67 ms and release at 174 ms). This meant that a footstep on the stage would temporarily halt all of the musical playback and replace it with a degraded version of the guitar/granular delay audio (the external source for the compressor sidechain which is playing "silently" at all times). The second compressor reduced the signal at a ratio of 2.86:1 when audio from the SM58/newscast chain exceeded -28.1 dB (with attack set to 59.5 ms and release to 300 ms).

The result of the installation, perhaps usefully thought of as an assemblage, was to both afford and restrict possibilities for interaction. Although no particular course of action is *overtly* demanded of the participant, carefully chosen restrictions were implemented in order to limit the participant to possible spheres of action.

Going back to Born's (2013: 32) 'four planes of social mediation of sound', I will now list most of the strategies employed in the work according to their elicitation of each category:

1. The 'intimate microsocialities of… sound installation site' (Ibid.)

    a. This is the purpose of the installation generally. Exploration of this first plane of social mediation invokes, or opens onto the following three, which are related but not reducible to it.

    b. The architectural design of the space, both permanent (performance space on campus) and temporary (chairs-facing-stage-assemblage) speaks to the participant of an expected flow of action and a pre-existing stratification that marks one body as permitted to undertake a certain action and another as prohibited. As Hebdidge (2002: 12) reminds us, 'modern institutions of

education… carry within themselves implicit ideological assumptions which are literally structured into the architecture itself'.

c. The performer-audience relationship was brought into relief through the absence evoked by the positioning of a microphone on the stage. In this sense, the audience were faced with spectral performer/performers and the expectations that this elicits (Derrida, 1994).

2. The 'imagined communities… virtual collectives or publics' (Born, 2013: 32) animated by both musical and wider identifications.

a. The first factors considered in the creation of the work were the cultural expectations of behaviour in a gallery setting. Through a virtual, gallery-oriented community (consisting of curators, artists, audiences, commentators etc.), certain societal norms were to be felt, and adhered to by the audience. The boundaries for transgression of these norms were therefore laid out for conduct.

b. The university setting also brought with it the trace of another (related) virtual community in academia, with its particular history and more or less widespread customs. To break with these customs in the academic conference/festival setting would also be to breach the expectations of this present/absent community.

c. The digital, time-stretched, aleatory, erratic, human-machine amalgam of the installed sound environment brought a particular community into contact with the participant: that of digital art music producers and audiences. The evocation of this virtual community drew lines of inclusion/exclusion on technological-epistemic grounds. This community was again mediated through the traces of the artist's agency that haunted the constructed sonic environment. In other words, a contextual stratum, 'the '"virtual" space of the post-production environment', accompanied 'the sound of the exhibition space in which the sound work is presented' and brought with it the spectre of this community (Chapman, 2017: 47).

d. The myriad types of 'musical habitus' characteristic of each audience member would undoubtedly be operative during their interaction with the installation. This would be productive of a multiplicity of responses and a variety of experiences (Rimmer, 2012: 300).

3. The traversal and refraction, through music and sound, of 'wider social formations' - 'the hierarchical and stratified social relations associated with… class, age, race, gender, religion etc.' (Born, 2013: 32)

a. The virtual communities referred to above intersect with wider social formations. Born (2012: 262) identifies the 'art-music-technology scene[s] of the global North [with] a palpable if "unmarked" race, class and gender profile [characteristic of] those that make and listen to the music'. In short, 'white middle-class men predominate' (Ibid.). Strikingly, Born and Devine (2016)

identify a large gender-discrepancy in the uptake of music technology-based courses in UK higher education. Some 90% of students studying within the discipline were found to be male. These 'social relations and social imaginaries can be scripted into technological assemblages' and therefore imply elision between planes 1 and 3 (Born and Devine, 2016: 4).

b. The use of a male voice that blends and interacts with digitally produced sound further implicated the gender divide noted above and brought it to the surface of the work. This elicitation of gender was capable of colouring interaction with the installation and acting upon a female participant's sphere of possibilities.

4. '[A] range of institutional forms that enable [music and sound's] form, production, reproduction and transformation, including market and non-market exchange, elite, religious and state patronage, and late capitalism's multipolar cultural economy' (Born, 2013: 32).

a. The work was part of a PhD study funded by a scholarship and inevitably bore the marks of its creation. It would be disingenuous to overlook the place of the current study within a wider shift in the context of higher education that Pokorny and Warren (2016: 2) describe as a 'neoliberal agenda with competition at its heart'. It is possible that this situation, coupled with the societal position afforded to post-graduate students – those that are "cutting-edge" and "making an original contribution to knowledge" – could inspire a

reverence in the audience that would prohibit interference with the installation.

b. The hardware and software that enabled the complex flow of information that animated possibilities within the installation-assemblage was facilitated by corporate technologies (Apple MacBook Pro, Ableton Live 9 etc.). The play with potentialities within the installation was therefore facilitated by entire corporate structures and social matrices without which its functioning would not be possible.

c. The degree to which the 'cultural capital' of each audience member adhered to the university environment could have a prohibitive effect that functions according to social class (Greenbank, 2006: 218).

Finally, there were restrictive factors that I do not deem to be social in the sense that Born's categories deal with. For example, the hypnotic and changing intensities of the music, and the play of the light (on the screen and in the room) were enabled by non-signifying informational flows in the assemblage. They may have brought to bear a 'pathic' influence upon a participant's possible self-positioning within the installation scenario (Guattari, 1995: 25).

Cartographies (2019) was a quadrophonic installation based upon field recordings captured in the West Everton area. The work was created for installation on the mezzanine above the entrance to the Cornerstone building on the West Everton-based Creative Campus of Liverpool Hope University. The installation ran from the 22nd to the 25th of March 2019 at the Angel Field Festival. A binaural stereo version of the work, intended for headphone playback, is available online at

https://johnlowndes.bandcamp.com/album/cartographies-binaural. In this version, the effect of the four speakers used for the installation were simulated with Logic Pro X's binaural panner.

Having completed work on *What Does Who to What?*, I felt that a second pilot work was required in order to develop my field recording-based practice. Whereas *What Does Who to What?* explored the social mediation of sound in order to make a matrix of social relations manifest in an assemblage that limited and dominated the 'sphere of possibilities' available to a participant at site (Nichols, 2014: 178), *Cartographies* engaged with existing endeavours in the West Everton community that operate according to value systems that are not primarily competitive but generative of future possibilities as ontological becomings (Barnett, 2009; Booth, 2011; Cohen and Silverman 2013 and Denora, 2013). If *What Does Who to What?* was intended as negative demonstration of factors that contribute to a restrictive, domineering assemblage that inhibited the potential for action at site, *Cartographies* was an attempt to identify and amplify the kind of ontological play spaces that are created beneath the dominant assumptions of 'rationalist, capitalistic subjectivity' and the ways of interacting that it entails (Guattari, 1995: 26).

It was not incidental that this was the stage at which the community was first heard within the sound work of this study (albeit through the mediation of the composer). According to Guattari (1995: 2), the production of alternatives is of necessity a collaboration,

a 'collective existential mutation'. The shared endeavours highlighted in the work can be considered as alternative forms of the 'work on the self' that Lazzarato (2014: 51) identifies as being inseparable from contemporary capitalistic production. *Cartographies*, then, can be thought of as a necessarily local, artistic attempt to engage with Gordon's (2011: 3) notion of a 'contest over the future'.

The Cornerstone is a Grade II listed building. Constructed in 1877, the building was formerly the site of St. Francis Xavier's College, a Jesuit school designed by Henry Clutton. The reverberation beneath the highly pitched roof of the great hall is a prominent feature of the space that was noted on the building's first day of use (Heery, 2002).[23]

Cartographies was created from recordings of three sites of community interaction:

1. General day-to-day activities at West Everton Community Council;
2. The Urban Workbench foodbank shelves project;
3. Rehearsals for In Harmony Liverpool's 10th anniversary concert.

Each of these sites corresponds to a section of the work, referred to as 'existential territories' (Guattari, 1995: 4).

Recordings from WECC form a moderately lengthy (18-minute) scene that serves to orient the work. Musical elements derived from a conversation with a five-year-old boy at WECC are woven into field recordings.[24] The final two words of this conversation ("around

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[23] The Max for Live Convolution Reverb Pro device, loaded with an impulse response recorded in the space on the 22nd of January 2019, provided a useful reference for composition.

[24] The elements of conversation retained in the piece are as follows:

Child: "You know, you know that side? That's the dog side, that's the dog side, that's the dog side."
Researcher: "This side?"
Child: "Erm… if you go through that park, there's a dog over there… No, it's not in the next building. Around there!"

there!") serve as a refrain that situates the piece as an exploration of locality. At the same time, the cautionary intent of the conversation became a focus to be explored thematically as an example of alternative systems of valuation. The child's perspective was engaged and explored seriously as an alternative mode of 'valorisation', part of a wider 'ecology of the virtual' that Guattari (1995: 91-92) identifies as an artistic task to 'recast the axes of values'.

I created a compositional plan in which sounding events in Existential Territory 1.1 were plotted roughly over time (see Figure 4). In this plan, the spoken material, "musical" sounds derived from it, field recordings, wind samples and animal recordings were mapped visually over a period of approximately ten minutes.[25]

Cartographies

#1: Existential Territory I

Musical vocal derivative 2

Musical vocal derivative 1 Musical vocal derivative 1 Musical vocal derivative 1 Musical vocal derivative 1

...around there!

Wind and voice vocoder

Wind and voice vocoder

Gulls
+ Universe of reference:
Ocean samples within delay tails

Child speaks to specific manner of valorisation (world)

Wind gust

[SILENT] [SILENT] [SILENT] [SILENT]

[Canine Sounds]

Concrete Recording 1 - WECC & Friary Shared Wall

Swirling wind in sidechain patterns

Close mic dog + atmosphere

Empty construction site atmosphere
+ Universe of reference: Faint and brief irruption of construction site sound assemblages

"0

"10

Figure 4: Compositional plan for Existential Territory 1.1, part of the larger *Cartographies* (2019).

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[25] This was a provisional plan, and the finalised section lasted for sixteen minutes and fifty-two seconds.

Generally, the section follows the spatial conception suggested by the boy in conversation by means of concrete field recordings. Elements were added to the recordings in an attempt to tease out the plurality of place and 'weave dreams around things' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002: xi). The influence of a curious online version of Variant's *Sequential Sleep* (2016) mixed with "Japanese Train & Station Sounds" should be acknowledged here.

We begin at the site of the conversation, close to the small playground from which the opposite side of the building is accessible by a passage. This opposite side is the "dog side", and the section progresses towards sound sources emanating from there. This progression goes as follows: from the wall that separates WECC from the Friary; through recordings of the "dog side" construction-site captured from the roof of WECC; and finally, to an artificial space in which recordings of a dog interact with a sounding texture created from the child's voice. The sound of gulls, captured in the park referred to in the original conversation, and constant background noises of relatively regular frequency extracted from field recordings can be heard throughout.

The conversation was edited until it contained only the required parts.[26] Gentle reductions (in terms of decibels and sensitivity) were applied to the sample in three stages with Audacity's Noise Reduction processor. Inspired by Berio's (1958/2013) *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, I wanted fully comprehensible speech to constitute only the initial hearing of the spoken sample (Mussgnug, 2008). In working with the spoken audio material, more experiments were undertaken than space will allow me to describe. Instead, I will explain the processes that led to the composition of the main elements of the section.

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[26] This was done purely at the artist's discretion. A much more thorough exploration of the limits of artistic license when using the statements of others is made in the final work, *About Us – For Us*. See Chapters 7 and 8.

In order to generate "Musical vocal derivatives" 1 and 2 I implemented the following process. In the clip view, I stretched this sample to the maximum using the segment BPM instruction. Rather than using the "beats" Warp setting as I had for *What Does Who to What?*, I selected "texture". Standard use of texture involves finding a grain-size that mediates between two poles: either an atomised, digital sound or an alternate extreme at which the grains become so large that they overlap. This overlapping sound was what I was aiming for; a pulsing, psychedelic effect that retains something of the human voice when bent out of shape to an extreme. Having stretched two samples to the desired length, I then made reversed copies. I sent the forward and reversed versions of both samples through an EQ Eight device that cut frequencies below 311 Hz and above 1.23 kHz. Next, a Filter Delay device was added with the following settings: left delay line set to 700 Hz/282 ms; left and right delay line set to 1.29 kHz/570 ms; right delay line set to 801 Hz/305 ms. Finally, the derivatives of the first stretched sample were sent to Return Track A, where a second processing chain was applied to them. This chain boosted notches at 519 Hz and 535 Hz whilst sharply removing all other frequencies. A Grain Delay device, in which the size and duration of each grain was set to 2.02 Hz and pitch was shifted down three semitones (creating a minor third), was finally added to give the slightly ominous tone desired in quiet sections.

Another method by which the voice was utilised beyond its comprehensible function within the section is indebted to Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* (2005) and *Come Out* (2005). Reich's experiments in synchronicity and phase with spoken recordings suggest a sonic method by which to explore the political import of an echo, and its orienting role in the production of subjectivity (Vallee, 2016).

First, the "around there!" sample was pitch-shifted down with Ableton's "Complex Pro" Warp Mode to create two additional samples (pitched down 4.5 and 9 semitones). Experimentation with the preservation of formants quickly provided impressive results, with

the boy's voice seemingly increasing in age (although, interestingly, childish articulations remained). In this way the notion of a speaking subject was problematised in a digital way that was not available to Reich. The three samples were then loaded into separate Granulator II Max for Live devices. Experimentation with continuous playback altered by envelopes controlling grain size and spray (control over the length of time from which grains can be selected for randomised playback) allowed me to sculpt a section of audio in which the voices (and fragments of voices) interact in various, sometimes surprising ways. The audio clip derived from this process begins in noise. From this noise emerge two rising glissandi as the grain lengths applied to two of the samples approach their smallest point. A distinct reversal in the direction of the glissandi follows, reminiscent of a passing aeroplane or even a string orchestra (similar to Penderecki's *Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima* (2012) for example). This section is later woven into a long recording of an aeroplane passing WECC, thereby engaging in an interplay between voice and field recordings. As the grain sizes decrease, they interact rhythmically in complex ways, resulting in a musical section during which the fuller articulation of words emerges. These interactions are enhanced by use of a Filter Delay (left delay line set to 1.05 kHz/250 ms; left and right delay line set to 222 Hz/453 ms; right delay line set to 534 Hz/539 ms) and Auto Pan (sawtooth down LFOs set at rate of 7.85 kHz and offset at 234°).

The musical elements described above supplement material derived from field recordings. Just under two thirds of the section are composed on top of a long recording made on the 31st of August 2018 on the wall that divides WECC from the Friary. This is later replaced by a section derived from a recording made on the roof of WECC on the 17th of December 2018 that includes sounds of hammering from a construction site and dogs barking in the area. The gulls were captured on the 20th of November 2018. The dog samples were recorded at my home with a Zoom H2n on the 25th of November 2018. Further use was made of the Granulator II device in order to produce chance sequences of

sounds by use of the spray function. This provided material that could then be worked on in a more focused compositional manner. Samples treated in this way included those of conversation, dog, gulls, wind and field recording background ambiences.

The Urban Workbench sections were created from recordings made during an educational project that resulted in the building of shelves for the proposed foodbank at WECC. As Barnett (2009: 440) has argued in a higher education setting, the pursuit of knowledge has an influence on being and becoming, and it is therefore incumbent upon pedagogues to consider the 'kinds of human being that [they] want [their] students to become' when deciding upon curricula. For its part, Urban Workbench (2019) explicitly engages this connection, pairing the acquisition of 'new skills' with the aim of acting as 'a catalyst in raising levels of community resistance'. These sections (Existential Territories 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4) therefore foreground instances of striving towards a common, communitarian aim that were captured by the recordings. The emphasis is on the collective becoming of the group (hitherto little previously acquainted) that is oriented and facilitated by a shared, community-spirited objective.

In a way similar to the Urban Workbench sections, the In Harmony Existential Territories (3.1 and 3.2) focused upon the shared endeavour of children, teachers and volunteers as they prepared for their 10th Birthday concert at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on Monday the 11th of March 2019. Again, the emphasis is on instances of striving towards a common goal. In this case, the exertions are located around a common centre of striving towards "beauty".

The link between beauty and community becoming in collective musical practice is noted in the work of several authors. As Booth (2009: 22) puts it in his discussion of *El Sistema*:

> I have come to appreciate the subtle formative power of logging so many hours engaged in community, craft and beauty.

Beauty is similarly a focus for the half-prisoner, half-local-community-member choir at Oakdale Prison, USA, where becoming is also explicitly engaged through the 'African concept, Ubuntu' (Cohen and Silverman, 2013: 189). Here, '[o]ne learns and grows from the experiences in the choir because of the interactions with others, musically and socially' (Ibid.). This finding is also shared by DeNora (2013), who reminds us that musical performance is productive of the projection and transformation of selfhood.

All of these Existential Territories aim to highlight and 'preserve the endangered species of cultural life', whilst also necessarily contributing to the wider 'engender[ing of] conditions for the creation and development of unprecedented formations of subjectivity that have never been seen and never felt' (Guattari 1995: 91). In this sense, the work is intended as both a documentation of existing forms of community engagement and a 'sonic possible world', installed at site, that in part constructs and generates the actuality of the world for an auditor (Voeglin, 2014: 36). In other words, an auditor, in engaging with the sound work as a 'mapping' of a 'possible terrain' may 'inhabit a place made of time and space that centers [them] for the duration that [they] reciprocate it', in order to 're-actualize [their] actual world in its plurality' (Voeglin, 2014: 35). Engagement with the work then, for an auditor, has the potential to act as a 'vector of subjectivation' (Guattari, 1995: 25).

In order to break linearity and, in doing so, further emphasise the points of orientation in these sections (beauty, becoming through shared endeavour etc.), a technique of randomisation was developed for the later Existential Territories (1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1 and 3.2). In all of the sections, audio recordings were sliced to MIDI in Ableton Live according to rules that suited the characteristics of each. Once spliced and loaded into a sampler instrument, the Random MIDI effect was placed before it in the chain. The range of possible randomised playback samples was often limited to the two or three samples surrounding the

original.[27] The recording was then played back linearly, and the chance of randomisation being applied at any particular point was controlled by automation. This broke up the chronology of each recording, in order to encourage the listener to wonder about the factor that provided cohesion (collaborative striving).
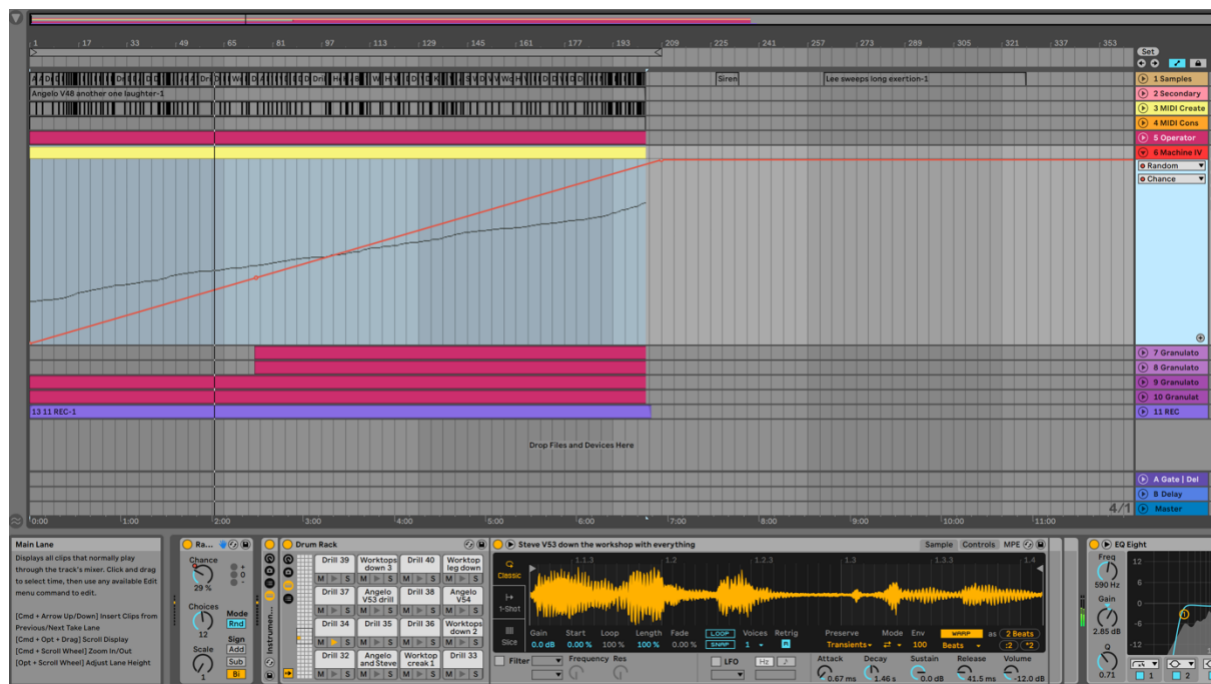
Figure 5: Randomisation of samples in Existential Territory 2.4 (screenshot of Ableton Live 9 software).

A further technique, exemplified most obviously in Existential Territory 1.2, was also developed. After the main recording had been spliced to MIDI (the recording made on WECC's dividing wall in this case), a second recording (a recording of the Mersey meeting the ocean in Liverpool bay) was spliced manually to the precise time specifications of the first. These second samples, each corresponding in length to one of the first set, were then loaded into the sampler, adjacent to their partner sample. MIDI notes from the original splice

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[27] Although this was significantly increased where it was deemed compositionally appropriate to do so.

were retained. In this way, it was ensured that, when played through from start to finish,

only the original recording would be heard. The introduction of a random MIDI effect device

however, opened up the possibility of playing the adjacent, "hidden" sample of the second

recording. The odds of this second, hidden environment being revealed were dictated by

automation.
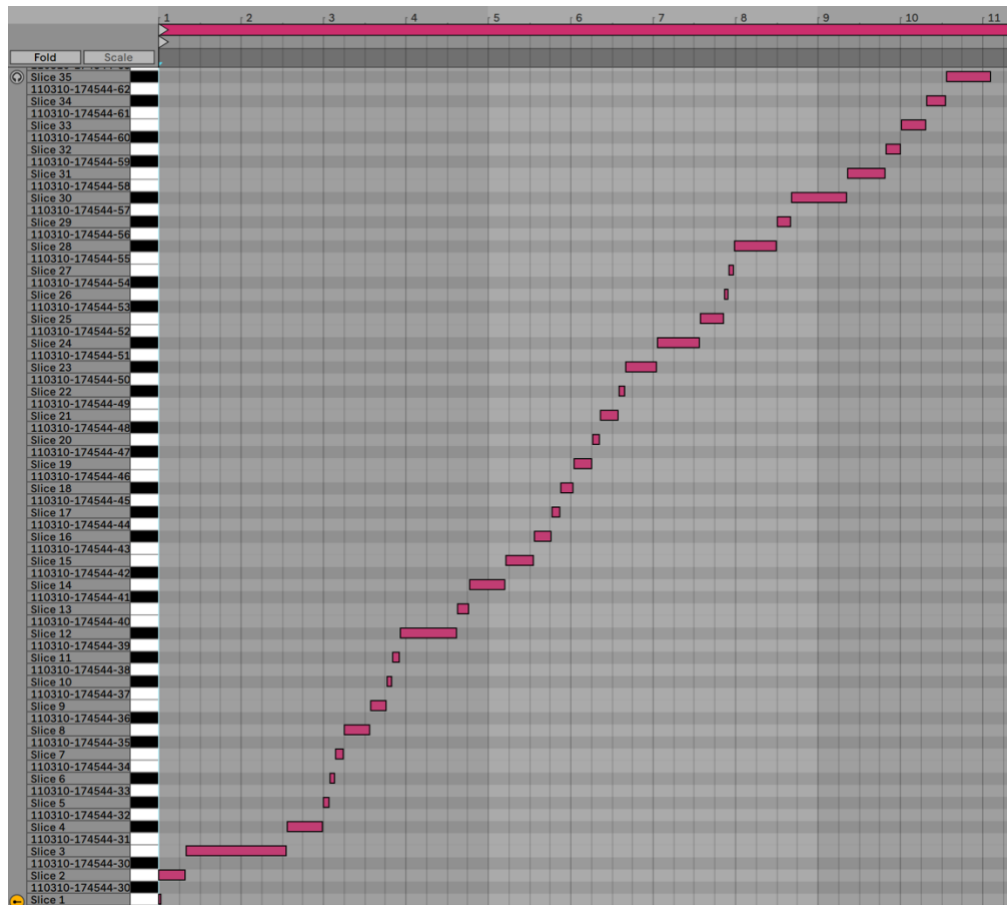
Figure 6: Retention of notes from original splice over "hidden" counterpart in Randomisation for Existential Territory 1.2 (screenshot of Ableton Live 9 software).

In Existential Territory 1.2, the chance of revealing the second environment begins at 0%. In

the middle of the section, the chance has increased linearly to 80%. It then decreases in a

similar fashion back to 0% by the end of the piece, again hiding the second, ocean

environment from audibility.
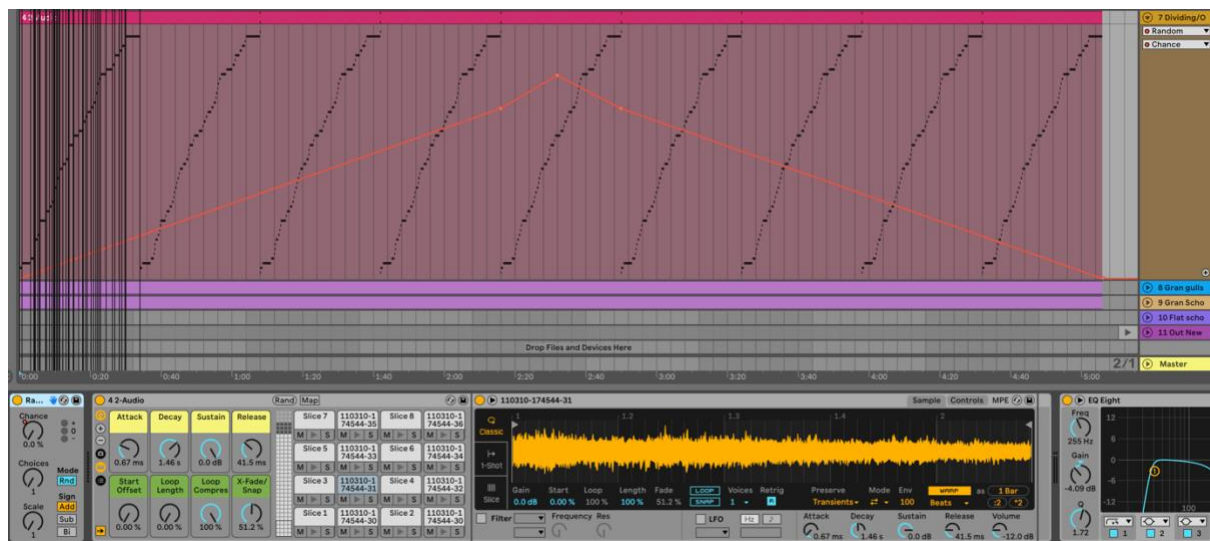
Figure 7: Increasing and decreasing the chance of playing the "hidden" environment back in Existential Territory 1.2 (screenshot of Ableton Live 9 software).

An interesting factor involved in the quadraphonic presentation of the work derives from the fact that the mezzanine level upon which the work was installed is without a centre. It sits beneath the high ceiling overlooking the ground floor and is served by a set of stairs that immediately face an entrant. The installation's four speakers were set on plinth-type surfaces at each corner of the square balcony. This meant that there was no access on foot to what would be the central point between the speakers. Hence the virtual point of view occupied by the artist in mixing was inaccessible to the public. The sound work circles around this non-existent but operative point, making use of quadraphonic panning. This is analogous to the non-fixed yet operative points of "subjectivity" alluded to above (group becoming according to communitarian aims, beauty etc.). The quadraphonic set up, in fact, is reminiscent of Guattari's (2012) diagrammatic representation of his conception of the meta-modelisation of subjectivity. In this diagram, interaction between four ontological functions is possible in straight lines via the edges, but never passes through the centre.
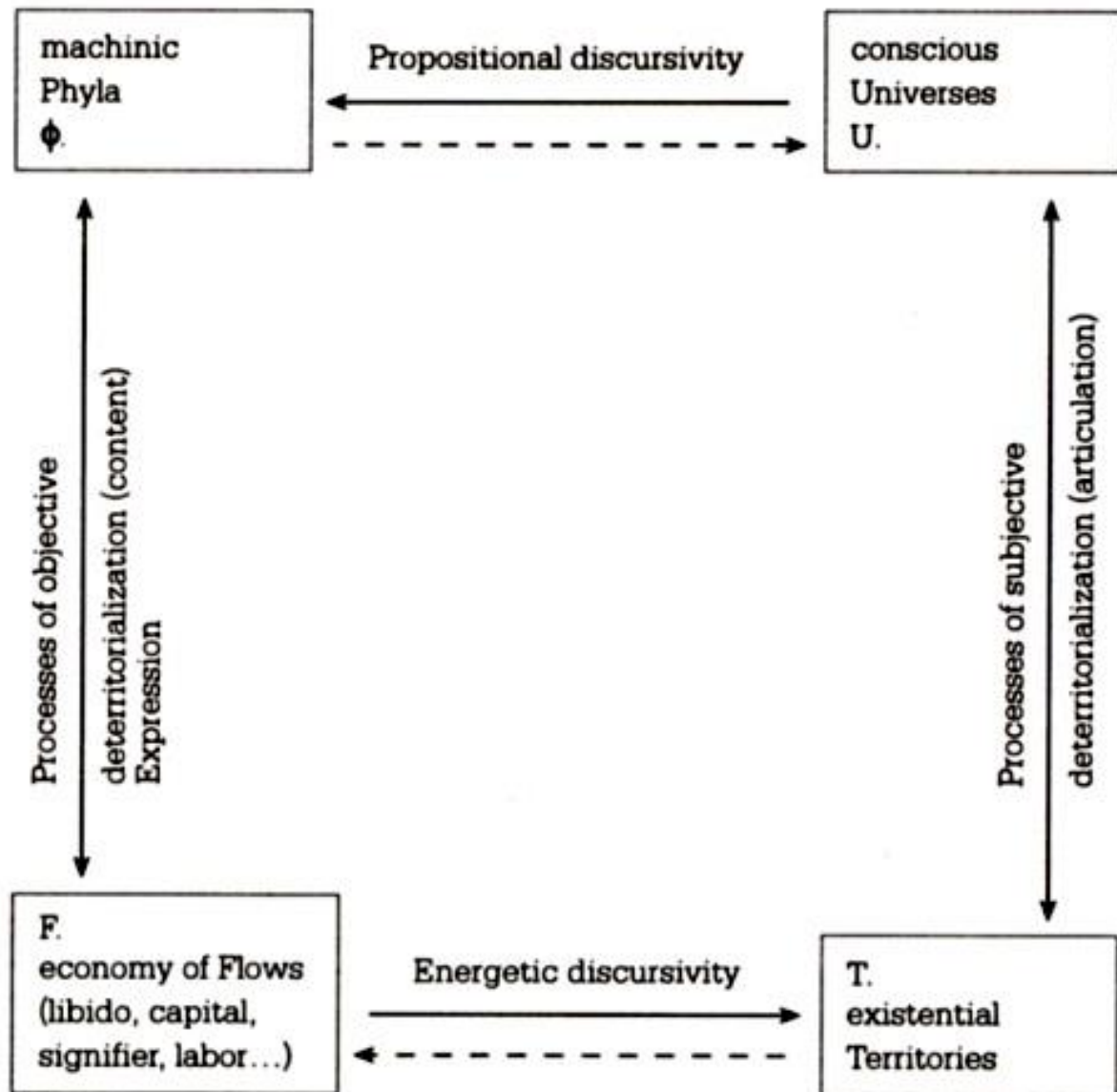
Figure 8: 'Discursivity and Deterritorialization' (Guattari, 2013: 27).

I arrived at the techniques employed in the Urban Workbench and In Harmony sections by taking artistic inspiration from these considerations. Furthermore, Spinelli's (2016) notion of "schizo-narrative" proved useful.

> The term 'schizo-narrative' refers to both a compositional and theoretical tool. It relates to an editing technique I use to treat the voice material in my compositions. After splitting the original interviews into hundreds of small fragments, the various utterances are reorganised on the timeline of the sound-work (often using aleatoric techniques) in order to construct a new, unexpected, broken and non-linear

> narrative, more removed from of [sic] its original context and its original unfolding and oscillating between rational and nonsensical stances. The semantic of the resulting discourse therefore becomes a malleable and constantly shifting element that never ossifies into one definite narrative (Spinelli, 2016: 13).

What is evident in listening to the broken sentences of Spinelli's *Lands and Genotypes* (2010) is the striving towards – and active positioning of – self-as-speaking-subject. This productive activity exposes the intersubjective, co-constitutive function of the 'second order language' identified by Merleau-Ponty (1973:1) 'in which we do not speak of objects and ideas except to reach some person'. In other words, both the situation in which we speak and the act of speaking itself call subjectivity into being (Murray and Holmes, 2014).

In Existential Territories 1.2 – 3.2, spoken and environmental fragments of audio are arranged around the themes discussed above (striving towards beauty, community resistance etc.). What is heard in these sections then, is the constitution of a collective subjectivity, a point of coherence amongst disparate, non-linear, semi-randomised elements that is further represented spatially as the elements circle an inaccessible centre of gravity. At various times during the installation, the sounds swirl spatially around a different temporary central point, each representative of nascent subjectivities – both collective (e.g., In Harmony as collective becoming oriented around the virtual yet operative notion of beauty) and individual (e.g., a child's notion of place as existential territory). The audience, who make almost exclusively transitory use of the space, pass through this point – this sonic possible world – as they go about their business.[28]

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[28] This observation is derived from a visit to the Cornerstone building on the 22nd of January 2019. Movement of people within the space was mapped between 3.30pm and 4:30pm. The impression was also supported by casual observations made on subsequent visits.

7. About Us – For Us (2021)

7.1. Foodbank and Recruitment

7.1.1. Recruitment (face-to-face interviews)

Recruitment for face-to-face interviews began in late 2018. Ann Roach, a community leader, made the first recommendations for participants just as the Urban Workbench foodbank shelves project got underway at WECC. In total, four potential participants were suggested by Ann, and two subsequently gave consent to take part in the project.

On the 30th of November 2018, both Adam Byrne and E were recommended for the project. Adam is a local musician, historian and activist that preferred to be credited for his participation in the work. We first met at my introductory meeting with WECC in August of the same year. He signed the consent form in early February 2019 and our interview took place in April. In the interim, we both worked as volunteers at the foodbank, and by the time I had completed the last of his superordinate theme diagrams in February 2020, we were well acquainted.

E is a woman of East African origin that agreed to participate on condition of pseudonymity. Ann felt that she would be an interesting participant after having heard her speak at a local community group activity. During this activity, community members had been asked to tell the group about an object that they had brought from home. Ann told me that E's contribution had been moving and emotionally charged. The backstory of E's chosen object was inseparable from a story of migration. Mindful of the ethical implications of conducting interviews with E, I first discussed the matter with her and then with my supervisors. It was decided that Ann, one of the trusted community members identified for this purpose whilst designing the current research, could be present at interview to provide any support that might be necessary.

Both Adam Byrne and E were both recommended for the project in late 2018. Adam was not the second participant to give consent, however. Rather, a former Everton resident, Ken Thompson, was the next to agree participation. As with Adam, Ken preferred to be credited for his collaboration rather than remain anonymous.

The recruitment process that led to Ken's involvement was slightly different to that of E and Adam. We met at an Everton History Society gathering on the 21st of February. I had attended the meeting on the recommendation of a local community member, J, to whom Rev. Henry Corbett had introduced me.

The meeting was held at Albion Youth Centre, close to Everton Park. I arrived with a Zoom H2n Field Recorder to record the meeting. There were twenty or more people present, all of post-retirement age. Everyone in attendance was a current or former resident of the area. A local historian was also present. I gave an overview of my proposed project, and the group offered a generous insight into life before the "slum clearances". As we were leaving, Ken approached me to enquire about the project. He explained that he had lots of memories of the area – from "going to the football" to "watching The Beatles". Enthused, I gave him a Participant Information Sheet and arranged to call.

I had a discussion with my supervisors about the appropriateness of Ken's participation as an ex-resident of the area. It was agreed that his perspectives would be invaluable. I then contacted Ken who agreed to participate in the project.[29]

7.1.2. Foodbank (observation and participation)

My participation at the West Everton Community Council Foodbank began in March 2019. It was then interrupted in April 2020, a few weeks into the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout

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[29] I had originally hoped to recruit two female, and two male participants. A fourth, female participant eventually opted out of the study for personal reasons, however.

this period, I was present as a volunteer at thirty-four of the weekly openings. Two food projects operated out of the WECC building: a Trussel Trust supported branch of North Liverpool Foodbank (St. Andrew's Community Network) for which users required a referral from specific agencies; and the WECC Food Project that provided for members of the local community through knowledge of the area. Officially, the foodbank opened at 2pm each Wednesday and ended at 3:30pm. However, in practice, volunteers began to arrive much earlier in the day, and it was not uncommon for work to be fully underway by 1:30pm, with foodbank users in attendance.

Despite the urgency felt during its construction in the winter of 2018, the opening of the foodbank was delayed until late February 2019. Usage was low during the first few openings. I first attended on the 6th of March, a week after the foodbank first opened its doors. I was told that I had missed a training session, but there was a member of St. Andrew's staff on hand who offered to get me up to speed. On that day, we provided food for one attendee.

One part of a volunteer's job was to fill bags with cans and boxes from the shelves. The specific amount of goods was determined by the attendee's living situation (there were several lists that determined the amount of food to provide for families with children, couples, single persons etc.). The other part of the job took place in a large room in which foodbank users were invited to sit with local volunteers around a table upon which further food was provided for consumption on the day.

My participation throughout April and May of that year was regular. As use of the foodbank increased, so did the camaraderie between the volunteers. At times it seemed that there were more volunteers than the flow of foodbank users demanded, but it was becoming evident that showing up and being together was important. In working together for the benefit of people that need assistance, a positive group dynamic was developing. I

was convinced that its benefits could affect beyond the walls of WECC and reach out into the wider community through foodbank users that had been treated warmly and respectfully.

Conversely, we also began to hear some tragic stories during this period. On the 1st of May, a young woman told us that her diabetic seventeen-year-old stepdaughter had died from hypoglycaemia. She also described the labyrinthine processes that had prevented her from having money for eight weeks. The reality of Universal Credit was tangible and penetrated the academic or professional notion of studying austerity as a researcher. The young woman also described a history of suicide attempts, exposing for me the hopelessness and cruelty associated with the welfare reforms. On the same day, a young man told us that his father had died from an infection following an operation. The original procedure had been necessitated by an accident that he had suffered due to problems with alcohol.

There were also difficulties with some attendees. In May 2019, the volunteers had to deal with a difficult man that was known in the local community. He was asked to wait outside after intimating that he was going to steal things from WECC. Something similar happened in July, when three female foodbank users wandered further into the building and tried to open doors that led to other rooms. They were heard loudly proclaiming that they were looking for things to steal. On both occasions, I was very impressed by the ability of the local volunteers, several of whom are women of post-retirement age, to deal with the situation calmly and without incident.

On another occasion, a young man stopped me on my way into the building to tell me that he was in a rage. He had just been to the nearby police station and caused a scene in the waiting room because he had been approached by a sex worker (that he referred to as a "strapper"). "Everyone is sick of it", he told me. For me, the conversation highlighted the dangerous position that street sex workers find themselves in. According to Bellis et al. (2006), a large proportion of Liverpool street sex workers have reported experiencing

violence. For some people I had spoken to in the area, this taboo practice, alongside a local resurgence in drug dealing, was symbolic of comparative deprivation. However, the incident with the young man reminds us that we should be careful about such matters, as 'community action' can often be 'a euphemism for vigilante violence' (Mitchell, 2005, cited in Howell et al. 2008: 247).

Some days in the foodbank were busier than others. We also found that periods of action were sporadic; intense activity often followed long lulls. It was also difficult to predict the occasions upon which the foodbank would be busy. Having experienced days in which up to thirty separate referrals were made (some for large families), we were sometimes surprised by quiet afternoons on what we had convinced ourselves would be busy occasions. For example, only three referrals were received on the first day of the 2019 school summer holidays. Ann was able to offer explanations on such occasions: some parents could not afford bus fares for the whole family, whilst others lacked the necessary local support network to leave the children and travel alone. Others still might have been too embarrassed to explain the purpose of the journey to their children.

2020 started relatively well at the foodbank. There had been a private donation (the second that I had been aware of since the foodbank opened) and Ann was encouraging us to give more out to each foodbank user. However, she was finding it hard to get this message across, so Adam Byrne and I decided to make a point of filling up the bags with items (which felt much better than the past occasions upon which stock had run low).

World events caught up with us in March 2020 when national restrictions were imposed as a measure to control the spread of COVID-19. An email from the Graduate School at Edge Hill University on the 18th of March announced the suspension of all fieldwork. In accordance with the advice, I did not attend the foodbank that week. However, I subsequently spoke to some of the volunteers, and they informed me that the service was under threat. Several of the staff, including Ann, were considered vulnerable to the virus.

After some investigation, I noted the Government exception that allowed travel for foodbank workers. I then attended for the following three weeks. Ann's daughter had taken charge, doing brilliantly to oversee the change from a drop-in to a drop-off service.

On the fourth week, after members of my immediate family (and household) received letters from the NHS instructing them to "shield", I made the decision to contact the staff and inform them that I would not attend for a while. Although it was not the reason for my decision, I took some comfort in the fact that roles for volunteers at the foodbank were changing. The job that I had performed for the past thirteen months was becoming, at least temporarily, a little redundant. More than anything, the new drop-off service required volunteers with transportation. Responding to referrals and delivering food to those that the local staff identified as most vulnerable in the West Everton area had become the priority.

7.2. Interviews

7.2.1. Face-to-face interviews in the local area

In accordance with the hermeneutic, phenomenological principles that underpin both Feld's sounding anthropological approach (1991) and IPA, I felt that it was important to conduct interviews in the local area. The discussions and recordings were therefore undertaken within the participants' quotidian, existential environment, which was also the phenomenon under examination at interview.[30] This approach also resonated with Gallagher's (2012 and 2015) attempts to ensure the ethical conduct of interviews in a field recording-based work.[31]

As a final consideration, I also felt that it was important to meet in places chosen by the participants in order to assuage, to some degree, additional power imbalances that can

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[30] See Chapter 5.
[31] See Chapter 4.

arise when a researcher meets a participant on the researcher's "turf" (with all of the institutional authority that this turf implies).

7.1.2.1. 16.04.19 – Interview with Ken

The first interview conducted was with Ken on the 16th of April 2019. Prior to the meeting, I had contacted J, the local community member who had invited me to the Everton History Society meeting at which Ken and I had first met. J kindly agreed to sit in on the interview, thereby fulfilling an ethics committee requirement for a trusted member of the local community to be present as a representative of local support networks. Ken had a prearranged walk scheduled with a local group (a social group that organised walks in and around the Merseyside area) of which he was a member. We arranged to meet in May Duncan's pub in the late morning once the groups' activities were completed.

I made my way to Everton with a (borrowed) Sennheiser ME66 shotgun microphone, a Zoom H4n field recording device, a Zoom H2n field recording device, and a small Vemont action camera. Already aware of Ken's love for walking, the plan was to conduct the interview whilst touring Everton Park on foot. However, as I was travelling into the city, Ken called me to report rain. This was unfortunate, and even at this early stage I felt that it would have implications for the trajectory of the artistic work and its consequent presentation. However, I reminded myself that the project was an exploration, analogous in fact to a dérive, and that no set route should be pursued at the expense of others at this early stage (Debord, 2004). We decided to ask for permission to record the interview in the pub.

I arrived to find Ken sat with his walking group in an otherwise empty establishment. He introduced me to his friends, and I joined the group until J arrived. We then moved to the back of the pub and set up on a table of our own. I made enquiries at the bar, and my request for permission to record in the establishment was met with a casual and friendly

affirmative. The staff member even offered to turn off the music that was playing in the pub. I declined this offer, conscious of the need to blend with and capture the environment (a decision that I sometimes momentarily questioned during the editing and composition stages of the project!).

I set up the Zoom H4n on the table, pointing the X/Y coincident pair end diagonally across towards Ken. I then set the Zoom H2n to four-channel surround mode. I pointed the M/S (mid-sides) end directly at Ken and the X/Y configuration towards myself. The Vemont action camera was placed next to the H2n so that it was also pointing squarely at the interviewee. I sat around the corner of the table to Ken's left, gripping a short boom pole holder that supported the Sennheiser ME66. The microphone's head was angled downwards at his sternum, ensuring that his voice projected through its super-cardioid area of sensitivity whilst being safely out of the reach of air blasts from his breath.

We started the interview and, after an initial request to clarify the first question, Ken launched into an earnest and explorative interview.[32] He had no problem in speaking at length, or in following his line of thought down tangential and revealing avenues. A little over seven-and-a-half minutes into the interview, I realised that I had forgotten to start recording on the ME66 channel. This was regrettable, as I envisaged that the shotgun microphone would provide my main source of capture. Nevertheless, the first stages of the interview were covered by the H4n's, and H2n's, integral microphones.

I worked through the questions that I had prepared for the semi-structured engagement as the interview progressed.[33] As time passed, J, who was sat opposite to me on the pub table, naturally began to join the conversation. Hence the interview, to some degree, became a group discussion. Despite this, the unspoken expectations of the interview situation maintained an influence and Ken's input far outweighed J's. The extent of

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[32] See Appendix 1.
[33] See Appendix 1.

J's participation was not negligible, however. This was illustrated by the fact that thirty-eight minutes and forty seconds into the seventy-six-minute interview, she had to ask that the microphones be switched off for a moment while she answered a direct question from Ken. In a sense, the group began to enunciate according to its singular dynamic. Later, these considerations became central to my analysis of the interview.[34]

The interview ended when J had to leave. In all, we had recorded an hour and fifteen-minutes' worth of audio material. I had intended to ask Ken to improvise on a small Korg Monotron Delay Analogue Synthesizer whilst reflecting on the interview, but I sensed that this would be a conspicuous act in the pub environment. Instead, I simply mentioned the idea to Ken and suggested that we might come back to it on another occasion.

7.1.2.2. 30.04.19 – Interview with E

The second interview took place on the 30th of April 2019. I met E at WECC in the early afternoon. Ann was also present, providing a link to community and local support networks should such assistance be needed. We discussed possible locations for the interview and decided to set up in the foodbank room across the corridor from WECC's kitchen area. E felt that it would be best for Ann to look after her youngest son during the interview. He was a baby who was not yet old enough to walk confidently. Ann agreed to take care of him in the other room.

E sat at the far end of a table in the centre of the foodbank room facing the door. I brought a chair to the side of the table to her right-hand side. I placed the Vemont action camera on a shelf behind me and proceeded to set up the microphones. Placed on the table, the H2n's X/Y side pointed at me, whilst the M/S side pointed toward E. The H4n's

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[34] See Appendix 2 and Section 7.3.5.3.

X/Y configuration faced E but was kept within easy reaching distance of my position at the table. Having learned a lesson from Ken's interview, during which I held a short boom pole uncomfortably for the duration, I opted to set up a microphone stand in front of E and use it to angle the Sennheiser ME66 shotgun microphone to point at her sternum. Although E frequently shifted sitting position, the ME66 capture turned out to be the least problematic of any recording made during the participants' interviews.

E's answers were short at first, as is often the case in IPA semi-structured interviews in which initial exchanges are meant to establish rapport (Smith et al., 2008). I suspected that E was a little reticent at first, but as we progressed, she became forthcoming and explorative with her responses. There was, of course, a difference in communicational styles, and I felt that it was perfectly understandable that this be compounded by the usual tension of the interview situation. Some of the responses caused me to speculate upon E's expectations of the conversation, and the degree to which expectations play a role in what I would suggest is always a cultured interview performance (Lazzarato, 2014). For example, my questions about local sounds were understood to be questions on social issues. E's answers, which often blended the auditory with the social, proved to be some of the most interesting in the project, offering an insight into the way in which she hears the social world.[35]

The interview lasted for just under twenty-three minutes. At the time I felt this to be rather short. Later, when familiarising myself with the interview footage, I noticed that a baby began to cry at approximately 20 minutes and 24 seconds. This had completely escaped my notice on the day, but must surely have influenced the final stages of the interview for E.

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[35] See Appendix 3.

At the end of the interview, I asked E if she would like to improvise something on the Korg Monotron Delay Analogue Synthesizer that I had to hand, but she declined. E explained that she was reluctant to use the instrument because she did not know how to play it. This was unexpected, and I realised that I would have to learn to be sensitive to power relations in ways that I may not necessarily have assumed beforehand.

7.1.2.3. 08.05.2019 – Interview with Adam

The third, and as it turned out, final interview took place with Adam on the 8th of May 2019. Once again, WECC was the venue. This time we set up on the quiet first floor of the building in the room next to the workshop.

I decided to set up a comfortable space, travelling in early to place two soft-furnished chairs on either side of a small coffee table. We had arranged to meet in the late morning on a Wednesday, a couple of hours before foodbank users tended to arrive. I set up the action camera on a large worktop near the windows, perpendicular to the chairs. The H2n was positioned on the table with the M/S side facing Adam's seat and the X/Y facing my own. The H4n was also positioned on the table with its X/Y configuration facing towards Adam. The Sennheiser ME66 shotgun microphone was again mounted on a stand and pointed downwards towards the interviewee's sternum.

Just before the interview, I made a last-minute decision to swap the current, partially full batteries in the H4n with two of the spare Panasonic AAs that I had bought as a backup on the way to WECC. I came to regret this decision when, around seventeen-minutes and forty-one seconds into the interview, the field recorder shut down (consequently halting recording for both the integral X/Y configuration and the Sennheiser ME66). Again, the H2n came to the rescue for the period in which the issue escaped my notice. By twenty-five minutes and twenty-three seconds in, the H4n had had its batteries replaced and was up

and running again. However, the loss of the shotgun microphone for this period proved a difficult obstacle later on.

As I was now coming to expect, Adam was a just little guarded at first but settled into the interview very quickly to provide a forthright and explorative account of life in the area. When we had finished, I asked him if he would like to improvise something on the Korg Monotron Delay Analogue Synthesizer. He agreed and we made a recording before packing up and heading to the foodbank room. This synthesiser recording proved very important for the final audio work.

7.3. Analysing the interviews

7.3.1. Audiovisual footage for analysis

In the time that followed the completion of an interview, I put together a video of the event in Ableton Live 10. Determined to improve upon the voices that had featured in *Cartographies*, I opted to work with the space of presentation in mind. After some initial experiments in mixing the close presentation of the Sennheiser ME66 with the more ambient sound of each stereo field recorder (which is how the sound is presented in the Ken and E interview videos that were used for analysis), I eventually opted to retain only the shotgun capture going forwards.

Each interview was analysed in turn. The order of analysis mirrored the order in which the interviews were conducted. In accordance with the IPA methods expounded by Smith et al. (2008), I felt that it was important to focus on one interview at a time. This allowed me to retain and develop impressions from each interview without "cross-chatter". It should be noted, however, that because of this, the order of analysis was significant. Inevitably, the singular impressions, techniques and approaches developed in the analysis of one interview coloured the next.

Ken's interview was the first to be conducted, and the analysis of it began in the following weeks. Once the audiovisual footage of the individual interview had been rendered as a QuickTime Movie file, the first stage was to watch and listen to the footage repeatedly in order to gain familiarity with it. Aside from a preliminary journal entry made on the day of the interview, no notes were made until I had played the video through in full three times.

7.3.2. Free coding

Next, a free coding pass of the audiovisual footage was made on a printed transcript. The interview was transcribed word-for-word, and sentence structure was foregone in favour of a method by which spaces were left after each pause in speech. I felt that this was important, as rhythmic, and prosodic considerations should not be dismissed as meaningful elements in analysis, especially in a sound-based project. Abortive enunciations were transcribed phonetically in an attempt to retain some of the singular nature of the verbal dialogue. Wide margins were left, and the transcript was split into two columns in order to facilitate pen-written notes on the page. Formatted in this way, Ken's seventy-six-minute interview was presented on seventy pages of A4.

The aim of the free coding stage was to note down any and every thought that came to mind as the audiovisual footage played through. This document would then provide a written account of this specific stage of preunderstanding. Throughout the free coding, many notes were made on the page, and a plethora of connecting lines and neologistic symbology were used in order to emphasise connections. The same process was conducted in turn for both E's, and then Adam's interview.

7.3.3. Detailed Analysis

When each free coding pass was complete, I moved on to a detailed line-by-line analysis. Adhering to IPA methods, I put away the free coding transcript, now replete with documentation of my preunderstandings, and started fresh on a new transcript (Smith et al., 2008). This document was partitioned, with three table columns running vertically downwards.[36] The leftmost column, entitled "Emergent Themes", was left blank at first. The middle column, entitled "Transcript" contained the transcribed interview, still spaced according to pauses in the participant's speech. The right-hand column, entitled "Explorative Comments" was utilised for the first analytic pass through the document. Elaborating upon the recommended subdivision of explorative comments into the descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual,[37] I decided to order my line-by-line analysis according to descriptive, enunciative, conceptual and sonic-spatial comments. The substitution of "enunciative" for "linguistic" allowed me to comment upon all manner of gesture noticed in the audiovisual material. The "sonic-spatial" comments category allowed me to incorporate sounding considerations that might prove useful for the eventual translation of IPA analysis into a sounding work. An example of one of the real benefits this invented category was the documentation of E's interesting aural manner of conceiving social space.[38] Each category – descriptive, enunciative, conceptual and sonic-spatial – was designated a particular type of formatting to distinguish it from the others.

As with free coding, the line-by-line analyses were conducted whilst playing through the audiovisual material recorded at interview. Another minor modification to the standard IPA process was employed here. When my mind drifted back to ideas that had occurred to me when free coding, I allowed myself to return to the document (that I had initially put to

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[36] See Appendices 2, 3 and 4.
[37] See Chapter 5.
[38] See Appendix 3.

one side) and check the section in question. Rather than being detrimental to the method, I felt that this was an important way for preunderstandings to systematically inform developing understanding and allow for localised implementation of the hermeneutic circle.

7.3.4. Emergent Themes

When the line-by-line entry of exploratory comments (descriptive, enunciative, conceptual and sonic-spatial) was completed, focus shifted to the left-hand column and the identification of emergent themes. Recurring themes within the interview were identified and given relatively short and memorable titles. Some titles were suggested by recurring phrases within the exploratory comments. Others were created as a matter of necessity when a suitable title for an emergent theme did not already exist amongst them. The analysis was conducted from the top of the transcript to the bottom, and a separate document (a key to emergent themes for each individual interviewee) was developed in order to define them.[39] In this way, the concepts that facilitated analysis were generated from close inspection of interview material.

7.3.5. Superordinate Themes

Once the transcript document and key to emergent themes had been developed, a process for extrapolating superordinate themes was required. As Smith et al. (2008) note, this process can vary from study to study. My method was to list all of the emergent themes for an individual as "message" objects in Max for Live. Associated emergent themes were grouped together and then whole groups were moved close to other related groups. Duplicates of emergent themes that had already been placed in another group were

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[39] See Appendix 5.

identified by the colour red. Finally, multi-coloured patch chords were connected from emergent theme to emergent theme in order to illustrate their connection. Most often, connections were made between emergent themes in the same and adjacent groups, but I imposed no hard and fast rule on this, and sometimes connections were made across superordinate theme groupings. For example, connections run between emergent themes in the superordinate categories A1 and A2, and themes in A2 connect to themes in A3 (see Figures 9 and 10). At this level (and at the level of overarching themes discussed in the following section), I suggest that the possibility for any theme to connect to any other renders the diagram 'rhizomatic' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 6).[40]

The interconnected groupings were given individual titles. These titles, and alternative shorthand relating to individual participants (A1, E1, K1 etc) constitute the superordinate themes.

7.3.5.1. Adam
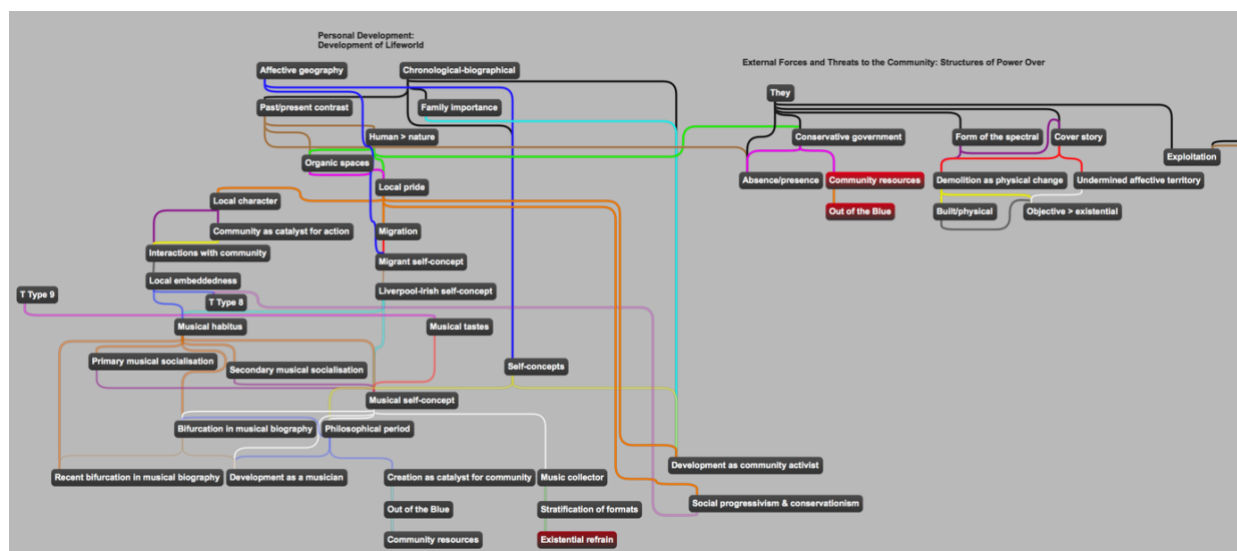
Figure 9: A1 Superordinate theme diagram – Personal Development: Development of Lifeworld.

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[40] This is a Deleuzo-Guattarian concept that refers to connections in multiplicities. Multiplicities are groupings that are less hierarchical than those termed "arborescent".
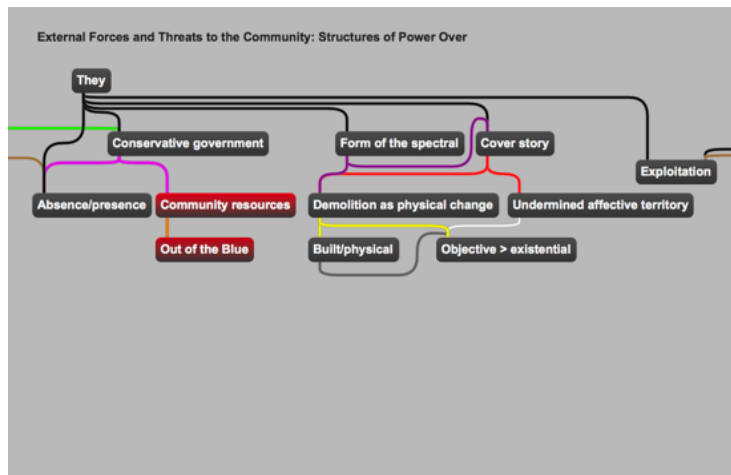
Figure 10: A2 Superordinate theme diagram – External forces and threats to community (structures of power over).
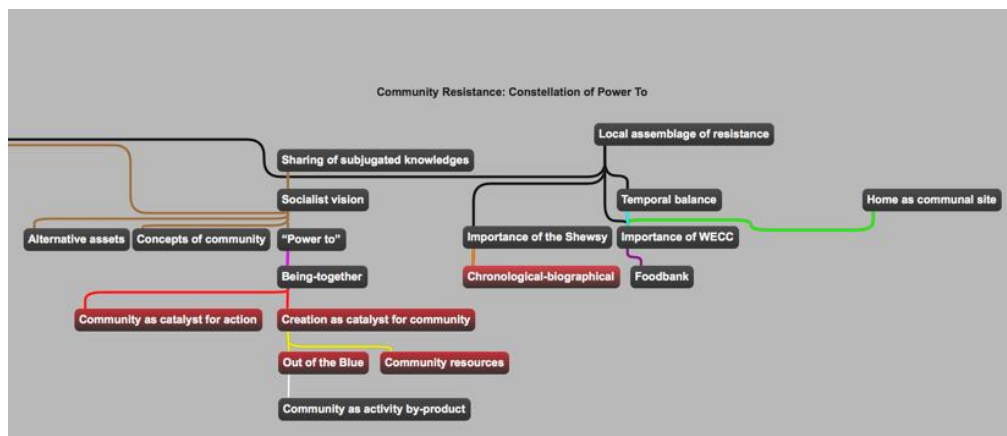
Figure 11: A3 Superordinate theme diagram – Community resistance (constellations of power to).
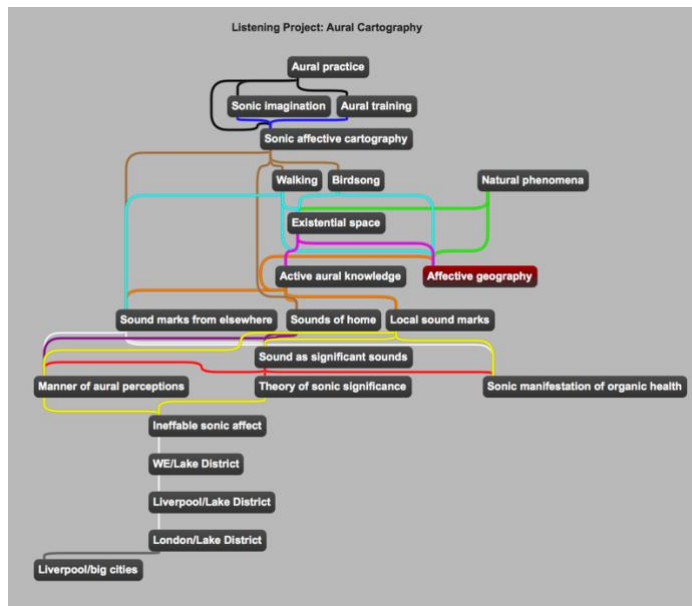
Figure 12: A4 Superordinate theme diagram – Listening project (aural cartography).
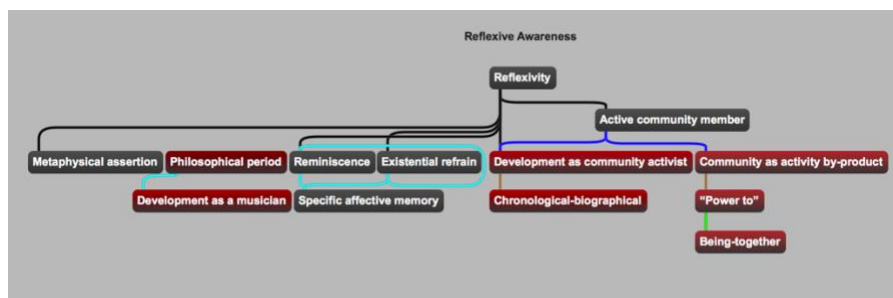
Figure 13: A5 Superordinate theme diagram – Reflexive awareness.
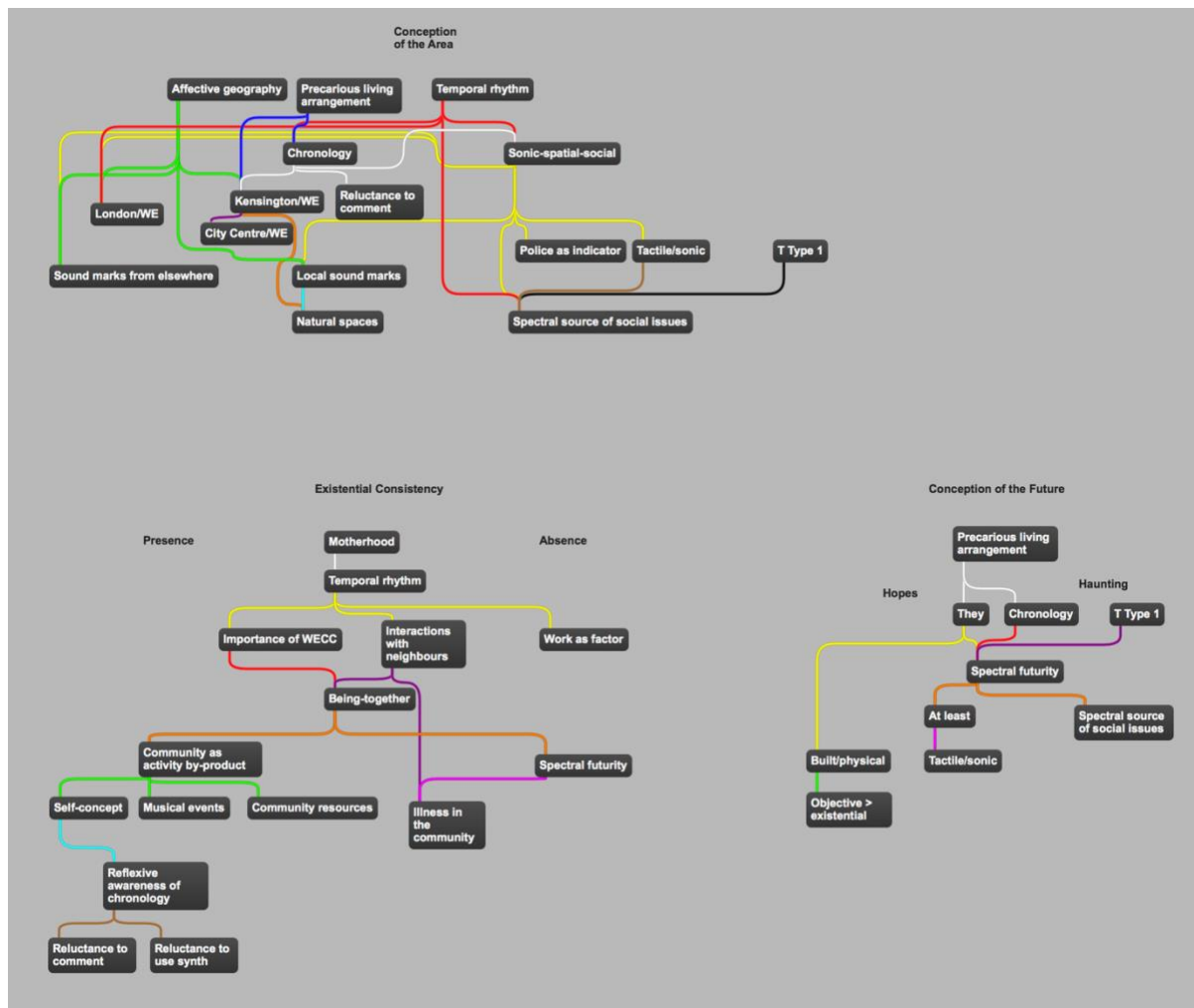
Figure 14: E1 Superordinate theme diagram – Conception of the area, E2 – Existential consistency and E3 – Conception of the future.
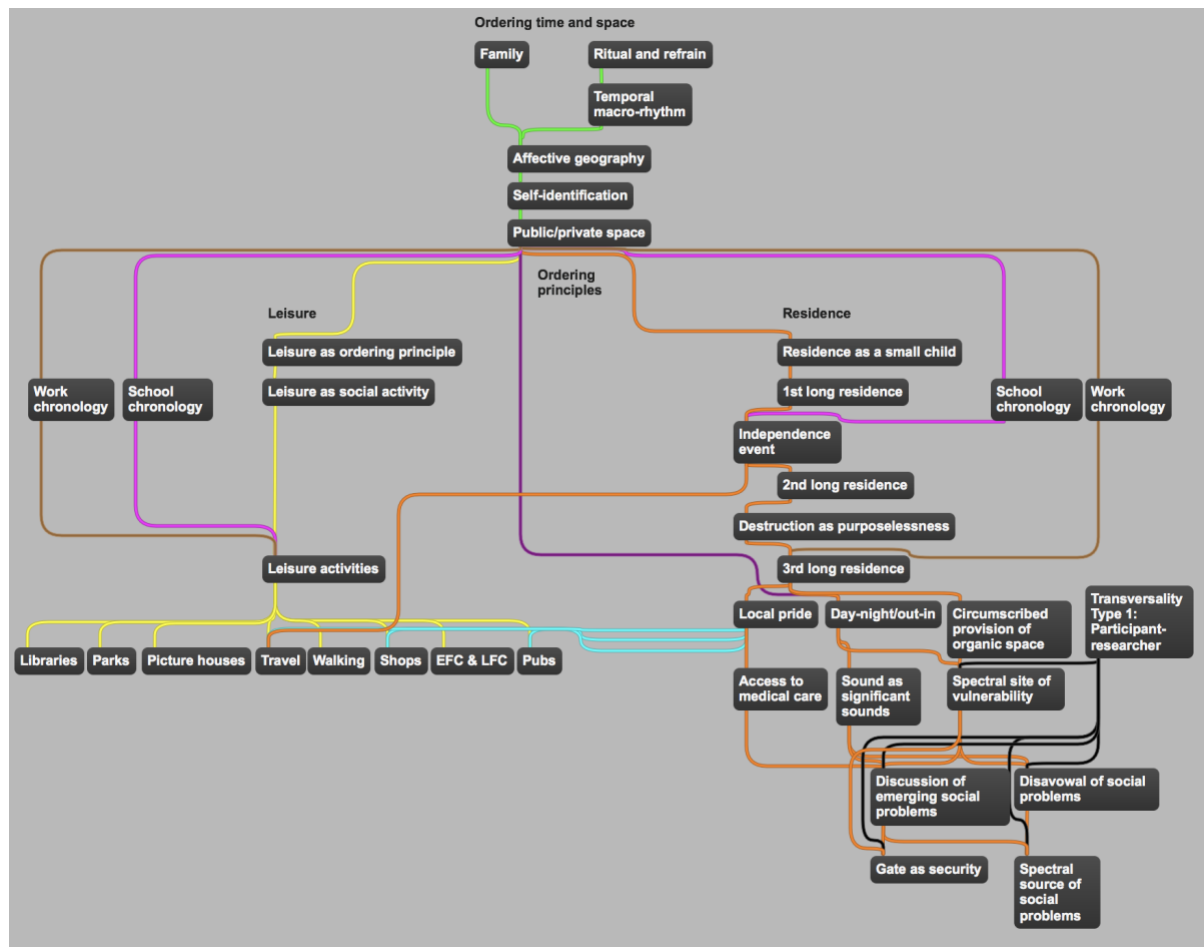
Figure 15: K1 Superordinate theme diagram – Ordering time and space, plus ordering principles K1.1 Leisure and K1.2 Residence.
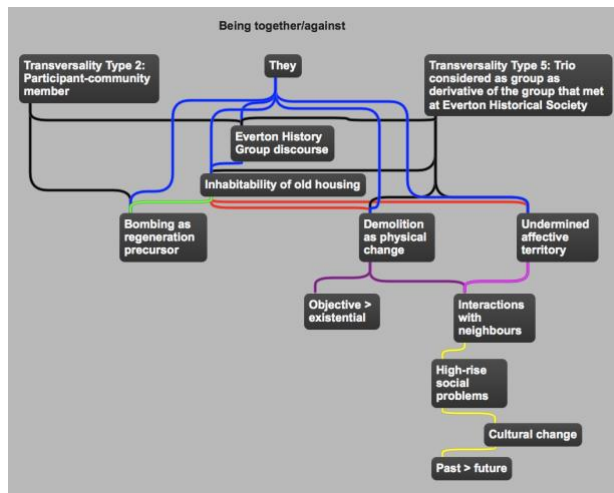
Figure 16: K2 Superordinate theme diagram – Being together/against
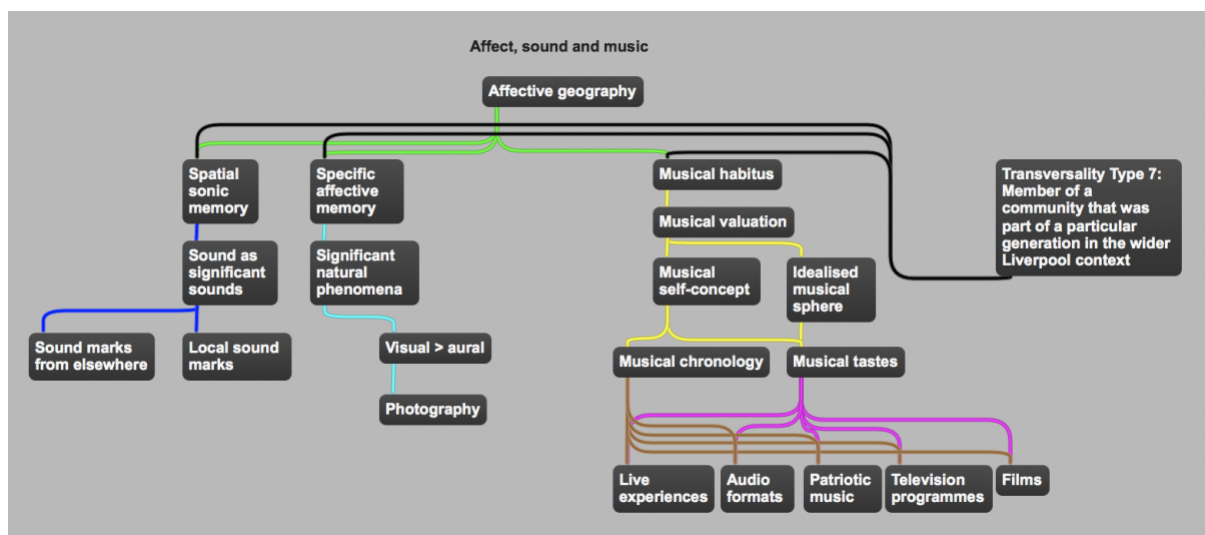
Figure 17: K3 Superordinate theme diagram – Affect, sound and music.

7.3.6. Comparison across cases and developing a structure

Once individual analyses were complete, connections were identified between superordinate themes across all cases. Unlike the solution employed in the generation of superordinate themes, comparison across cases was conducted in a less visual way: by comparing them in a rough .txt file.
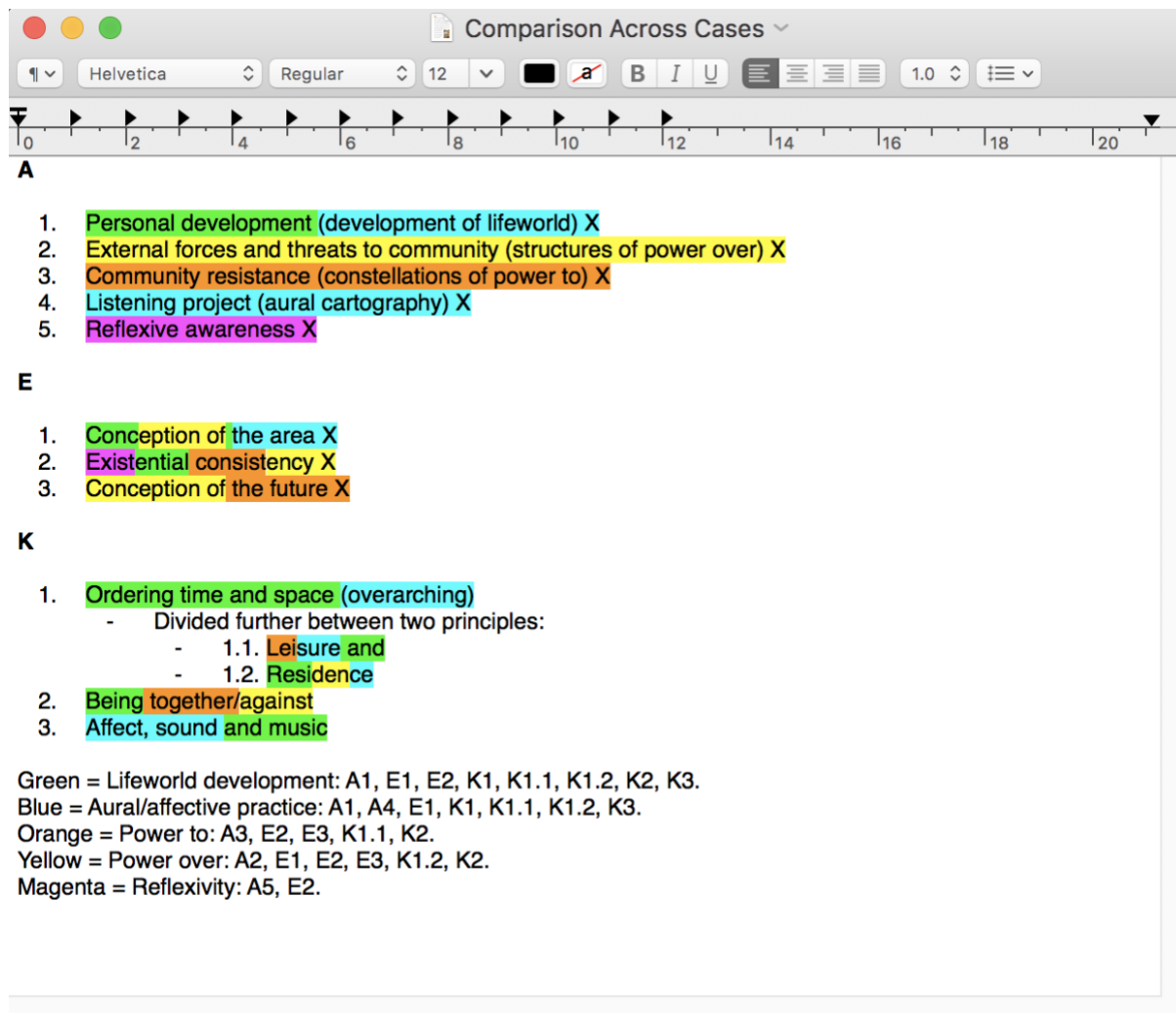
Figure 18: Comparison across cases.

Having listed and numbered the superordinate themes according to participant, links were identified and colour coded. The overarching themes were as follows:

- Lifeworld development: Those superordinate themes that reveal information on the way in which lived experience of the existential world was formed and is maintained. An example can be found in Ken's ordering of time and space according to "ritualised" activities, and the subdivision of this into considerations of leisure and residence.

- Aural/affective practice: Those superordinate themes that reveal information on a participant's aesthetic engagement with their environment. Interesting examples can be found in E's propensity to describe periods of time and the associated mood of the local area in sonic terminology[41], and Adam's affective mapping of the area according to birdsong and other sonic markers.

- Power to: Those superordinate themes that refer to forms of community empowerment. Various examples were evident in Adam's interview, who dealt with this topic so explicitly that a superordinate theme (A3) was dedicated to it.

- Power over: Those superordinate themes that refer to systems of domination. Again, this topic can be well exemplified by Adam's interview, from which a dedicated superordinate theme (A2) was formed.

- Reflexivity: Those superordinate themes that reveal information about the participant's awareness of their place within the local environment. This was exemplified by E's self-consciousness that stemmed from her short tenure in the local area, and by Adam's interview, from which emerged a superordinate theme dedicated to it (A5).

The ordering of superordinate themes into overarching themes can be seen in the following table**:**

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[41] See Appendix 5.

Superordinate Theme	Overarching Theme				
	Lifeworld Development	Aural/affective practice	Power to	Power over	Reflexivity
A1	X	X			
A2				X	
A3			X		
A4		X			
A5					X
E1	X	X		X	
E2	X		X	X	X
E3			X	X	
K1	X	X			
K1.1	X	X	X		
K1.2	X	X	X	X	
K2	X			X	
K3	X	X	X		

Table 1: Ordering of superordinate themes into overarching themes.

As well as constituting categories, the five overarching themes serve as virtual connections between superordinate themes. This consideration had consequences for the next stage of the work, in which a Max for Live patch was created in order to determine playback sequences according to the connections between themes that arose at interview.

Once the analysis was completed, all participants were invited to review the superordinate theme diagrams and key to emergent themes relating to their own interview. Both Adam and Ken took the opportunity to review the documents. Adam then took the documents away for closer inspection and fed back his approval the following week.

7.4. Musical Context for *About Us – For Us*

7.4.1. Overview

About Us – For Us is a large-scale work that is presented as a fixed, binaural composition. It can be thought of as a 'sonic-write up': a sounding ethnographic artwork that is offered in the place of a traditional written report (Rennie, 2014: 121). The title is derived from WECC's mission statement: 'nothing about us, without us, is for us' (West Everton Community Council, 2019). This was felt to be apposite for a sounding work that presented data from an ethnographic engagement in the area, whilst also exploring the themes of collaboration and representation.

The duration of the work is one hour, thirty-two minutes and forty seconds. It is subdivided into seven tracks. Track changes correspond to changes in overarching field recording location. The tracks are:

1. WECC I
2. West Everton Area I
3. Stanley Park Lake I
4. WECC II
5. West Everton Area II
6. Stanley Park Lake II
7. End

The final track contains field recordings captured at West Everton Community Council and within the wider local area.[42]

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[42] It should also be noted that Stanley Park Lake is not located within the West Everton area. A discussion of this field recording session follows in Section 7.4.5.2.

As a binaural composition, the work is best experienced via headphone playback. This type of presentation has the advantage of increasing availability for listeners, who only require domestic equipment in order to experience it.[43]

7.4.2. COVID-19 and implications for the work

Initially, I had envisioned the work as an installation, and aimed to exhibit it at a place of significance within the local area. However, in the time between the work's earliest conceptions (May 2019) and final realisation, the COVID-19 pandemic forced me to reconsider the available options. As a safety measure, fieldwork had been suspended by Edge Hill University in March 2020. This had implications for field recording activities and limited choices concerning the eventual site of presentation. In an atmosphere of uncertainty that surrounded the possibility of social interactions, the composition developed as a fixed work that could be accessed remotely. The possibility of future exhibition, however, still coloured aesthetic choices throughout.[44]

Early plans for the sonic write-up centred upon notions of collaboration. *Cartographies* had included recordings of community activities, but no local people were involved in the work's realisation. In the making of *About Us – For Us*, I considered Drever's (2002: 25) recommendation: that soundscape composers find ways to 'displace authorship of the work'. To this end, a short-lived project of collaborative field recording was embarked upon in early

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[43] Several of the works discussed in Chapter 4 can be experienced via domestic playback systems, and therefore share the same advantage (Feld, 1991; Radio Boy, 2000; Stollery, 2005; Garin and Gobart, 2007; DeLaurenti, 2008; Kirkegaard, 2008; Lane, 2008; Spinelli, 2010; Cusack, 2012a; 2012b; DeLaurenti, 2012; Martin, 2013; Rennie 2013; Spinelli, 2013; Waldock, 2013; Cílková, 2014; Martin, 2014a; O'Keefe, 2014 and Cambridge University Press, 2015).[43]
[44] The work was finally exhibited, albeit under socially distanced conditions and with low footfall, at Angel Field Festival, 2021 (Liverpool Hope University).

2020.[45] However, the suspension of fieldwork forced a re-evaluation of options that had

aesthetic consequences for the sonic write-up.

7.4.3. Theoretical considerations

The notion of assemblage[46] guided work on *What Does Who to What?*, and informed the

Spinelli-influenced aleatory processes that featured in several sections of *Cartographies*

(Spinelli, 2016).[47] Having assembled a variety of diverse materials during the process of

observing, participating, and interviewing within the local area, this concept again became

operative in *About Us – For Us.*

The ambition, stated above, to 'displace authorship' (Drever, 2002: 25), and the

complementary concern for "multiple perspectives" within the literature, sit easily alongside

the notion of assemblage (Freeman et al., 2011; Gallagher, 2015; Waldock, 2016). The

materials mentioned above, sourced from diverse places and rendered in diverse formats

(interview transcripts, aural histories, field recordings, journal entries, superordinate theme

diagrams, musical performances etc.), also served to problematise notions of individual

artistic ownership of a work. Despite obstacles that arose as a consequence of the global

pandemic, I chose to embrace this trajectory. To this end, a reduction of the individuated,

artistic agency that is often arrogated to the composer at the expense of other voices was

attempted.

Just as non-linear processes in *Cartographies* were oriented around operative

concepts of becoming (striving towards communitarian aims and beauty), *About Us – For

Us*, was envisioned as an assembled sonic write-up, centred upon a notion of place (West

Everton), that enunciates in many (human and non-human) voices.

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[45] Details are given in Section 7.4.5.2.
[46] Definitions are given in Footnote 8 on page 15 of this text.
[47] See Sections 6.2.1. and 6.2.2.

7.4.4. Planning and structure

In this section, a rationale for the structure of the work is provided. A more detailed discussion of each the composition's constituent elements then follows in Sections 7.4.5.-7.4.10.

An initial diagram was made to outline the intended structure of the work.
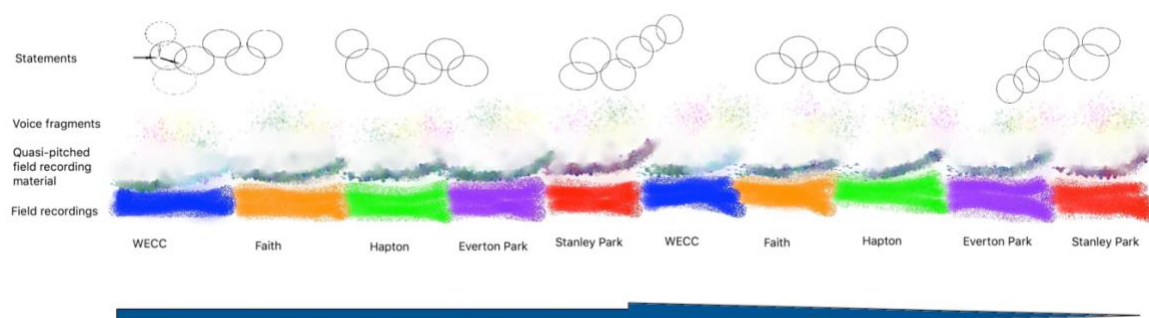
Figure 19: Compositional plan for *About Us – For Us* (2021)

In this early conception, the composition was reliant upon two main elements: field recordings, arranged according to location, and recorded statements from interviews with participants. Both elements were organised in time according to semi-randomised (aleatory) processes. It was felt that these processes provided a method by which some of the authority of the artist could be displaced. Rather than rely solely upon the artist's discretion, the agency of digital technologies was invoked within the enunciating, West Everton-aural-assemblage. In the finalised sonic write-up, the juxtaposition of recorded, fixed elements arranged by aleatory processes provided a template for the work. Details arising from their interaction helped to define a start and end point.

Two additional elements were included in the initial diagram: "quasi-pitched field recording elements", referring to semi-constant filtered sounds derived from audio

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recordings of the soundscape; and "voice fragments", referring to musical elements abstracted from statements made by the participants.

The work developed from this foundation, and two further important musical elements were included in the final presentation: Adam's synthesiser performance that was recorded at interview; and recorded telephone calls with the participants, conducted while they were in COVID-19 lockdown isolation. Each element, in its own way, was structurally operative within the work.

Feld recordings are foundational for the development of the composition. Unfolding according to the aleatory process mentioned above, the final work moves between three overarching categories: WECC, the wider West Everton area, and Stanley Park Lake. Each of these categories is further subdivided into specific recording locations that are situated within them. The order of the overarching categories derives from an imaginary walk. This walk follows a route that begins at locations closest to Adam's home and proceeds to those furthest away.

Recorded participant statements, perhaps usefully thought of as an archive or aural history, were ordered according to an aleatory process that applied rules of succession derived from interview analyses. Their placement within the work is quite regular, mirroring the output of a Max for Live patch that was specifically designed for this purpose.

The prominence of filtered field recording elements, referred to as "quasi-pitched" in the original diagram, increases as the composition develops. This musical device, reliant upon signal processing, was developed from techniques employed in *Cartographies*. Its inclusion in the piece is representative of gentrification. To this end, it unfolds according to a subtle but voluble increase over time, depicting gradual and irreversible change whilst also dialoguing with discussions around permissible artistic manipulation in the soundscape composition literature (Andean, 2014).

Musical elements derived from participants' statements are featured for the entirety of the work. Often, these sounds accompany the more clearly spoken elements within the composition. At other times they emerge periodically in locations dependent upon slow volume automation dictated by a low frequency oscillator (LFO). Like the aleatory processes that ordered field recordings and statements, this use of automation handed some structural agency over to digital technologies within the assemblage. The original, LFO-dependent positioning was retained during composition, providing material at specific points that could then be worked upon in more detail.

Slow volume automation was also applied to Adam's synthesiser improvisation. Here again, the initial mapping of material was retained and then worked upon in greater compositional detail.

Spoken material derived from telephone calls with participants interjects in the texture depicted by the original structural diagram. These telephone materials can be considered sections in their own right. The position of these sections, included to allow further participant collaboration in the work during a national lockdown, were also defined by an aleatory process.

A wider discussion of each of these elements will now be made in the sections that follow.

7.4.5. Field Recordings

7.4.5.1. Field recordings and the COVID-19 pandemic

Before restrictions were placed on social interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had planned to undertake a project of collaborative field recording with the participants. Initially, I had hoped to make numerous collaborative recordings of sounds that were significant to the participants.[48] The hope was that this process would lead beyond my direct involvement and engender a culture of recording amongst them.

When measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic were first imposed, a single, collaborative field recording session had been completed with Ken on the 9th of January 2020. The continuation of the pandemic forced me to consider alternatives, so I enquired about the participants' access to recording equipment. I found that several factors prevented them from recording alone and swapping files with me remotely. Namely, there was trepidation, a lack of equipment, and in some cases a lack of response to communications. I then bought a Zoom H1n field recorder, imagining that I could post the relatively small device to participants to facilitate their recording activities. However, after discussion with my supervisors, we decided that the risk of data loss presented an ethical issue.

With limited options, I returned to the existing recordings of the West Everton area. These recordings formed a substantial archive that had been assembled between August 2018 and January 2020. They had been made at significant local sites with Zoom H2n and Zoom H4n field recording devices.

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[48] I had even bought an Audio-Technica AT875R shotgun microphone for this purpose.

Recordings of WECC and Everton Park were captured during the sessions described in Section 6.1.3. Additional recordings had been made on the 17th of December 2018. On this date, I had attempted to "map" the area subjectively. Audio was captured in the park adjacent to Faith Primary School, and on the wasteland close to Hapton Street. I had also returned, field recorder in hand, to the roof of the WECC building.

As has been mentioned above, the only collaborative recording session had been with Ken in January 2020. I felt that it was important for him to lead the interaction if possible and had asked if he would take me on a familiar walk. He settled on a location at which he had previously taken photographs, Stanley Park Lake.

It should be noted that this location is not within the West Everton area. Rather, it is a stone's throw from Goodison Park[49] and provides a famous buffer between the stadiums belonging to the city's two major football clubs.[50]

We met at the Stanley Park end of Goodison Park at 11am and followed a route that was familiar to Ken. I had brought a Zoom H2n with me. I felt that Ken's interest in photography might serve as a bridge into sound recording. Concerned about dominating the interaction, I decided not to press the issue of sound recording with him. I reasoned that if Ken did not want to take control of the field recorder, I could make audio recordings whilst he photographed the location.

From the Blue Dragon chippy, we walked to the former boating lake. It immediately became evident that Ken was interested in birdlife, and he wasted no time in capturing

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[49] The current home of Everton F.C.
[50] Sites of interest that were important to the lifeworlds of both Adam and Ken.

images of birds, ducks and swans with the camera built into his tablet computer. At the same time, I got to work with a Zoom H2n field recording device.

Walking towards the water, we disturbed a flock of pigeons that flapped away in unison. I mentioned the sound to Ken, and he was very interested in the phenomenon. Then two swans approached us expecting to be fed. Still concerned about dominating the process, I quietly began to record, and after a conversation we fell silent. As we settled into perceptive states, Ken noted that the lake was very peaceful. Meanwhile, the pigeons had all taken up residence in a tree across the water, and Ken moved on from the swans to focus his camera upon them. He then directed my attention towards some coots on the water and I captured their calls. Soon after, the pigeons returned to the path. We both noticed an opportunity and I moved the microphone closer in to capture their cooing before they could fly away again.

We moved around the lake to a spot at which Ken had previously succeeded in capturing images of two restored Victorian bridges. Our conversation had turned to sound, and I asked him if he would like to make the next recording. I handed the device to him, and, after a brief overview of its functions, he set it down on a stone near to the water's edge. We stood quietly and listened to the sound of a pipe that was spilling water into the lake. Ken told me that this was the first time he had noticed it. As the recording continued, a helicopter moved almost directly overhead and circled around. As this significant sound was occurring, Ken spoke to me about the birds on the water.

We walked on to where an outdoor swimming pool had once been located. We spoke for a while whilst two anglers left the far bank. Then we stood in silence, and once again Ken noted how peaceful it was. I was aware that Ken was beginning to listen for longer periods. I suggested that he make another recording but despite saying, "yes", he remained in a state of observation and did not activate the field recording device. Noticing this, I made a recording while he observed the nearby plants without taking photographs.

We walked to a location that Ken recommended for further recordings on the far side of the lake. We stopped under the trees when he heard birds singing. He asked if the microphone was still recording whilst in my pocket. I told him it was not, and he requested it. He began to walk with the device but, having only travelled a short distance, I stopped him and explained that it was particularly susceptible to handling noise.[51] He then set it down and we made a fifteen-minute recording. Our conversations continued at times during its capture, but there were also long sections in which we remained quiet and listened to the birds. Ken was trying to locate the birds visually in the trees. He then asked me whether we could cut the road sound out of the recordings.

We finished our circuit and casually arranged to meet at WECC on a later date to experiment with the recordings. Ken told me that he was aware of the transformative power of the modern recording studio and asked if we could make "music" from the recordings. I was happy to find that he was interested in this and suggested that I could make it happen.

7.4.5.3. Categorisation and ordering of field recordings within the sonic-write up

Terms for inclusion and exclusion were needed for archived field recordings. Some recordings, including those made at the WECC workshop and In Harmony rehearsals, were very much linked to my earlier work, *Cartographies*. For this reason, I opted not use them again. Other recordings featured in that work were linked more strongly to the environmental sound of what I considered to be key sites in the locality (the recordings made on the roof of the WECC building, for example). I decided that, under the circumstances, their inclusion could be justified to enhance the aural presentation of the area.

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[51] As it turned out, this advice was misguided. The recording, in fact, made an interesting contribution to *About Us – For Us*.

The chosen recordings were grouped according to location. I felt that the order in which these locations appeared in the work should derive from a local perspective. Knowing of Adam's love for walking (an emergent theme), I attempted to contact him and ask for details of his walks within the area. I felt that the appearance of samples belonging to each location could be ordered according to the route that he specified. Unfortunately, we had a period in which communication was difficult and, after a certain amount of time had elapsed, I decided to press on. I consulted a map and sketched out a virtual round trip from Adam's home via each recording location. In order, these locations were as follows:

Recording location number	Recording location	Number of field recordings
1	Side of WECC on which the entrance is located	10
2	WECC playground	18
3	Inside of WECC: a) a room with an electric piano and b) the staircase	15
4	WECC roof	37
5	Park adjacent to Faith Primary School	39
6	Wasteland near Hapton Street (just outside of the area's boundary)	30
7	Top of the stairs in Everton Park	10
8	Stanley Park Lake (recordings made collaboratively with Ken, outside of the West Everton area)	14

Table 2: Field recording locations for *About Us – For Us* (2021).

I then placed the recordings within larger, overarching location categories that eventually defined individual tracks within the work:

Overarching location category	Recording locations				
WECC	Side of WECC on which the entrance is located	WECC playground	Inside of WECC: a) a room with an electric piano and b) the staircase	WECC roof	
West Everton Area	Park adjacent to Faith Primary School	Wasteland near Hapton Street (just outside of the area's boundary)	Top of the stairs in Everton Park		
Stanley Park Lake	Stanley Park Lake location A	Stanley Park Lake location B	Stanley Park Lake location C	Stanley Park Lake location D	Stanley Park Lake location E

Table 3: Organisation of field recording locations into overarching categories.

An aleatory process was then developed to further reduce artistic authority over the structure and invoke the agency of digital elements in the created, West Everton assemblage. The order of recording locations, derived from the "walking" conceit described above, was retained. However, rules were imposed that allowed for samples from within a single recording location group to either playback in chronological order or jump to any other recording within the same subcategory. The odds determining this choice favoured linear playback by a ratio of 3:1. Playback remained within each recording location category for a minimum of around two minutes and fifteen seconds, and a maximum of five minutes and twenty seconds.[52] At a random point between these temporal limits, playback leapt to any sample contained within the following recording location subcategory.

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[52] The minimum permissible time was half the length of the combined samples in the shortest recording location subcategory ("Inside of WECC"). The maximum permissible time was one and a half times the length of the combined samples in the same subcategory.

A combination of Ableton Live 10's standard Session View functions (Follow Actions), and an edited Max for Live device – random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1 (Fou, 2016) – were used to achieve this.[53]
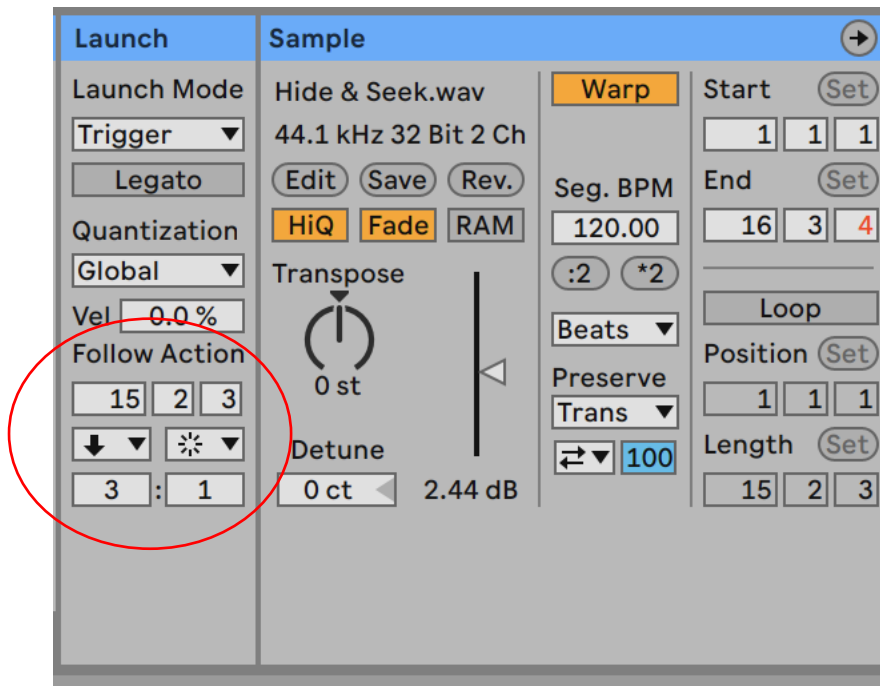
Figure 20: Probabilities set for follow actions (circled) of Hide & Seek.wav (screenshot of Ableton Live 10 software).

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[53] Ableton Live 10's Follow Actions allow the user to determine probabilistic outcomes for samples stacked adjacently on a single track. They could therefore apply the desired 3:1 ratio to playback of recordings made in a single location. However, samples from separate locations could not be placed next to one another without causing elision between categories. I turned to the random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1 device (Fou, 2016), sourced from the Max for Live Community Resource website (Cycling '74, 2018), in order to address this issue. This device enabled sample playback to leap across recording category groupings. I refer to it as an "edited" device because I added a timer to its basic logic in order to impose the time-based rules described above. It should be noted that something akin to this process can now be achieved without the need for the random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1 device (Fou, 2016) in Ableton Live 11.

Figure 21: Comparison of the unedited and edited "random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1" (Fou, 2016) device interfaces (screenshot of Max for Live software).
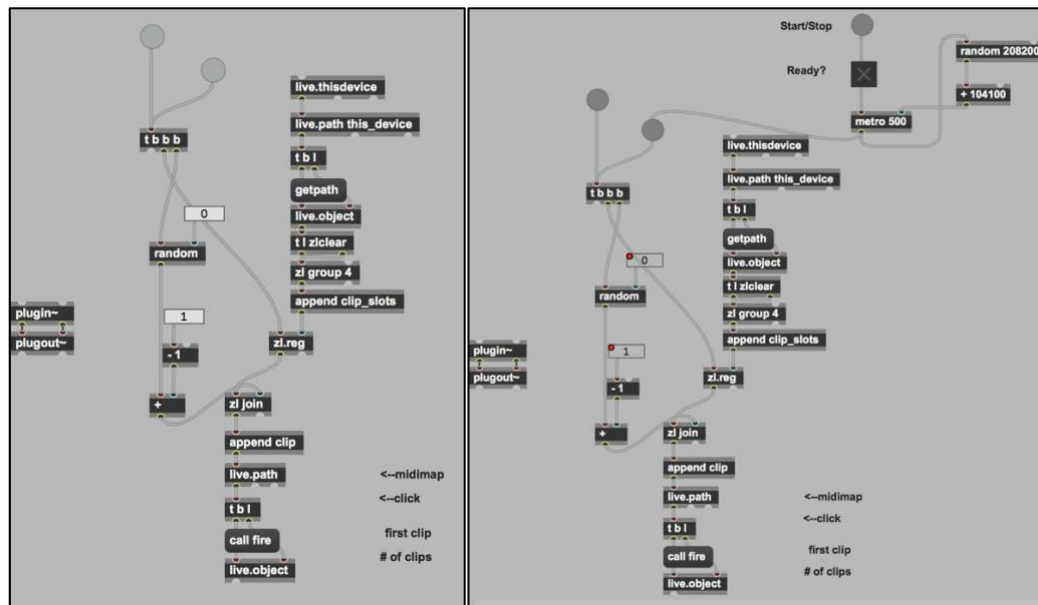
Figure 22: Comparison of the unedited and edited "random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1" (Fou, 2016) device's logic (screenshot of Max for Live software).

The resulting output, recorded and fixed as a linear element, made a large contribution to the overall structure of the work. By setting this element alongside the participants' voices (ordered according to their own aleatory process, described below), an initial template for the sonic-write up was achieved.

Almost all field recordings in *About Us – For Us* were recorded from a static microphone position. The field recording sessions from which they derive were primarily intended to "map" the local area aurally. I had hoped that additional material, captured by a mobile recordist (with an Audio-Technica AT875R), would be available for use in the sonic write-up. However, restrictions on social interaction eliminated this possibility. This had aesthetic consequences for the work. The listener's "journey" through the local area is facilitated by a succession of static, aural snapshots of important locations. Action takes place around their passive position in binaural space. Their sense of the recordist's agency is aurally diminished in a way that contrasts with autoethnographic soundscape compositions (DeLaurenti, 2008; Findlay-Walsh, 2015a; 2015b). [54] I felt that this was appropriate, given the predominance of researcher-captured recordings within the work. The lack of perceived recordist movement within the composition primarily diminished the sense of my own agency for the listener, rather than that of the participants (Anderson and Rennie, 2016). Movement in the work was reserved for sounds emanating from the area, as well as participants' voices and the musical elements derived from them.

This is not to claim, however, that the researcher-recordist is effaced from the work. The already-dislocated sounds, edited by the researcher, were also re-presented according to artistic, spatial strategies (Andean, 2014). Dedicated Envelop for Live devices (E4L Source Panners routed to an E4L Master Bus) dictated the distance (radius) and width (spread) of the environments relative to the listener in binaural space (Envelop, 2016). [55] Recordings made in open spaces, such as those captured from an elevated position in

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[54] It should be noted that there is an exception: a recording made by Ken in which his breathing can be heard whilst walking. This mobile capture makes a successful contribution to the sonic write-up. The inclusion of a participant's autoethnographic presence contrasts with the seeming absence of the researcher's and is consistent with the aims of the composition.

[55] E4L devices are routed automatically in Ableton Live. The user can monitor binaural output with headphones. The software also facilitates ambisonic surround output.

Everton Park, were pushed back from the listener. More confined spaces, such as the stairwell in the WECC building, were re-presented with claustrophobic parameters. Sounding events that approached the recordists from above, such as the helicopter captured at Stanley Park Lake, were elevated slightly. Within, and against the relief of these rendered spaces, the play of foregrounded sounds (such as those derived from participants' statements) across binaural space was afforded prominence.

The hand of the artist-researcher is also present in occasional and subtle frequency spectrum adjustments. This is the case, for example, in the re-presentation of recordings made under the trees outside the WECC building. Here, the high-pitched rustling of leaves in the wind was emphasised by reductions to other parts of the frequency spectrum. Such matters of foreground and background were made according to aesthetic judgement. These judgments reflected my aural understanding of the area, which had been informed by the sonic observations that facilitated the improvement of my preunderstandings. Certain sonic events were also emphasised with delay.[56] The emphasis on such occasions was suggested by musical judgement. A difference to Spinelli's (2010 and 2013) approach, in which sounds are 're-scal[ed] to highlight crucial aspects of the socio-political fabric of a specific place', can be noted here (Spinelli, 2016: 4). Although all musical choices in *About Us – For Us* were arguably also political choices, matters of field recording emphasis were motivated by a desire to enhance parts of the soundscape that had been noted for primarily aesthetic reasons, rather than to overtly highlight the micro-political.[57] I feel that this approach left more space for any consciously political themes to derive from the participants' interviews and their analyses.

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[56] A noticeable example of this occurs during the Hapton Wasteland section of Track 5, "West Everton Area II". It is located at approximately 7 minutes and 28 seconds.
[57] Admittedly, the general motivation of the project *was* to highlight the political.

A structural strategy, according to which manipulations increase as the work develops, is evidenced by the position of reversed field recordings in the sonic-write up. Reversed environmental sound is not heard until approximately thirty seconds into Track 4.[58] This strategy consciously dialogues with discussions surrounding permissible manipulations in the soundscape composition literature (Andean, 2014).

Further manipulations were applied to field recordings in order to smooth over jarring transitions that were thrown up by the aleatory process. Delay, implemented with the dedicated binaural E4L Multi-Delay unit, was applied to intersections that were aesthetically undesirable (Envelop, 2016). In these cases, the musical judgement of the artist interacts with a structural process that was instantiated by digital means. To enhance some of the more extreme environmental changes, particularly those in which one recorded environment transitioned into the next, reversed reverb and delay tails were created. These elements foreshadowed the recorded environment to come whilst growing in intensity. The new environments emerged from the climactic point of these crescendos, carrying the listener into a new space whilst returning them, suddenly, to a more naturalistic representation of the soundscape.

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[58] A reversed recording of seagulls can be heard at this point.

7.4.6. Participant statements

7.4.6.1. Initial considerations relating to participant statements within the work

When lifeworld analysis of participant interviews was complete, the question of reflexive use of interview material within the composition came to the fore. How could a soundscape composer make choices of inclusion and exclusion without asserting complete editorial political dominance over the words of the participants? With social interaction limited by public health measures, my response was to rely upon connections made in the IPA data analysis.

These connections were established by a method that was chosen with the researcher-participant relation in mind. To reduce the domineering agency wielded by the composer when making structural choices, I began to work on an instrument that played back statements according to these connections. This instrument was developed with Max for Live, a visual programming language that utilises the Max paradigm to provide 'a way of combining pre-designed building blocks into configurations useful for real-time computer music performance' (Puckette, 2002: 31). Max for Live is designed for use in the Ableton Live DAW environment. Despite some consideration of Pure Data, an alternative visual programming language[59] that has the benefit of being open source, I chose to use Max for Live because of my familiarity with Ableton Live.

Initially, I had envisioned the instrument as an optional device that could be either used or discarded during the collaborative work of composition. However, collaboration was made difficult by restrictions on social interaction. Consequently, this instrument took on a central role in the process of composition.

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[59] Based on the same paradigm as Max (Puckette, 2002).

Despite the methodological focus of IPA on the relation between researcher and participant, I understood its systematic application, intended to "fuse horizons" in a hermeneutic sense, still very much implied translation and categorisation – a power operation on the part of the researcher. Similar issues would inevitably arise when developing the IPA method to create an instrument for the playback of participant statements. Reflexive care was needed. To justify this political undertaking, I once again turned to concepts of Deleuzo-Guattarian origin, namely the separation between subjection and machinic enslavement (Lazzarato, 2014).

Utilising the ideas of Guattari, Lazzarato (Ibid.) describes "subjectivation" as a composite of two parts: subjection – domination that addresses the individual as a subject; and machinic enslavement – domination that positions the individual (or part of the individual) as a node in a machine. The former operates according to dualisms such as female/male, employed/unemployed, that can operate through signifying semiotics (the province of language, ideology etc.). The latter, on the other hand, relies upon regimes of a-signifying semiotics and sets positions within networks that bypass language, debate, ideology etc. For example:

> As an investor/debtor [an individual] can be viewed as the very model of subjectivation: the promise he makes to reimburse his debt means that memory and affects (such as guilt, responsibility, loyalty, trust, etc.) must be created to ensure the fulfilment of his promise. But once credit has entered the financial machine, he becomes something else entirely, a mere input of the financial assemblage (Lazzarato, 2014: 48).

The machinic enslavement of this investor/debtor in the financial assemblage takes place on a different level than their subjection. The financial assemblage – replete with a-signifying,

diagrammatic[60] symbols, networks of artificial intelligence etc. – can be subject to immediate changes that reposition those caught up in them. This repositioning happens regardless of the individual's status according to language, memory, affects or ideology. The thinking and speaking subject that feels guilt, makes promises etc., is neither appealed to, nor can appeal against the change. It is therefore a form of domination that bypasses the subject of subjection.

As previously stated, I was aware that the categories that I had developed for the participants, however earnestly I had attempted to fuse my horizons with theirs, were a modelisation that imposed domineering classifications of subjection upon them. However, Lazzarato (2014) feels that there is potential for such categorisations to be used for emancipatory purposes by redistributing them in a machinic assemblage.

> Revolutionary political action must... [f]irst [convert] the machinic dimension into forms of subjectivation that critique, reconfigure, and redistribute these molar dualisms and roles and functions to which we are assigned within the division of labor (Lazzarato, 2014: 36).

Influenced by this idea, I considered the potential for the instrument to develop as a machine with a modest emancipatory function. Could the machinic elements that constitute a computer programme be put to work in order to reconfigure and redistribute categories of subjection that were identified in, or emerged from the interview analysis? Could categories that are generally held apart by dominant narratives, for example those dichotomised by the media and journalistic discourses, be brought together and juxtaposed by such a machine? Could opinions that are generally individuated and ascribed to a single point of origin (the individual) be juxtaposed with others to reveal connections that may have been unknown or

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[60] According to Guattari, diagrams (e.g., musical notations) operate differently to other signs. They produce rather represent in order to 'have a direct effect on things' (Guattari, 2007, cited in Watson, 2009: 12).

unnoticed, even by the individual themselves? And could all of this be done whilst remaining faithful to the themes that had emerged from the interview?

I felt that such an instrument would constitute a composite 'sound subject' (Spinelli, 2016: 10). Spinelli's (2016) sound subjects are individuated. Their coherence relies upon the unity of a single speaking subject (an individual) that retains its autonomy despite the temporal rearrangement of statements. A composite sound subject, however, could speak with multiple voices in the artistic work, linked by themes that emerged directly from the interviews and their analyses – a collective and machinic 'schizo-narrative' (Spinelli, 2016: 13). Moreover, the purposive sampling of participants (for which connection to the locality was the primary determining factor) would ensure that the cohesion of the composite sound subject was centred on West Everton. In other words, West Everton would become a virtual centre around which fragmentary statements cohere. The result could be considered a kind of virtual mapping of the area, or an existential territory (Guattari, 1995). The spoken elements of the work would then contribute to the overall West Everton assemblage constituted by the sonic write-up.

The validity of such an undertaking would rely upon the retention of connections established between overarching themes, superordinate themes, and emergent themes from the interview analyses. If such a programme were created, it would have the potential to bypass the individuation of individuals involved (dominant subjection), and offer a dynamic and connected aural presentation of the interviews, area and people as an assemblage of enunciation (Ibid.).

7.4.6.3. Plans for the instrument

I created a series of diagrams to illustrate the workings of the proposed instrument. The following series of diagrams (Figures 23, 24 and 25) first depict the behaviour of the potential instrument in its sample-to-sample workings, and then move on to show how its output might be combined with collaborative material in a sonic write-up.
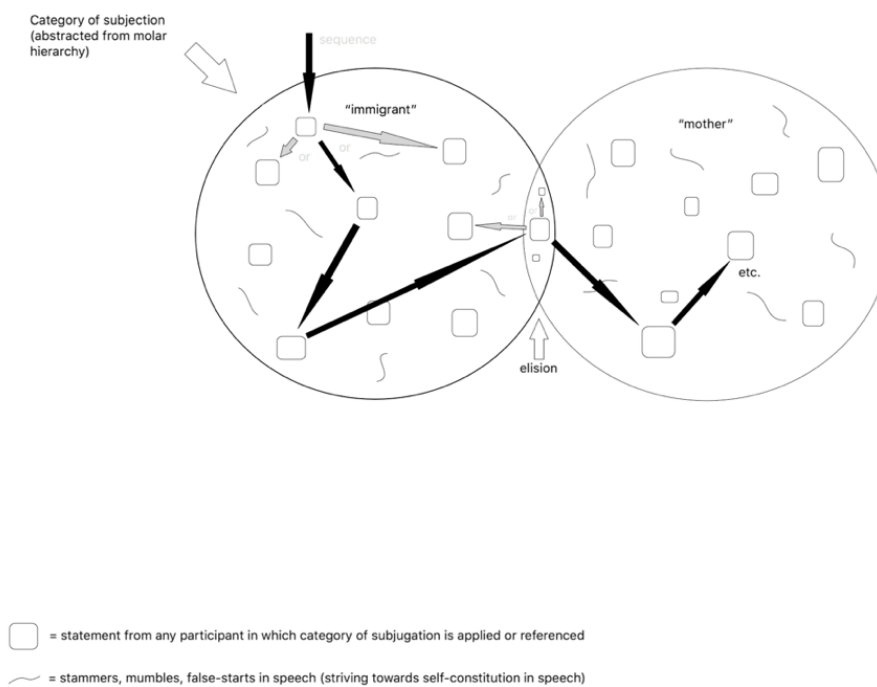
Figure 23: Categories of subjection instrument (i).
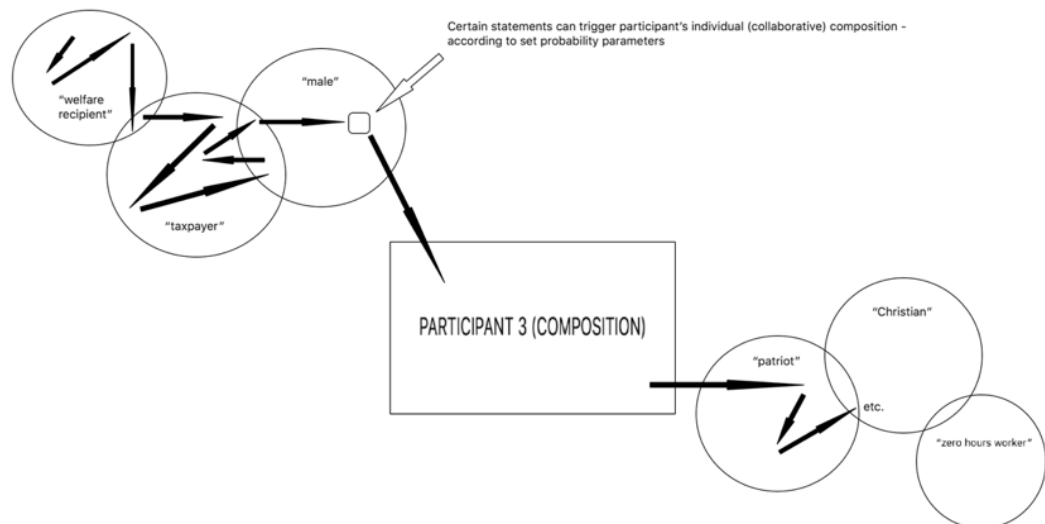
Figure 24: Categories of subjection instrument (ii).
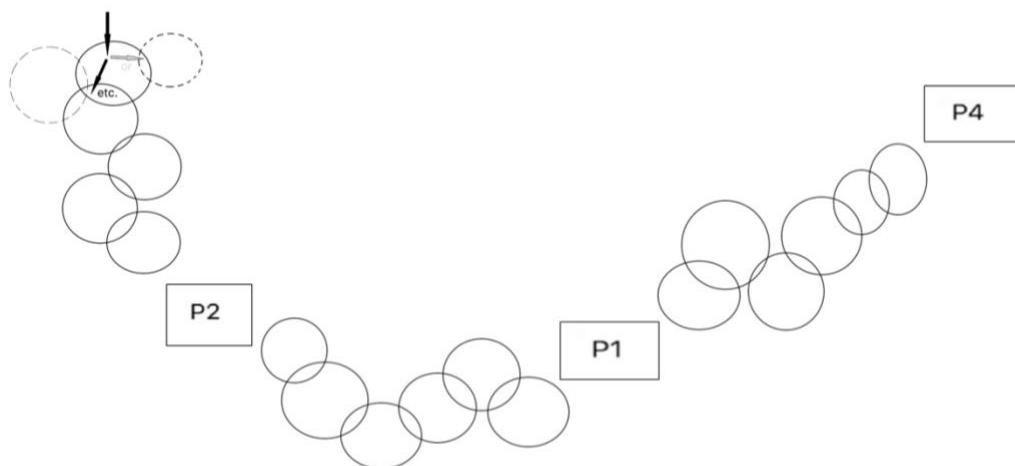
Figure 25: Categories of subjection instrument combined with collaborative material.

7.4.6.4. Creation of the Instrument

To realise the instrument, all statements from the participants' interviews were broken into individual samples. Rather than look for longer sections of speech that cohered according to a particular topic, I fixed start and end points that mirrored the line breaks in the transcript.

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These line breaks were dictated by pauses in a participant's flow of speech. I felt that this would allow for interesting juxtapositions and encourage the intimation of new meanings or 'nonsensical stances' in the manner of Spinelli (2016: 13).

A total of 2572 samples were categorised in folders corresponding to participant and superordinate themes. Samples themselves were labelled according to the participant and emergent theme to which they corresponded in the transcript analysis documents. Statements that belonged to multiple emergent theme categories were doubled (or tripled, quadrupled etc.).

Samples according to participant and superordinate theme												
Participant	Adam					E			Ken				
Superordinate theme	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	E1	E2	E3	K1	K1.1	K1.2	K2	K3
Number of emergent themes	34	12	18	22	13	15	14	10	6	13	19	11	21
Number of samples	337	89	150	150	176	151	167	94	176	405	133	131	413

Table 4: Samples according to participant and superordinate theme.

Superordinate theme number	Superordinate theme name	Emergent themes[61]	Number of samples
A1	Personal development (development of lifeworld)	Affective geography Bifurcation in musical biography Chronological biographical Community as catalyst for action Community resources Creation as catalyst for community Development as a musician Development as community activist Existential refrain Family importance Human-nature Interactions with community Liverpool-Irish self-concept Local character Local embeddedness Local pride Migrant self-concept	26 10 23 3 1 11 16 14 25 6 1 18 3 8 23 8 2

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[61] See Appendix 5 for a summary of individual emergent themes.

		Migration	9
		Music collector	21
		Musical habitus	7
		Musical self-concept	16
		Musical tastes	9
		Organic spaces	9
		Out of the Blue	7
		Past-present contrast	5
		Philosophical period	5
		Primary musical socialisation	16
		Recent bifurcation in musical biography	4
		Secondary musical socialisation	2
		Self-concepts	3
		Social progressivism and conservationism	3
		Stratification of formats	9
		T Type 8[62]	8
		T Type 9	5
A2	External forces and threats to community (structures of power over)	Absence-presence	20
		Built-physical	16
		Community resources	1
		Conservative government	8
		Cover story	4
		Demolition as physical change	4
		Exploitation	5
		Form of the spectral	11
		Objective-existential	1
		Out of the Blue	7
		They	2
		Undermined affective territory	10
A3	Community resistance (constellations of power to)	Alternative assets	5
		Being-together	9
		Chronological-biographical	23
		Community as activity by-product	18
		Community as catalyst for action	3
		Community resources	1
		Concepts of community	3
		Creation as catalyst for community	11
		Foodbank	7
		Home as communal site	2
		Importance of the Shewsy	5
		Importance of WECC	16
		Local assemblage of resistance	1
		Out of the Blue	7
		Power to	18
		Sharing of subjugated knowledges	4
		Socialist vision	14
		Temporal balance	3
A4	Listening project (aural cartography)	Active aural knowledge	7
		Affective geography	26
		Aural practice	4
		Aural training	1

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[62] I have used "T Type" as a shorthand for "transversality type" in the superordinate theme diagrams and the Max for Live patch.

		Birdsong	14
		Existential space	11
		Ineffable sonic affect	4
		Liverpool-big cities	13
		Liverpool-Lake District	2
		Local sound marks	4
		London-Lake District	2
		Manner of aural perceptions	1
		Natural phenomena	2
		Sonic affective cartography	3
		Sonic imagination	2
		Sonic manifestation of organic health	4
		Sound as significant sounds	1
		Sound marks from elsewhere	6
		Sounds of home	11
		Theory of sonic significance	17
		Walking	7
		WE-Lake District	6
A5	Reflexive awareness	Active community member	3
		Being-together	9
		Chronological biographical	23
		Community as activity by-product	18
		Development as a musician	16
		Development as community activist	14
		Existential refrain	25
		Metaphysical assertion	1
		Philosophical period	5
		Power to	18
		Reflexivity	10
		Reminiscence	13
		Specific affective memory	21
E1	Conception of the area	Affective geography	17
		Chronology	17
		City centre-WE	2
		Kensington-WE	29
		Local sound marks	2
		London-WE	7
		Police as indicator	3
		Precarious living arrangement	1
		Reluctance to comment	8
		Sonic-spatial-social	33
		Sound marks from elsewhere	9
		Spectral source of social issues	12
		T Type 1	2
		Tactile-sonic	3
		Temporal rhythms	6
E2	Existential consistency	Being-together	10
		Community as activity by-product	15
		Community resources	7
		Illness in the community	8
		Importance of WECC	12
		Interactions with neighbours	23
		Motherhood	26
		Musical events	9
		Reflexive awareness of chronology	6
		Reluctance to comment	8
		Self-concept	2

		Spectral futurity	26
		Temporal rhythm	6
		Work as factor	9
E3	Conception of the future	At least	24
		Built-physical	6
		Chronology	17
		Objective-existential	2
		Precarious living arrangement	1
		Spectral futurity	26
		Spectral source of social issues	12
		T Type 1	2
		Tactile-sonic	3
		They	1
K1	Ordering time and space (overarching)	Affective geography	107
		Family	36
		Private-public space	14
		Ritual and refrain	17
		Self-identification	1
		Temporal macro-rhythm	1
K1.1	Leisure	EFC & LFC	14
		Leisure activities	54
		Leisure as ordering principle	61
		Leisure as social activity	33
		Libraries	7
		Parks	15
		Picture houses	13
		Pubs	21
		School chronology	12
		Shops	41
		Travel	70
		Walking	40
		Work chronology	24
K1.2	Residence	1st long residence	5
		2nd long residence	1
		3rd long residence	5
		Access to medical care	11
		Circumscribed provision of organic space	7
		Day-night-out-in	8
		Destruction as purposelessness	1
		Disavowal of social problems	10
		Discussion of emerging social problems	7
		Gate as security	3
		Independence event	2
		Local pride	5
		Residence as a small child	1
		School chronology	12
		Sound as significant sounds	6
		Spectral site of vulnerability	13
		Spectral source of social problems	3
		T Type 1	9
		Work chronology	24
K2	Being together/against	Bombing as regeneration precursor	3
		Cultural change	4
		Demolition as physical change	19
		Everton History Group discourse	6

		Inhabitability of old housing	11
		Interactions with neighbours	15
		Objective-existential	9
		T Type 2	32
		T Type 5	14
		They	7
		Undermined affective territory	11
K3	Affect, sound and music	Affective geography	107
		Audio formats	8
		Films	15
		Idealised musical sphere	1
		Live experiences	8
		Local sound marks	21
		Musical chronology	11
		Musical habitus	9
		Musical self-concept	9
		Musical tastes	74
		Musical valuation	6
		Patriotic music	2
		Photography	6
		Significant natural phenomena	8
		Sound as significant sounds	6
		Sound marks from elsewhere	20
		Spatial sonic memory	4
		Specific affective memory	75
		T Type 7	10
		Television programmes	8
		Visual-aural	5

Table 5: Samples according to superordinate and emergent themes.

The aleatory logic for sequential statement playback was programmed in Max for Live.[63] The patch[64] utilised the various levels of connection between statements that emerged from IPA analysis. These connections dictated the possibilities for one sample to follow another. An overview of these connections is given here.

Firstly, statements categorised within a single emergent theme were closely related. Furthermore, some statements within the emergent theme were related to each other by the chronological order of the participants' interviews (i.e. subsequent statements).

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[63] My experience with Max prior to the creation of the patch was not negligible. However, it is fair to say that my use of the paradigm had been limited. I had certainly never attempted to create a patch as complex as the one that I eventually created for this work. I anticipate that the patch could have been improved, streamlined and so on. Rather than constituting an example of exemplary programming, it can be considered a means to realise compositional aims.
[64] See Figures A-F in Appendix 8.

On a higher level, the emergent themes themselves had direct connections to one another, as demonstrated by the superordinate theme diagrams. Some of the emergent themes also had "twins". By this, I mean emergent themes belonging to the same participant, bearing the same name and content, but subsumed by a different superordinate theme. Moreover, some of the emergent themes had namesakes that were located within the superordinate themes associated with other participants.

On a higher level still, the superordinate themes were themselves constituted by groups of emergent themes. Some superordinate themes were also linked by their common origin in the interview of a single participant. Finally, overarching themes contained superordinate themes, and therefore implied connections between all of the statements subsumed within them.

I decided that almost all of these connections should be utilised as virtual routes between samples in the patch. To emphasise multiple perspectives, however, connections that were based purely upon on interviewee (individual) without further connections derived from analysis were left out. Therefore, routes were not automatically established between the various superordinate themes of each interviewee. Only those superordinate themes that were linked by overarching themes were connected at this level. I also decided not to include a route that led from one sample to any other within the same superordinate theme. Instead, only emergent themes linked directly in the interviewee's superordinate theme diagrams[65] would be connected. I made this decision to facilitate the increased juxtaposition of statements that originated from different interviewees. These decisions were made with the aim of bypassing dominant ways by which enunciation is individuated (Lazzarato, 2014).[66]

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[65] See Figures 9-17.
[66] See Section 7.4.6.2.

Upon completion of a typical sample's playback, any one of the following routes might be possible:

0. Next sample;

1. Any sample in the same emergent theme;

2. Any sample in an emergent theme linked by a superordinate theme;

3. Any sample in a twin or namesake emergent theme;

4. Any sample in a superordinate theme linked by an overarching theme.

On some occasions, one or more of the routes identified above were not available to a sample or emergent theme (e.g., when a twin or namesake emergent theme did not exist). On these occasions, only the possible routes were included in the patch.

The amount of time taken before playback of a subsequent sample (delay) was an aesthetic consideration. In Spinelli's works (2010 and 2013), aleatoric 'schizo-narratives' work largely by juxtaposing interview fragments at rather short intervals, reconfiguring narrative as they go (Spinelli, 2016: 13). I wanted to allow for the possibility of such juxtapositions, but I was also mindful of the need to leave space between statements for other musical elements in the sonic write-up to be heard. I eventually opted to allow a maximum of fifteen seconds (delay time) before a subsequent sample had to be played back. This facilitated both possibilities.
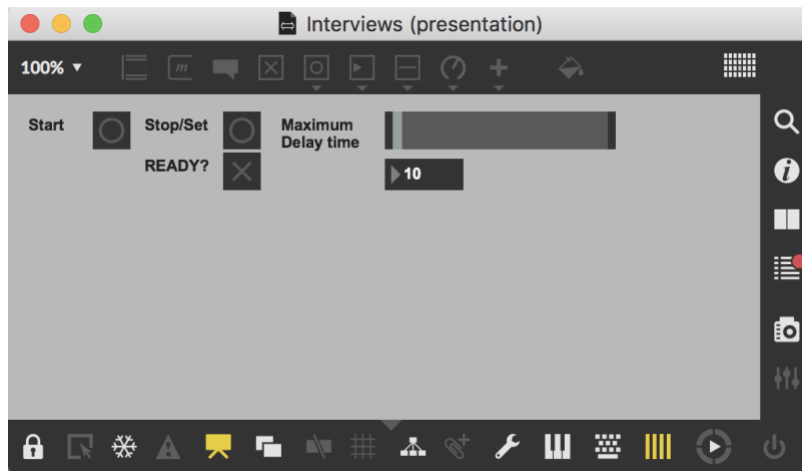
Figure 26:"Interviews" patch in presentation mode (screenshot of Max for Live software).
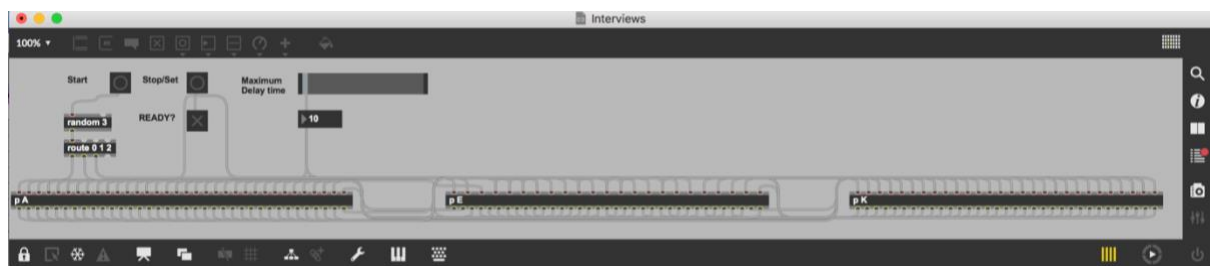
Figure 27: "Interviews" patch at the highest level of encapsulation in patching mode (screenshot of Max for Live software).

7.4.6.5. Instrument output as a fixed musical element

I recorded the output of the instrument to create a fixed musical element. I felt that this linear rendering of a non-linear instrument would best suit a fixed composition that was to be made available online. Had there been no limits on social interaction, non-linearity might have been embraced as part of an installation.[67]

The recording was two hours long. At a certain point within it, the instrument produced an interesting sequence of statements in which Ken's voice communicated

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[67] I also had issues with audio dropouts when using the instrument in Ableton Live due to high demand on CPU.

biographical information. This sequence begins when Ken states, "Well, we moved into the

Everton area about 1949". I felt that this statement was an excellent starting point for

spoken material within the work. The statement simultaneously established the area and

provoked expectations of chronology in the listener that would be thwarted as the work

progressed.

This undermining of expectations is a gradual process. The opening statement is

followed by three others that reinforce the impression that statements are linked solely by

Ken's chronological and biographical narrative. This impression is disrupted when E states,

"And I have the slightly music with my children [sic]". However, the statements that follow

are again dominated by Ken's chronological reflections, and the biographical impression

temporarily reasserts itself before slowly dissipating.

Having chosen a starting point, my attention turned to a suitable ending.

Approximately one hour and twenty-six minutes after Ken's biographical sequence, the

instrument outputted statements made by Adam on the topic of gentrification. This topic was

central to another structural strategy within the work, according to which filtered field

recording elements gradual increased in prominence to represent gentrification as slow but

irrevocable change. Adam's statements on gentrification provided an appropriate point for

the culmination of this strategy, and thereby constituted a good place for the work to end.

7.4.6.6. Aesthetics of participant statements

For the most part, voices within the work were presented quite "naturalistically". In other

words, most samples did not undergo heavy signal processing.[68] This was consistent with

Martin's (2014b) approach, in which some voice samples are heard in a seemingly

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[68] An earlier version of the work did utilise compression and limiting, but this was deemed
aesthetically inappropriate.

unprocessed state that allows 'the meaning of the sentences [to] be conveyed to the listener' (Martin, 2014b). The natural sounding voices were manipulated, however. Importantly, they were recorded and then re-presented in a new context, thereby undergoing a primary act of dislocation (Andean, 2014). Moreover, several processes were applied to them in order to enhance their presentation.

Firstly, a light boost was applied to fundamental frequencies with EQ. EQ was also used for minor corrective purposes, and a high-pass filter was applied to remove any unwanted low-pitched sound.

More significantly, the voices were positioned in binaural space. Location within this space was initially dictated by another aleatory process. This time, modulation was applied via an LFO-generated random wave that selected random points in binaural space. An Envelope Follower device was used to ensure that this position was held for the duration of an individual statement by modulating the LFO's hold function. The effect of this process was to locate each voice sample at some point in front of the listener in binaural space. Voices were positioned "closer" to the listener in this virtual space than the field recordings. The resulting presentation simulates the spatiality that one might associate with face-to-face conversation, with participants speaking to the listener from the front. Voices that reach the listener from the left and right side of the head were felt to simulate some the effect of conversations held whilst walking. Walking, of course, was a strong theme derived from IPA analysis.

Voices were mixed for clarity. Some samples featured little ambient sound and were presented as though emerging from within the field recording environment. Others, particularly those of Ken's voice recorded in May Duncan's pub, brought their own contexts with them. In such cases, the spoken sample's environment was juxtaposed with that of the field recording.

Convolution reverb was also utilised to achieve a subtle degree of blending between voices and field recordings. Ideally, this would have been achieved with original impulse response (IR) recordings made on location in West Everton (although this would have been something of an experiment given the prevalence of busy, urban outdoor sites represented in the work). Restrictions on both field recording and travel ruled this out, however. Some freely available IRs, recorded at outdoor locations similar to those presented by the field recordings, were used instead.[69] The reverberation was generally applied in small amounts to achieve an understated effect. Reverberant doublings of the voices were presented at the same spatial dimensions as the field recordings, serving to soften the clash between spoken samples and recorded environments.

Some voices within the work were processed more creatively with delay and echo. Unlike Martin's (2014b) method, in which some voices are processed to the point of semantic dissolution, creative manipulation in *About Us – For Us* serves instead to emphasise statements. To this end, delay and echo effects were initially chosen to highlight statements made about music. According to the IPA analysis, themes relating to music formed a significant part of both Adam and Ken's lifeworld. Furthermore, the recorded voice element output by the Max for Live instrument contained statements that directly concerned musical artists, such as the Beatles and Elvis Presley. As a nod to this, delay (set to Beatles-esque delay times of between 175 ms and 185 ms) and slapback echo (reminiscent of Elvis Presley and an aesthetic feature of several post-Beatles John Lennon records) were

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[69] IRs recorded by Francis Stevens and Simon Shelley at the Alcuin College, University of York (OpenAIR, 2019) were applied to voices that were juxtaposed with field recordings captured outside WECC. These IRs had been made in 2013 between buildings of a similar size to WECC. Further OpenAir (2019) IRs were utilised for voices juxtaposed with field recordings captured in the trees near WECC, as well those captured in Everton Park and at Stanley Park Lake. These IRs were made at Koli National Park, Finland. An IR recorded at McGill University, Montreal (Warren, 2012) was used to treat the voice samples that coincided with WECC stairwell field recordings. Finally, a Seminar Room "Convolution Reverb Pro" IR preset was utilised for voices juxtaposed with the sound of children improvising on an electric piano at WECC.

applied to voices within the work. In addition to highlighting statements about music, these time-based processors were used to mark repetitions and enhance sections of the work musically. This use of processing, linked to IPA analyses, constitutes an aural contribution to the creation of an overall West Everton assemblage, which includes musical contexts.

7.4.7. Filtered field recording elements

Constant background noises of relatively regular frequency extracted from field recordings were mentioned in Section 6.2.2. These sounds were formed part of "Existential Territory 1.1", the opening track of *Cartographies*. They were first noticed during the aural mapping activities that took place on the 17th of December 2018. A personal journal entry on this date reads:

> Spatially above my position on WECC's roof (emanating from somewhere slightly higher than my head and beginning somehow very generally to the left) is a distant, and seemingly placeless, whirring of fuzzy yet definite pitch. This vaguely elevated and obscure sound is at a pitch that I can replicate vocally without too much difficulty (in a subsequent analysis of the recording, I identified an intervallic step of around a perfect 5th between approximately 295Hz and 440Hz). I feel that the lower tone is secondary and plays a supporting role to the higher. I wonder whether the sound will be present in any future recording made at the same site. It feels like an odd 'keynote' (Schafer, 1993: 9) for the soundscape, providing a drone that is undeniably background. Its constant, unobtrusive character holds the scene together. The cranes and large building project that mark the skyline, although static, are animated by these unassuming, vocalisable pitches. It is a sound from everywhere, *as though it were intended as a motif for the slow, incremental, and seemingly relentless process of gentrification* (Personal Journal, 17.12.2018).

Similarly constant, harmonic sounds were noticeable from the park close to Faith Primary School, as well as Stanley Park Lake.[70] These sounds, thematised during a project of consciously subjective aural observation of the local area, were included in the work.

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[70] Stanley Park Lake recordings revealed similar sounds located at around 504 Hz and 1.04 kHz in the frequency spectrum. They could be heard quite clearly in the recordings that Ken and I made of birdsong, for example.

Isolated in the frequency spectrum by EQ Eight bell curves with narrow bandwidths, this element constitutes a development of the artistic methods employed in the preliminary work, *Cartographies*. It also represents a point of juncture between participant themes[71] and material created by the researcher. As a pitched element, its presence in the work can also be thought of as an implementation of Ken's suggestion that "music" be made from field recordings.

A structural strategy was applied to this element. The sounds feature intermittently and infrequently in the early stages of the work. Throughout the second half of the composition, however, they undergo a process of voluble and steady increase in prominence. This process leads towards a meeting with Adam's comments on gentrification at the end of the final track. Here, the "motif for the slow, incremental and seemingly relentless process of gentrification" is at its most prominent, modified by a shimmer reverb[72] that makes its entrance in Track 6 ("Stanley Park Lake II") (Ibid.).

To render the sound "unlocalizable", "slow" and "relentless", its spatial position was modulated by an LFO device set to a very low frequency. In effect, the sound makes a journey around the very edges of binaural space, starting behind the head and moving left in a gradual circular motion. Rather than existing in one precise location in virtual space, some spread between left and right was maintained to render its position more ambiguous as it creeps around the listener's head.

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[71] See Adam's themes in Section 7.3.5.1. and Appendix 5.
[72] To achieve this shimmer reverb effect, the sound was sent through a Convolution Pro Reverb device to a Soundhack ++Bubbler granular delay that altered the playback of grains whilst pitch shifting the content up by two octaves. The output of this second device was then sent back to the reverb unit, creating feedback in the system (White, 2020).

7.4.8. Musical elements derived from participant's statements

Sounds derived from participants' voices formed another important part of the work. Transformation of voices into musical material played a significant role within "Existential Territory 1.1"[73], and I chose to build upon these experiments in *About Us – For Us*.

Once again, a comparison can be drawn with Brona Martin's (2014b) approach to the processing of voices, but the decision to include sounds derived from voice fragments was primarily inspired by Lazzarato's (2014) discussion of the possible re-codification of syntactic elements. The aim was to repurpose parts of the spoken material in order to foreground matters of expression (pitch, timbre, morphology, prosody etc.) that are usually considered secondary to the domineering signifier. Musical elements derived from participants' statements served to highlight these elements in the work: to bring them to our attention and exhibit them as present yet subjugated factors within the West Everton assemblage. They also reinforced focus on the musicality of accent, a feature that demarks place just as strongly as dialect.

Musical fragments ranged from slow, surreal vowel and consonant sounds, to fast, pitched and more traditionally rhythmic material. They were all derived from three samples: "Affective Geography 1" statements made by each of the interviewees. This was a significant choice, as Affective Geography emergent theme categories subsumed statements in which participants articulated subjective understandings of the area.[74] As has been discussed, the participants relied upon more than just signification to communicate these understandings; their enunciations were carried by the (apparently) subsidiary elements of speech mentioned above. I felt it fitting that the subjugated elements of these

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[73] See Section 6.2.2.
[74] See Figures 9, 12, 14, 15 and 17, and Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5.

articulations be highlighted in the intersubjective representation of the area constituted by the sonic write-up.

The samples were processed by granular methods. A granular synthesiser, the Granular II Max for Live device, was used to randomise grain playback and interrupt linearity. Modulation, applied by an LFO device, was used to provide spatial movement between the left and right channels. Then Ableton Live's built-in time stretching functions were applied to the audio, effectively zooming in on minute details and exposing them to the ear for far greater periods of time.[75] Additional randomisation and automation of grain playback was applied at this stage. These processes resulted in surreal and slightly "digitized" vocal elements that moved across binaural space at various speeds.

Audio derived from this process was shaped by improvisation with MIDI controller faders mapped to gain automation. The previously constant sounds were brought up and down in volume to form musical phrases, a process that resulted in a work-long musical element. To blend this intervention of artistic agency with digital processes, the overall volume of the track was modulated by an LFO. The resulting audio emerged periodically, and was subject to further, detailed compositional work throughout the sonic write-up.

The musical fragments also frequently accompanied participant statements within the work, bypassing the dictates of modulation to bring the emphasised and digitally altered constituents of vocal expression into contact with statements and significations in their original, recorded form.

The overall effect is of voice fragments that move around the listeners head in binaural space, providing action against the relief of field recordings captured from a static microphone position, and framing the voices within the work.

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[75] This was achieved by stretching the recorded outputs to the maximum possible length with Ableton Live's "Texture" Warp mode.

7.4.9. Adam's synthesiser improvisation

Adam's synthesiser improvisation, performed at interview, featured within the work. Amplitude modulation was again called upon to fix the initial positions of this element throughout the sonic write-up. Those musical phrases that interacted with, and enhanced environmental sounds, were retained and re-presented. Inclusion of these phrases contributes further participant-derived content to the work. Adam's musical expressions are part of the co-created aural West Everton assemblage: local artistic articulations that contribute to the aesthetic language of the sonic-write up.

7.4.10. Telephone call sections

With the creation of further collaborative field recordings ruled out, I began to consider alternative ways for participants to contribute material to the sonic-write up. Eventually, I opted to record telephone conversations with the participants during the national lockdown.

Both Adam and Ken agreed to the recording of informal discussions about their experiences during the pandemic. E, a mother of school-aged children, understandably felt that she would struggle to focus on the project whilst educational institutions were closed and opted not to take part.

Recordings of six telephone calls, three with each of the two participants, were made between the 13th of April and 25th of May 2020. The discussions were unstructured, an approach facilitated by a genuine rapport with the participants that had developed over time. Once again, I encouraged them to follow any train of thought that they liked.

The recordings documented their experiences during the onset of the pandemic. Conversations were not time-limited, and recordings lasted for as long as fifty-two minutes. Consequently, a decision on terms for inclusion and exclusion of material in the work had to be made. Unlike the initial interviews (subject to a thorough IPA process), I decided to seek

out only those comments that related directly to circumstances resulting from the pandemic.[76] I also opted to let these comments run both in order and in their entirety, allowing the participants paint a picture of their experiences during lockdown. The fact that these spoken sections were longer than the individual statements that made up much of the work provided a contrast within the sonic-write up.

Telephone calls constitute distinct sections throughout the composition. Their position within the work was dictated by another aleatory process. A maximum of six minutes, and a minimum of two was permitted between each call section, a process facilitated by both Follow Actions in Ableton Live's session view, and an altered random clip launcher AUDIO 1.1 device (Fou, 2016).[77]

The resulting output provided a template that could be superimposed on the developing work. Once again, the aim was to provide an element of unpredictability and make demands born of the virtual environment on the artist.

The chronological treatment of these longer, spoken fragments allows for a reflection on time in the work. The imposition of lockdown conditions marked a significant rupture in habituated temporalities. An altered present, and the uncertainty of a future beyond it, was a feature of our conversations. The development of participants' thoughts on the situation was re-presented according to its original unfolding.

Telephone calls were made on a Huawei P smartphone handset set to "speaker" mode and recorded with an Audio-Technica AT875R shotgun microphone. The resultant, limited, frequency bandwidth seemed apt for conversations about lockdown isolation. To further emphasise this, two additional elements were included in the telephone call sections. Field recordings, derived from the recording location that preceded the interjection of a

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[76] This included discussions of artworks made by the participants during the lockdown period.
[77] The logic of this device was again edited to include a timer.

telephone section, were presented with a similarly limited bandwidth. The impression of space, afforded by wide and distant binaural presentation, was audibly reduced at the beginning of sections, bringing the sounds much "closer" to the listener. Additionally, a slow, pulsating sound, derived from the convolution of a ringing call tone and the field recordings just mentioned, can also be heard.[78] This element was also brought close to listener in binaural space. The overall effect, of limited space and restricted frequency content, is representative of isolation. In this claustrophobic environment, the participants' voices speak directly into one of the listener's ears, emulating a telephone handset.

7.4.11. Considerations for the site of presentation

During the uncertainty of a national lockdown, plans for a potential installation at site were made with The Shewsy Youth Club in mind. Given the emphasis on community in the work, I was keen to incorporate social, as well as Euclidean considerations of space. This approach was reminiscent of Shepherd's (2017a and 2017b) installations. The extent to which the site of presentation could become a site of socialisation was severely limited by the imposition social distancing measures, however. To create some limited sense of social interaction, I considered approaches that would allow 'loudspeakers [to] assume personalities within the space' (Stefani and Lauke, 2010: 252).

Three near-field monitors, one for each participant, would face a seat, simulating the spatial layout of interviews conducted with participants. In this way, an audience member could sit across from the speaker and develop a listening relationship with it. Further back, two loudspeakers would play the field recordings and additional sonic material, filling the space with sounds captured just beyond the walls of the building. Although it might prove

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[78] This sound was created with mammut, a programme that works on a sound's frequency in various ways (Notam, 2017). Its "convolution" feature was used for this process.

impractical to spend concentrated amounts of time in the space to adapt the work to it, I could at least anticipate that any external sounds would blend with, and complement, field recording material. To this end, I created a floor plan for the installation.

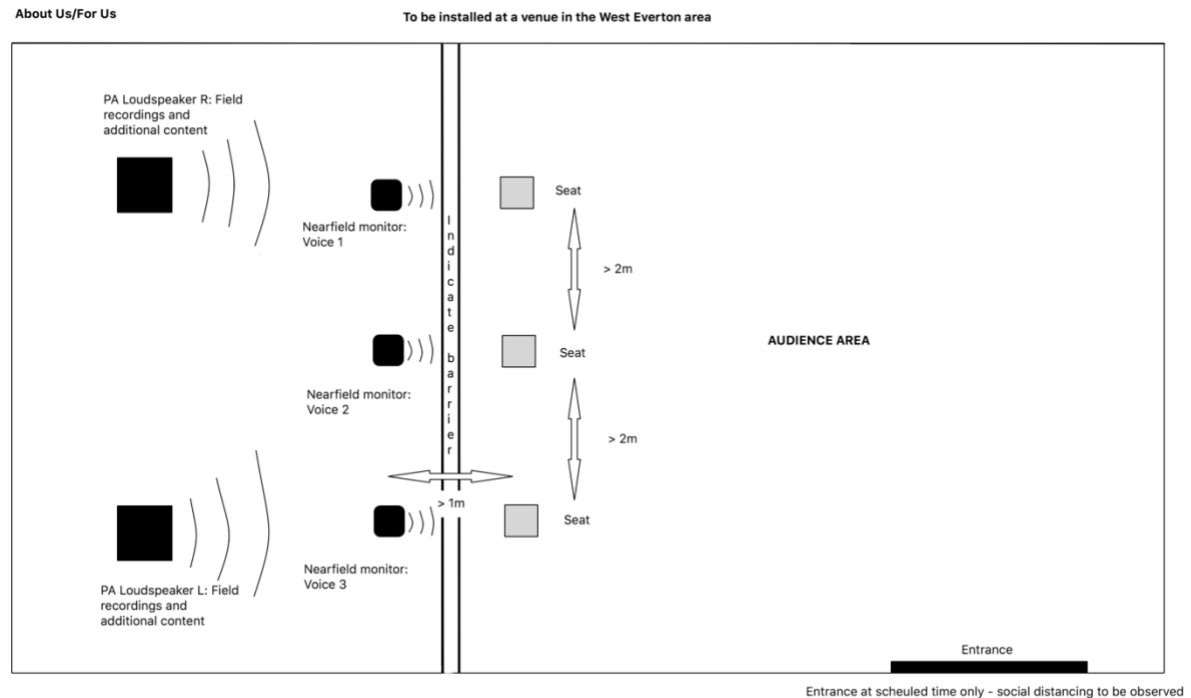Figure 28: Floor plan for proposed *About Us – For Us* installation in West Everton.

This floor plan was finally implemented in an installation at Angelfield Festival, Liverpool Hope University on the 25th of June 2021. However, as these sections on musical context have outlined, the main presentation of the work was reserved for the internet. Details of this presentation are given below.

7.4.12 Presentation of the final work

The work's official site of presentation is online at

https://doi.org/10.25416/edgehill.14602560.v2.   The final version was also uploaded to a

dedicated SoundCloud account under the artist name "West Everton Sound Collaboration".[79]

There is also a WordPress site dedicated to the project.[80]

The work was mixed binaurally. It was intended for headphone playback and has

been made freely available to the public. It is hoped that these choices will make the work

accessible for a relatively wide audience.

A piece of visual artwork accompanies the work. The image is a composite of

materials derived from the interaction. A map of West Everton, given to me by Ann Roach

on the 9th of January 2020, is featured alongside photographs taken by Ken at Stanley Park

Lake.

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[79] https://soundcloud.com/aboutusforus
[80] https://aboutusforus.wordpress.com

Figure 29: Visual artwork for *About Us – For Us*.

Unfortunately, Ken had lost the photographs taken during our collaborative field recording session. He returned to Stanley Park Lake during his regular exercise on the 3rd of January 2021 and captured some replacement images. He then uploaded the images to Instagram.[81] The photographs included shots of wildlife and public information points. A

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[81] Ken's photographs are available at https://www.instagram.com/bluehawaii333.

map displayed on one of these information points can be seen on the top right-hand side of the image, and its text is visible on the lower right.

During our recorded telephone conversations, Adam had communicated his rediscovered love for drawing maps. I thought that this would make an excellent addition to the image, and we subsequently had discussions about psychogeographic maps. I asked if he had made any maps of the local area. It turned out that he had, and we made plans for it to be sent to me by post. Adam, however, subsequently had a change of heart. He did not feel that the sketch was good enough to be displayed online. To my mind, images of a psychogeographic nature often benefit from a rough presentation. I did respect his artistic decision, however, and, after a time, I went ahead and organised the image without this potential element.

8. Discussion

8.1. Overview

The methodology section provided the rationale for the design of the study, and the preceding chapter has given an overview of its implementation in practice. Research Questions B and C both relate to practical implementation, and it would be opportune to discuss them together here, straight after the chapter on process (Chapter 8). Research Question A, which relates specifically to the state of literature within the discipline, will then follow. Any contributions to existing concerns within the literature will be made explicit in that section. Finally, Research Question D, which deals with the impact that the study has had on participants will form the last section of the chapter.

8.2. Research Question B and Research Question C

B. How might a soundscape composition process, that explicitly engages Drever's (2002) four ethnographic stages, be applied to an artistic intervention that explores power and domination in an area that has been disproportionately affected by austerity?

C. How can the simultaneous demands of artistic convention, collaboration and technical competence be balanced in light of researcher-participant power relations?

A summary of the application of Drever's (2002) four recommended ethnographic stages in *About Us – For Us* can be offered here:

Stage	Implementation
i) Observing and participating	• Observing and directly participating in local community projects that relate, in one way or another, to a local political context characterised by resistance to austerity. • Making sonic observations, recordings and mappings of the area by mixed aural methods that recognise the social as inseparable from the creation of space. • Being guided in recording choices by community concerns, suggestions and strategies. Recording collaboratively where possible. • Framing these processes in hermeneutic terms – as the constant and on-going development of preunderstandings – with the aim of fusing horizons with those of the local community residents and activists in order to be and become, in a modest sense, part of the context, thereby changing it and being changed by it.
ii) Conducting interviews	• Conducting interviews with participants that have been recommended by trusted community leaders engaged in the day-to-day provision of projects aimed at community empowerment. • Conducting interviews on-site and within the place of interest, or at a location suggested by a participant that constitutes part of their lifeworld. • Utilising an interview methodology that has explicitly engaged with issues of power in its theorisation (namely IPA in this study). • Utilising a method that endeavours not to lead participants to make certain statements (namely IPA with semi-structured interviews). In utilising this method, the researcher refrains from asking the participants direct questions pertaining to power and domination, and conducts an

	exploration of lifeworld (social, environmental and sonic).
	• Modifying the method of interview analysis to rely upon audio and video and capture all manner of enunciations.
	• Modifying the standard IPA analysis method to include specific consideration of sonic matters.
	• Developing hermeneutic preunderstandings derived from active participation in the milieu as well as the less extensive hermeneutic recommendations set out in IPA.
	• Giving participants the opportunity to review findings.
iii) Utilising archives	• Understanding the local history of the area through archival research.
	• Remaining informed of local context through news and local publications.
	• Becoming familiar with local archive creation (e.g., photographs of events at WECC) and the archives created by participants (e.g., Ken's Instagram photographs).
	• Putting the archives to work: using local and participant-created archives to make decisions relating to the creation of the artwork and utilising the archives created in the study (i.e. field and interview recordings that constitute aural history).
	• Addressing, to the extent that is possible, the domination of the artist over the artistic process and local materials.
iv) Write-up (sonic write-up)	• Creating a sonic write-up and considering it to be the main cultural artefact derived from the study.
	• Being reflexively aware that the artist's relation to local material is a power relation.
	• Being reflexively aware that the unequal possession of technical knowledge (musical and research methodological) is an issue of power relations.

	• Being reflexively aware that unequal access to technology is a power relation issue.

Table 6: Summary of the application of the stages identified by Drever (2002) to the creation of About Us – For Us.

It could be argued (rightly in my opinion), that any ethnographic soundscape engagement is inherently political. However, it should be noted that this particular study focused upon an area that had been impacted by austerity, and was therefore a consciously political engagement. In this section, I will discuss the ways in which this specific project implemented the four ethnographic stages set out by Drever (2002). Given the study's explicit engagement with political matters and the choice of area/culture to engage with, I would suggest that the general applicability of the findings in this section to the discipline should be measured against the singularity of its context.

As soon as the project commenced, the issue of researcher-participant power relations became apparent. There was clearly a difficulty in conducting an artistic project that explored power and domination whilst using methods that were themselves imbued with power relations. This brought matters of reflexivity decisively to the fore.[82] Sensitivity to the complex and interwoven assemblage of power relations therefore became a decisive factor in all methodological considerations. For this reason, it is very difficult to address Research Question B without constant reference to Research Question C. Hence the discussions of both are intertwined and presented simultaneously here.

So, what can we learn from the process? And to what extent was the implementation of the research strategy successful?

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[82] Local power dynamics and the participants' relationship with structures of power and domination are best expressed by the sonic write-up itself (*About Us – For Us*). I would direct the reader to it, where, as a listener, they can experience the results of the community engagement and the IPA process. It is not the aim of the current discussion to furnish such understandings.

8.2.1. (i) Observing and participating

In section 4.5.1., entitled "Next Steps", I posed several questions relating to the specifics of power relations. On matters relating to observation and participation, three of the five questions related to perspective.[83] In an attempt to blend perspectives (or fuse horizons), I followed in Feld's (1996) footsteps and utilised a hermeneutic approach. In choosing an area that had suffered under austerity, an engagement with local activists was almost inevitable. The hermeneutic method, with its embrace of the subjective, allowed for such a partial and political interaction.

The process by which I became active in the area was chronicled by a journal. It served to record preunderstandings that could then be developed through further interaction. In this way, the fusing of my pre-existing perspectives with local concerns were documented. This process shaped the field recording process in more ways than one and allowed for multiple perspectives to shape the project.

There were of course, collaborative recordings, and the impact of COVID-19 upon this aspect of the study is well documented above.[84] However, I would argue that local, political engagement rendered *all* of the recordings composite in one way or another. For example, the recordings that became *Cartographies* were made at locations that had been identified as objects of concern by community members. For example, I became aware of the foodbank's importance during a meeting of a local committee in which responses to the impending roll out of Universal Credit were discussed. My decision to record during its construction was owed to this understanding of the local political value of the project.

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[83] "To what extent does the researcher bring their pre-existing perspectives to bear upon a scenario?" "How do these perspectives translate into and colour recordings and presentation?" "What steps can be taken in order to merge the perspectives and interests of all parties?"
[84] See Section 7.4.2.

Without a sustained and active attempt to engage in the politics of the community as an activist, such an understanding of local action would not have been available to me as a composer; I simply would not have been present at the events during which these matters were discussed. Similarly, the recordings of In Harmony were made after attending the West Everton Lunch Club, a meeting of local community members and activists. Again, the social and political relevance of the orchestra to the community was suggested by socially engaged members of the community at an event attended by invitees. On other occasions, community members made direct suggestions for recording locations. This was the case for the capture of sounds from Faith Primary School, that eventually became integral to *About Us – For Us*. These recordings were made on the suggestion of Ann Roach on an afternoon on which we were both at WECC before the foodbank opened. Her local knowledge was such that she was able to advise me to head over because playtime was in progress.

I would suggest then, that (in response to another of the questions posed in section 4.1.5.)[85] the recordist's participation in the locality can be sufficiently deep if they engage earnestly in a political engagement. It should be noted however, that engagement in this case was not full, and I doubt that it could be impartial. Conversely, I would also suggest that the community's engagement in the recording process can be significant. In the current study, this proved to be the case even when limiting biological (COVID-19), technical (lack of access to recording facilities), and epistemological (unequal access to technical knowhow) factors converged. Furthermore, I would suggest that the best results were achieved when participation was oriented towards the community's objects of concern, such as the local experience with Universal Credit and the strategies by which this was met. This kind of engagement in the community can be seen as a matter of reflexivity, but it is also a strategy of authentication for the project. As with other such strategies it is necessarily imperfect and

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[85] "How deep can a recordist's participation in localities be?"

incomplete, but it does contain a claim to legitimation as valid as that of the aura of authentic presence, and possibly more valid than any claim to an "objective" sonic viewpoint.[86]

8.2.2. (ii) Conducting interviews

The rationale for the use of the IPA method for interviews was discussed in the chapter on methodology.[87] Generally speaking, this decision was based upon a recognition of the researcher-participant power relation and an awareness that the analysis of interviews is a form of power exercise. One is even reminded of the Foucauldian critique of hermeneutics which, he feels, 'opens up a gap between the signifier and the signified which cannot be closed, or even fully explained', and hands 'the task of closing this gap... over to an "interpreter" whose position of epistemic privilege masks the function of power in the interpretive act' (Nichols, 2015: 110). In other words, in seeking to interpret the testimony of participants in the current study, a specific form of power relation is established that cannot help but favour the researcher.[88]

It may appear that one solution is to employ no analysis whatsoever with regard to interviews. But power lurks here too, as such a process would not account for itself in terms of reflexivity, allowing decisions involved in the questioning of participants and the subsequent presentation of statements (remembering that even editing is a political and power-imbued action) to be taken entirely at the whim of the researcher. Therefore, I still feel that it was better to employ a method that has thought through matters of reflexivity and apply it in the hope of assuaging, rather than eliminating, power relations. Having done so,

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[86] See Sections 4.1.2., 4.1.3.1. and 4.1.3.2.
[87] See Chapter 5, particularly section 5.4.2.
[88] For an interesting discussion of Foucault's 'genealogy as a mode of suspicious interpretation', see Fairfield (2013: 180).

the resulting interpretations and representations can now be subjected to the review of the wider community of practice.

In section 4.1.5, I asked of Gallagher's (2015) work, "what steps were taken to address the researcher-participant dynamic at interview?" One of these steps, the conducting of interviews within the local environment, is known and was adopted in the current study. However, I feel that the use of IPA goes beyond this, providing a framework upon which a step-by-step overview of ways in which power issues were addressed can be provided. Much of this process is documented above.[89] In this section, I would just like to make a few points. Firstly, the interviews were coupled with a wider project of observation and participation than IPA usually requires (Smith et al., 2008). This allowed for a deeper engagement and enhanced the preunderstandings that I, as the researcher, brought to interview. This was important in matters sonic and social. For example, a project of listening, coupled with first-hand geographical understanding, made E's intriguing sonic and affective understanding of the area more accessible to me. The sounds and atmospheres that she described, and the locations and scenarios that she ascribed them to (for example, the "gang boys" screaming and arguing on William Henry Street) would have meant far less to me without significant prior participation in the locality that facilitated a greater degree of shared aesthetic knowing.[90]

What is also well-documented in the current study is the way in which perspectives gleaned from analysis of the interviews informed the compositional process. Until now, this consideration has been rather obscure in the literature. As an ethnographic undertaking that requires reflexivity, I feel strongly that we should be upfront about this topic, particularly if we

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[89] See Sections 7.2., 7.3. and 7.4.
[90] The inclusion of "sonic-spatial" exploratory comments in the IPA process also contributed here (see Sections 5.4.2.2.3. and 7.3.3.)

claim to facilitate "multiple perspectives". A more in-depth discussion of this will be made in the following section (8.2.3).

8.2.3. (iii) Utilising archives

To note that the use of archives informed the sonic engagement generally, or that the creation of a set of aural histories was involved in the process, simply serves to confirm earlier observations in the literature.[91] The expansion of the IPA method into a specific aleatory process for the presentation of statements, however, can be considered an innovation. Again, this claim is linked to the fact that the academic documentation of processes has not previously been undertaken in an exhaustive way by such a project.[92] One of the things that documentation of process allows here is an overview of the way in which the consideration of power relations informed decision-making whilst putting the archives (interview recordings and field recordings) to work. These considerations determined the terms of inclusion/exclusion for material at any specific point in the work. Rules for the generative processes were derived from a hermeneutic analysis and driven by aleatory processes. By deriving these processes from interview analyses, it was ensured that power relations were considered at every stage, and the documentation of these decisions in the current text allows for scrutiny from the wider community of practice.

What is clear however, is that power relations were by no means eradicated from the compositional process. Firstly, the subjectivating effect of interpretation, derived from the interview analysis, remained. This has been mentioned above.[93] However, knowledge of the existence of these power relations did allow for the implementation of compositional

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[91] See Section 4.1.3.3.
[92] See the following section (8.3.) for an in-depth discussion of the study's contributions to existing knowledge within the literature.
[93] See Section 8.2.2.

strategies that included their explicit consideration. Having exercised power in categorising and linking themes from interviews, the aleatory patch was designed to both explore the links created in analysis and allow for juxtapositions. Unusual links and uncommon juxtapositions were indeed thrown up by the patch in a process that reconfigures, to a modest degree, dominant categories of subjection. This also allowed for connections between linguistic signification and field recordings, permitting them to intimate by juxtaposition. For example, E's meditative statement, "the building in the area", was something of a pause for thought during the interview. Namely, the statement served as a stop gap before E proceeded to make a comparison of the physical features of buildings in West Everton and Kensington.[94] When heard against the field recording, replete with the sounds of construction captured from WECC's roof, the repeated statement can be understood as an intimation of the continual physical change that the place is undergoing. When heard against the surrounding statements, this comment on architecture mixes well with E's comments on the existential state of the area that were expressed as matters of both security and futurity (i.e. hopes for the future security of life the area). This crossing of the architectural and existential is a blurring of boundaries between domains that are usually considered separately. However, if we reference E's superordinate theme diagram[95], links between these domains in E's (co-constructed) lifeworld are revealed. Firstly, there are links between precarity in living arrangements, comparisons of West Everton and Kensington, and local sound marks in E1. Secondly, there are links between notions of the built and physical environments, and the "they" of social and economic action in the area (i.e. an abstract notion of those who have to power to change the economic, social and physical state of the area). This helped to enunciate E's conception of both the area and the future within the work. Furthermore, the section culminating with a comment by Adam in which he

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[94] Located eleven minutes into Track 1, "WECC I".
[95] See Figure 7.3.5.2. and Appendix 3.

tells us that the area has lost many of its assets, interestingly juxtaposes E's lifeworld (which is the product of a self-consciously short stay in the area) with Adam's experience-informed, political and local standpoint on gentrification.

Interestingly, this same sequence also serves to reveal the connection that was anticipated in the diagrams used during the planning of the work.[96] E's statements make the jump from descriptions of the area's built features to reflections on the future and her children ("not to be running away"; "oh, this area is no more safe for us to live, we have to move"; "at least, the area should be good for them to make their life"). In doing so, the (seemingly inevitable) juxtaposition of, on the one hand, the experience of migration (a form of subjectivity under assault by assemblages of power), and on the other, the role of the mother, (venerated even by the most fascistic of conceptions of the world), occurs and outlines a contradiction inherent in the logic of power (Lazzarato, 2014; 2017 and 2021).

The approach to the utilisation of archives that I have just discussed is one possibility amongst many. In no way do I claim the current approach to be the definitive way for ethnographic soundscape composition to deal with aural histories. As a documented approach, however, it does allow for critical consideration of the presence of the composer's hand (technically educated) and tools (technologies crucial for the manipulation of sound) in the presentation of aural histories derived from participants.

8.2.4. (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up)

The preceding discussion of the utilisation of archives presents us with several power imbalances that were identified during the process. In producing a sonic write-up, matters of technical ability, access to technology, and the availability of time and remuneration, all

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[96] See Figure 19**.**

constitute areas in which the artist-researcher enjoys a privileged position. There exist

ethnographic soundscape composition projects that have managed to address some of

these matters in ways that the current study did not. I am thinking in particular of Waldock's

empowering *Welsh Streets* (2013) engagement, in which technologies and artistic freedoms

were presented to those involved in the local collaboration. Even so, in any project there

remains the artist's prior soundscape composition experience, as well as their familiarity with

both the style and the literature. We can consider these factors to be creators of power

imbalances.[97] Despite the fact that, to a certain degree, issues of access to technology can

be addressed materially and the disparity in technical abilities addressed through education,

the resulting balance is always likely to favour the artist-researcher.

Although COVID-19 can be cited as a limiting factor in the current study, one of the

opinions that I formed whilst working on it is that, under current academic and economic

conditions, the artist-researcher must take the lead to some degree. Though I feel that this

is best done with careful reflexive attention at every turn, it would seem that situations

demanding an individual decision are something of an inevitability. This is due to limiting

factors. For example, in the current study, I was often faced with the issue of the local

community's unfamiliarity with soundscape composition. This might have been expected,

but I found that, in making efforts to describe the artform to them, my own perspectives

coloured my words and implied certain artistic pathways. When Ken and I discussed plans

for the Stanley Park field recording session, it was obvious that the notion of field recording

was new to him. Not wanting to dominate the process, I intimated that the choice of location

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[97] See Section 4.1.5., in which the following questions were posed: "In Waldock's (2013 and 2016) exemplary collaboration, what were the dynamics of interaction between researcher and participant/activists in the studio?"; "What approach was taken to the line of questioning that led and facilitated the participant's editing, deletion and enhancement of certain sounds?"; "How did the researcher's technical knowledge shape the participants' possible choices?"; "To what degree did the understanding of schemata for the presentation of sonic material rely upon the assumptions of the researcher's inherited artistic traditions?"

was his to make. However, he found it difficult to make the choice because of his lack of experience. In the end, it was I that suggested following a familiar walking route to the one upon which he had previously taken photographs. The introduction of photographs to the conversation was a way to connect something familiar to something unfamiliar. Inevitably though, this had consequences for the actual process of field recording on the day, and also subsequently affected the presentation of the sonic write-up.[98]

I wrestled with a concern for justifying decisions throughout the process. In fact, early attempts to make decisions on any artistic matter were rendered almost impossible by an almost obsessive concern for reflexivity! This may be methodologically desirable, but it can also have regrettable consequences. For example, I did not make extensive recordings of the working foodbank because I wanted every theme and choice of recording location for *About Us – For Us* to derive from the participants, or at least from the analysis of their interviews (which was still underway for much of the time I spent volunteering there). This went against my usual habit as a field recordist, and I cannot help feeling that the absence of these recordings is an opportunity missed. Had I started recording at this point however, I am almost certain that Adam would have participated. His experience of making recordings would thereby derive from my artistic trajectory, which is loaded with pre-existing notions from the discipline and the academy.

In a way, COVID-19 imposed the need for greater flexibility in decision making whilst realising the work. It also served to highlight the contingency of any process that one might undertake as an ethnographic soundscape composer and put strategies of authentication under scrutiny. I might, for example, have followed Mathew Herbert's (2011) rule, in the creation of *About Us – For Us*: 'Only sounds that are generated at the start of the compositional process or taken from the artist's own previously unused archive are available

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[98] Ken's photographs of Stanley Park feature on the project website: https://aboutusforus.wordpress.com.

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for sampling.' However, the suspension of field work forced me to consider the use of the

field recordings that were available to me, and the inflexibility of Herbert's approach was no

longer useful. Just as forms of power cannot be eliminated from the ethnographic

soundscape composition process, the existence of an assemblage of determining factors

(exemplified here by the interaction of COVID-19 pandemic – a matter of biological coding –

with notions of academic and ideological convention) cannot be escaped, and flexibility in

the real process of creating a sonic write-up remains necessary.

8.2.5. Site of presentation

The exploration of matters relating to the site of presentation were heavily impacted by the

COVID-19 pandemic. *About Us – For Us* was eventually presented as a binaural work on

SoundCloud, a site that allows a listener to play back the work for free (albeit amongst

advertisements). It would be wrong to assume that affordability is the same as accessibility

however (Bell, 2015). There are issues beyond affordability that limit a person's ability to

interact with a work. One such issue is technological knowhow. This was highlighted by the

fact that Ken did not feel able to access the work despite maintaining an Instagram account

online through a tablet computer.[99] This power imbalance suggests that, in some cases, it

can be more accessible to set up a physical and social interaction at site than a presentation

online.

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[99] See Section 8.4.2.

8.3. Research Question A

A. What can a soundscape composition process, that explicitly engages Drever's (2002) four ethnographic stages, contribute to our knowledge of the discipline?[100]

An overview of the context for the artwork was given in Chapter 7. Drever (2002) has called for further practical work to complement theory in the field of ethnographic soundscape composition, and Rennie (2014) has identified the need for processes involved in the creation of future works to be documented according to academic conventions. In order to answer these calls for future study, I engaged with the four stages of ethnographic study outlined by Drever (2002). The state of literature in the discipline was outlined according to these four stages in Chapter 4. In the following sections (8.3.1., 8.3.2., 8.3.3., 8.3.4. and 8.3.5.), I will return to the literature and make the contributions of the current study explicit. In this way, these sections will provide responses to Research Question A in light of the process that has been undertaken.

8.3.1. (i) Observing and participating

Rennie (2014) points to a tendency to prioritise matters of place over those of people in soundscape composition. In the current study, a conscious attempt was made to address place as an inherently social phenomenon. This implied the consideration of field recording as both a narrative and political action. Furthermore, I did not want the work to present a single narrative, connected solely to a particular individual. Instead, I sought to displace authorship and allow local voices and agency to be heard (Drever, 2002).

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[100] (i) Observing and participating, (ii) Conducting interviews, (iii) Utilising archives, (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up).

The recording process was informed by an active political engagement in the area. To this end, fourteen recordings were made collaboratively with Ken. At my suggestion, we followed one of Ken's usual routes to make recordings and take photographs. The narrative of these particular recordings was therefore inherently collaborative.[101] Furthermore, in section 8.2.1., I argued that all of the recordings were, in one way or another, composite. To bring this assertion into dialogue with the existing literature, I would suggest that the current engagement demonstrated that an engaged, partial and political role in local matters can be beneficial to a recordist. Moreover, I feel that it also highlighted ways in which such a role can undermine notions of objectivity that seek a dispassionate perspective.[102]

In contrast to an approach that strives for "objectivity", I would recommend that artists allow themselves to be changed by, and even impact upon the social milieu (in a modest but earnest way). If sound recordings are documents of their makers, then we must focus upon the maker and make them a genuine part of the social environment. Furthermore, having engaged in an attempt to fuse intersubjective horizons, the artist may well find themselves further embedded within the diverse semiotic regimes that cross (and constitute) the local context. This is important to a recordist that deals with what Andean (2014: 174) terms 'a sound' (i.e. sound-as-symbol). Becoming embedded in local semiotic regimes is one way in which to assuage the issue that Andean (2014) raises: that a change of semiotic context is often the source of ethical issues.

Once this issue has been dealt with, we are better placed to harness the power of dislocation that is identified by LaBelle (2006) as the source of field recording's power. For example, it was only through a familiarity with the soundscape, acquired whilst interacting with local people, that I felt comfortable to include the sound of sirens in the works. This is

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[101] See Section 7.4.5.2.
[102] I do not, however, claim that my input into most of the recordings did not greatly outweigh that of the community. The reasons for this have been discussed in Sections 7.4.2. and 8.2.

not something that I would have taken for granted, and I had initially wondered whether such a presentation was reductive or patronising. Only through sustained interaction and the development of preunderstandings (including those acquired through interview accounts) did I overcome this initial trepidation. After engaging with the community for a period of time, my understanding of local attitudes to the soundscape and the ways in which the police interacted with the community was much improved, leading to my feeling justified in (re)presenting certain aspects of it.

A final point should be made in this section on the topic of access to technologies. None of the three participants used a smartphone. The use of these technologies did not therefore present itself a solution to the problem of collaborative recordings. It should be remembered that assumptions about access to certain technologies cannot be made lightly. This confirms the findings of Freeman et al. (2011), who noticed a drop off in the use of their UrbanRemix platform after formal events had finished. The authors speculated on the general use of smartphones in the areas in which their participants resided and noted that these technologies had to be provided for many participants during their events.

8.3.2. (i) Conducting interviews

The inclusion of recorded voices in a soundscape composition constitutes a second form of narrative alongside the narrative act of recording itself. Narration in these works generally serves to furnish information about the act of recording (Anderson and Rennie, 2014), document a context, scene or event (Lane, 2008; Cusack, 2012a and Rennie, 2013), describe sonic differences between the present and the past (Lane, 2008 and Martin, 2013) or to help elicit the past (Stollery, 2005; Gallagher, 2012 and Martin, 2014b). All of these uses can be discerned in *About Us – For Us*, albeit to varying degrees. What the work adds

to these uses are the participants' perspectives on the future and local politics.[103] These

perspectives derive from a broad exploration of participant lifeworlds during interviews. This

proved vital, as the relative importance of spoken materials, and their connections, were

derived from themes that emerged from interview analysis. Without taking this broad

approach to permissible topics at interview, many of the themes may not have been

captured, and reflections on the contemporary battles over the future of the area may have

been lost.

Several practitioners have attempted to multiply the perspectives and narratives offered in

soundscape compositions through the inclusion of multiple voices. The inclusion of different

perspectives is theorised within the literature. As has already been discussed in Sections

6.2.2. and 7.4.1. (and is due to be addressed in more detail in section 8.3.3.), the current

project aimed for a systematic displacement of authorship by building on the ideas of Spinelli

(2016). This took the form of an attempt to create a composite sound subject.

So, what was learnt in the process of chasing multiple perspectives? One interesting

revelation was that all three participants had their own way of understanding the world by

sonic means.[104] This discovery was enabled in part by methodological additions to the IPA

process in which explorative linguistic comments were replaced by enunciative comments

(observations on all manner of communication to allow analysis to go beyond the domination

of the signifier), and a new category, "sonic-spatial" comments, that was invented.[105] An

understanding of the participants' means of sonic understanding can be best arrived at by

listening to *About Us – For Us*, and scrutiny of the analyses is possible by study of

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[103] These are themes that contribute to Shepherd's *A Life, A Presence, Like the Air* (2017). In that
work, however, explicit engagement with politics and the future is primarily reserved for the artist's
own narrative. Participant accounts deal with the day-to-day of life in social housing (admittedly an
implicitly political topic) and focus primarily on the past and present.
[104] See Figures 9-17.
[105] See Section 5.4.2.2.3.

Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5. However, we can list some interesting examples here: Adam's practice of mapping the region by birdsong; E's manner of describing the social and spatial in sonic terms; and Ken's understanding of sound as only those sounds that have direct social significance.

Beyond perspectives, dialects are discussed by Martin (2017) as an important indicator of place. The current works offer a movement towards multiplicity in this respect too. In *About Us – For* Us, three different accents, all relating to the same area, are heard to speak in different dialects.[106] This is a reminder that, despite the undeniable links of a dominant dialect or accent to place, many contemporary sonic environments are composites of different voices with different histories. Inclusion of minority voices in works is important from a political point of view, but it is also useful artistically, providing insight into the sonic richness that can characterise a place.

8.3.3 (iii) Utilising archives

The use of archived documentation to inform field recording-based compositions is well-reported in the literature.[107] In the current study, familiarity with historical documents, economic reports and presentations can be considered part of the hermeneutic development of preunderstandings, a consideration that resonates with the method of Feld (1996). On-going familiarity with relevant local newsletters and newspaper articles (relating to austerity and the local area) also contributed to the continual development of preunderstandings and proved to be an essential part of maintaining a local political focus.

The archives were also put to work in the compositions, an idea that has been developed in various ways by several relevant artists (Spinelli, 2010; 2013; Gallagher, 2013;

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[106] The mixture of dialects and accents in *Cartographies* is also diverse.
[107] See Section 4.1.3.3.

Martin, 2013; 2014b; Lane, 2015; Cusack, 2016; Findlay-Walsh, 2016; Shepherd, 2017 and Waldock, 2017).[108] One particular innovation in the current study was the use of participants' existing archives to inform the selection of recording location. Many people collate photographic archives on social media, and Ken's on-going Instagram activities proved useful in the creation and presentation of the work. Both his pre-existing photographs and plans for future photographic activities formed the basis of the Stanley Park field recording session.[109] The map of West Everton, supplied by Ann Roach from archived documents in the WECC office, was also foundational to the development of preunderstandings and to recording decisions made in the area. These community-sourced, archival contributions form part of the final presentation of *About Us – For Us*, providing the material upon which the visual component of the website is based.

In section 8.2.3., the aleatory logic of the "Interviews" Max for Live patch is discussed. The fact that consideration of power relations informed choices at every stage in the creation of the artwork is also noted there. The matter of subjectivation, discussed in the same section, can be considered in relation to Spinelli's (2016: 4) use of aleatory processes and their application as 'schizo-narrative' and 'sonic chorography'. Spinelli's (2010 and 2013) works utilise randomisation processes, rearrangement and juxtaposition in a political way, reforming speech and field recordings to present us with restructured sound subjects and emphasised socio-political sonic fabrics. These assemblages are thought of as archives that are being put to work. What is not documented in any depth by the artist, however, are specific details pertaining to the methods and rationale by which the authorial juxtapositions were arrived at. The omission of detail relating to these processes means that power-laden artistic decisions are not available for the scrutiny of the community of practice.

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[108] See Section 4.1.3.3.
[109] See Section 7.4.5.2.

Shepherd's *A Life, A Presence, Like the Air* (2017) also utilises interview fragments, albeit in a much longer and (seemingly) more "true-to-life" form than Spinelli's. These materials are interspersed with the artist's own political narrative throughout the work. As with Spinelli's arrangement choices, Shepherd's rationale for juxtapositions is as yet unavailable. From what we are presented with, can we be in any way certain that the participants share the artist's political views? If not, we can legitimately ask, for whose purposes the aural histories being put to work? There is, of course, an argument to be made for the autonomy of the artist. But to what extent can this autonomy be assumed when working with the material of others, or when making incursions into place and context?

As noted above, the use of IPA methodology to inform the aleatory component of *About Us – For Us* is neither a method that demands replication, nor one that eliminates power relations. What the implementation of this method highlights however, is the notion that the arrangement of material is a political choice, replete with power relations that favour the artist. Therefore, it deserves the same level of scrutiny as matters relating to recording location currently receive. Of course, this is not to say that the artists mentioned did not consider such matters! Rather, I wish to emphasise that, in the community of practice, we do not seem to be in the habit of writing about them as issues of power.[110]

Returning to Spinelli's (2016) discussion of method, it is fair to say that my notion of a composite sound subject owes much to it (it may even be simply another way of expressing ideas that the artist has already put forwards in slightly different terms). Following his

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[110] Findlay-Walsh's (2017: 125) use of 'aural selfies' – audio recordings that have been made (often as an adjunct to video capture) by smartphone users – also constitutes the putting to work of the archive. In this case, the artist's decisions are made through a process that is documented. The method favours strategies that emphasise decisions made by listening in the moment. This is as an aesthetic choice that relates to the documentation of self in editing and is considered an approach to autoethnography. Hence the balance of power falls decidedly on the side of the artist, but as a conscious matter of method. In the current study, in which the ethnographic focus is consciously on the representation of people and place, I would argue that more scrutiny of the artist-participant relation is required.

Deleuzo-Guattarian taxonomy, we can consider the subjectivit(ies)y presented in the current works, and particularly *About Us – For Us*, to be an assemblage. What does differ from Spinelli's ideas in the current work is, again, the particular method by which the composite was arrived at. This method has been discussed at length in Chapter 7, section 8.2.3 and throughout the text generally. Suffice it to say here that, the composite sound subject of *About Us – For Us* is an assemblage of enunciation ordered around place and is the result of putting the archives to work.

8.3.4. (iv) Write-up (sonic write-up)

Rennie (2014) argues that underuse of soundscape composition as a sonic write-up makes it difficult for us to form a clear opinion on its utility. *About Us – For Us* contributes a new work for our consideration in this regard. Let us make a few comments on it then. Rather than taking a "journalistic" approach in the manner of Cusack (2012b) or Rennie (2014), the current work dispensed with both this and other such distancing and objectifying notions that exist within the discipline. In doing so, it does not base its claims for authenticity on the supposedly "transparent" replication of events through sound. This has the consequence of increasing the scope for sonic manipulations within the work. In order to demonstrate this artistically, a subtle, linear movement towards expanded sonic manipulation is employed as a structural strategy within *About Us – For Us*.

Upon what does this work rely for legitimation then? Firstly, the legitimating strategy of claiming genuine presence at place (Fiebig, 2015). Admittedly, this is achieved, in part, by the aural verisimilitude of (most) recordings in the presentation to local soundscapes. This could lead one to conclude that a transparent replication of events is being aimed for. I would, however, argue that this overlooks the manipulation of amplitude, frequency and time that marks the work from the beginning. In this sense, we can consider the aura of place to

be delivered through a hyperreal presentation. The claim to actual presence in place is there, but the philosophical claim to the presentation of a pure (objective) analogue is not. It is important to remember that in being recorded, the material has already undergone what Andean (2014) describes as the primary act of dislocation. And in rearranging samples on a timeline, time-based manipulation has been utilised. Again, these considerations remind us that the presentation of something *like* an originary event is being offered, but not something that is somehow its mirror image.

The second way in which *Cartographies* and *About Us – For Us* seek legitimation is through the multiple perspectives derived from community participation and participation in the community.[111] In order to achieve this, *About Us – For Us* has been conceptualised as an assemblage organised according to notions of place. Did this approach produce a successful standalone, sonic-ethnographic representation of place? I would argue yes. Perhaps a more precise understanding of power and domination in the area would have been furnished by a written narrativisation of the interview analyses (which is the usual end product of an IPA process). But just as writing does things that sound cannot, I feel that the inverse is also true.

If one listens to *About Us – For Us* for a while, a complex and rich sonic notion of place – replete with idiosyncrasies, dead ends, humorous coincidences etc. – emerges. This is a composite, virtual, singular and inherently non-exhaustive West Everton sound subject that speaks in multiple voices, both human and non-human, intersubjective and technical. The listener engages with enunciations that emanate variously from: the participants' lifeworld-explorations and aural histories; the researcher (and the conventions of the academy); the artists (and the conventions of artistic communities); the researcher-as-artist and artist-as-researcher; computer programmes and languages (both logics that pre-

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[111] See Section 8.2.1.

exist in commercial software and project-specific realisations of decidedly singular latent potentials of these softwares); the sounds of local residents (speaking, driving, working, walking, shouting...); the sounds of local animals and wildlife etc. etc. The composite enunciation also unfolds according to a singular assemblage of interacting temporalities, derived variously from place-based, context-based and compositional sources: the non-linear, assembled expansion of IPA analysis into a logic of semi-randomised, intervallic, spoken sample playback; the narrative of walks (two real and one imagined) through important local places that determine field recording playback; the chronology of the participants' isolated COVID-19 "lockdowns" that order the telephone conversations; the morphology of certain statements (i.e. sample "Affective Geography 1" of each participant's interview) that determine the shape of "musics" derived from voice recordings; the structure of Adam's synthesiser improvisation; the researcher-artist's general and subtle linear progression from purported "transparency" of presentation to increased sonic manipulation throughout the work; various LFOs that modulate various other of the elements listed here at various frequencies etc. etc.

That the style of writing in the preceding paragraph had to be altered from the style employed in the rest of the document is testament to the difficulty of capturing the totality of what sound does in words. In this sense, the sonic write-up very much serves to enunciate something of place, people and power that a written narrativisation would struggle to capture.

8.3.5. Site of presentation

As has been noted above, the social distancing measures implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability of the study to explore matters relating to the site of

presentation. Unfortunately then, the current work offers little by way of contribution to our knowledge of the discipline in this area.

8.4. Research Question D

D. What is the impact of the process for the participants?

8.4.1. Overview

My participation within the local political context of the area served to extend the general impact of the project to a level that surpassed what could usually be expected from a study that aims to create a collaborative artwork. Examples of this broadened impact include assistance with a local music festival,[112] the creation of soundscapes for a play staged in the local area, and the promotion of local artists via online fundraiser streams for the benefit of the foodbank.[113] Beyond the impacts just listed, I feel that the largest impression was made by volunteering at the foodbank itself.

However, in this section, I would like to focus upon the impact of the project for the three participants specifically. Brief interviews were conducted with both Adam and Ken in March 2021 to explore their retrospective opinions on the project. Both interviews were again subject to Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Given the continuing need for social distancing, these interviews took place by telephone call. Full details of the analytic processes undertaken can be reviewed in Appendices 6 and 7**.** The superordinate theme diagrams derived from this analytic process can be seen in Figures 74 and 75 below.

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[112] Volunteering as a stagehand for WECC's 50th Anniversary celebration on the 14th of September 2019.
[113] This initiative was started after the first lockdown and the Give Hope (2020) fundraiser page is linked from the project website.
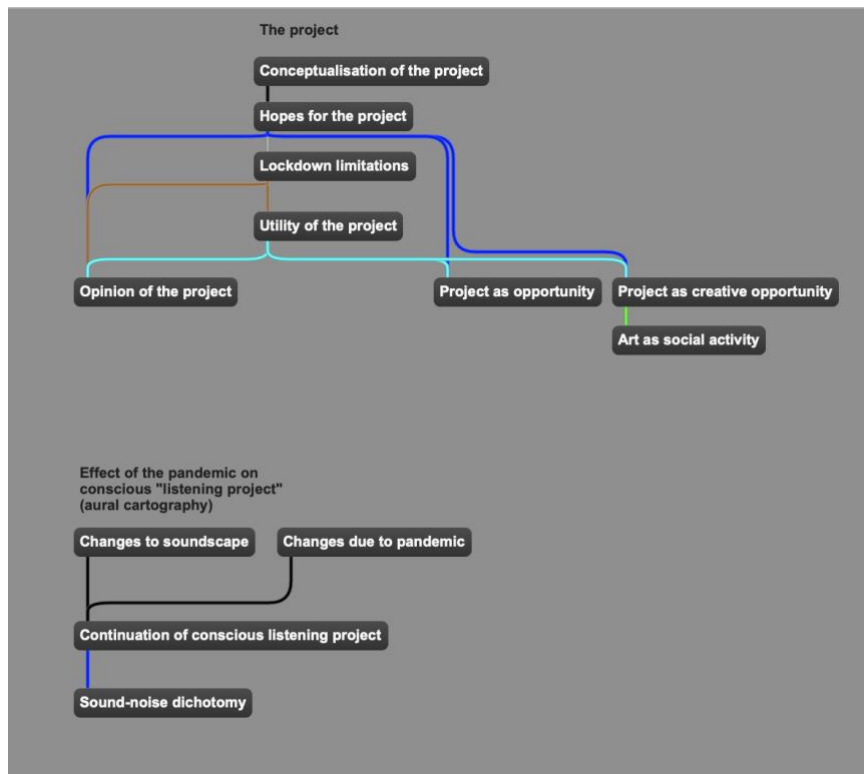
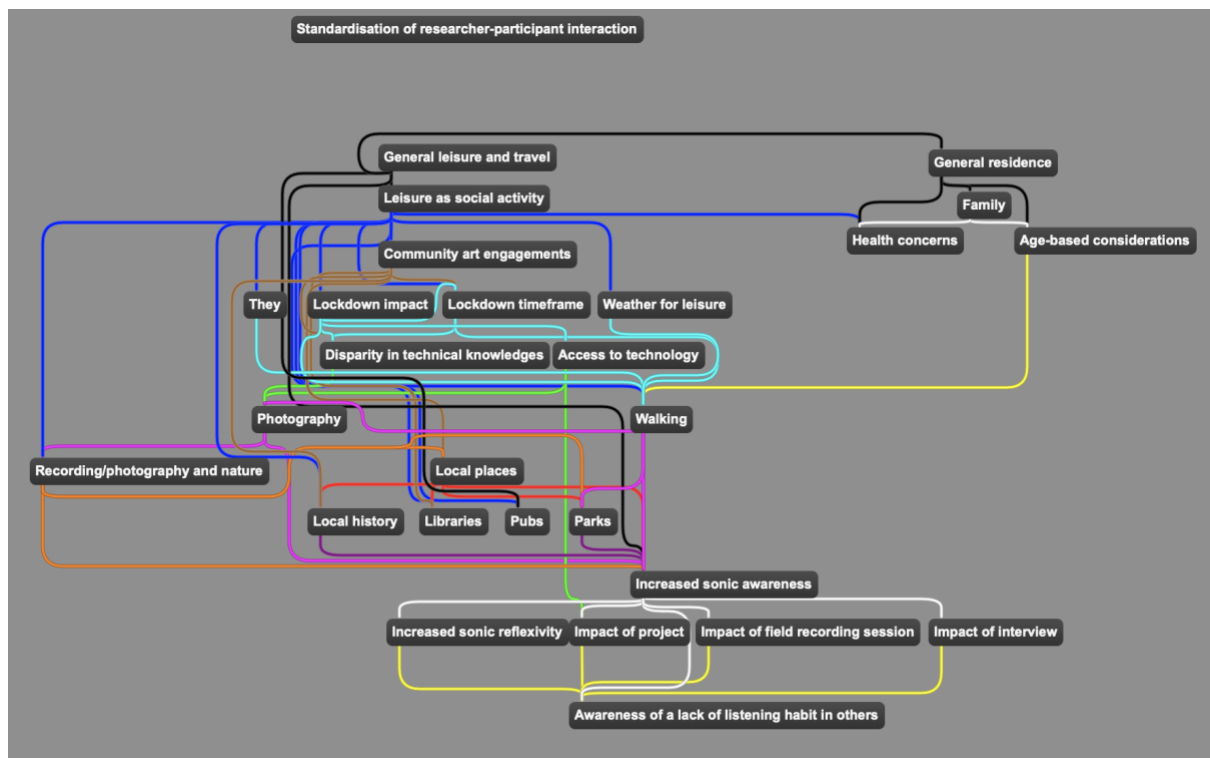Figure 30: Superordinate theme diagram for Adam's impact interview.

Figure 31: Superordinate theme diagram for Ken's impact interview.

E, who had previously decided against participation in the recorded telephone calls that generated material for *About Us – For Us*, was also contacted about the interviews. She was busy at the time and after two subsequent unanswered calls, I decided that any further attempts would be unjustified.

8.4.2. Impact for the participants

A general concern for sonic community engagements is to trace the development of any heightened sonic awareness in the participants. Care is needed in assessing such an impact. As McCartney (2015: 160) highlights, we should be reflexively aware of our assumptions, as it is possible for those in our community of practice to imagine others to be 'deafened into numbness and needing to be awakened to true listening by the composer', or more generally, believe them to be 'ignorant and needing enlightenment'. As the preceding discussion has shown, each of the participants in the current study has a unique way of listening to the world, and also of making sense of that listening. This fact bears out the alternative suggested by McCartney (Ibid.), in which we can imagine others to be 'possessed of original and unusual ways of listening' and able to contribute to 'an expanded awareness of how we deal with soundscapes'. With this in mind, I would like to discuss any changes, or any lack of changes to participants' listening habits that were suggested by the interview analyses.

In response to a question about changes in the way he listens, Ken responded: "Well, I do listen out through the parks when I go... and just around an area as well... and on the coast... and perhaps I didn't do as much before... take much notice." Clearly then, the engagement has had an effect on the way in which Ken engages aurally with his surroundings. How can we explain this change?

At the start of the interview, I asked Ken if he had had chance to visit the website, to which he answered "no". Therefore, he had not heard the finalised work. From prior conversations that we had had about the Stanley Park photographs, I understood that Ken was able to upload images to Instagram with his own equipment but had previously done so with the help of friends. One of these friends was the leader of various community projects that Ken had been involved in. Ken wasn't sure whether he was able access websites, and COIVD-19 regulations made it difficult for us to explore his setup over the telephone. This is an issue of disparity in terms of both technical knowhow and access, and is an important consideration in its own right. In the context of the current discussion, it allows us to eliminate the idea that listening to the finished work had contributed to changes in Ken's listening habits. Instead, analysis of the impact interview suggests that both the Stanley Park Lake field recording session and the project generally (including the initial recorded interview, which included discussions about sounds heard in different areas) were the contributing factors.[114] This is an interesting discovery and serves to highlight the power of participation in field recording to encourage wider learning and reflection on soundscape and listening.

Collaborative engagement with the project more generally helped to induce changes in an existential sense: as a matter of becoming (Barnett, 2009). In the superordinate theme diagram (Figure 75), "Increased sonic awareness" is linked to an emergent theme entitled "General leisure and travel". The latter can be thought of as a shorthand for the superordinate theme that related to leisure-as-a-way-of-ordering-experience in the original interview (see Figure 15). Ken now listens to the natural soundscape whilst going about his walking activities (in the park, in "different areas", on the coast), a practice that he regards as inherently social and forms a very important part of his lifeworld. In relating listening to this

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[114] See Appendices 2 and 5.

way of experiencing time and space, we might now suspect that it has become an important part of his lifeworld. Whereas listening in the park might be readily attributed to the impact of our field recording session (which took place in Stanley Park), the fact that Ken is now listening to the sounds of different areas might be more easily ascribable to the impact of our original interview, in which a discussion of local sounds and sounds from elsewhere constituted a rather in-depth meditation on matters of the soundscape. This suggestion is given some weight by the fact that Ken tells me, "As you say, as you go through the different pa[rts]... you can hear them [birds] there as well". I would suggest that the discussion to which he is referring here ("as you say") did not begin in the impact interview at all, but is rather a continuation of a discussion from the first (see Appendices 2 and 5).

It is also notable that Ken is conscious of this change. During the impact interview, he tells a short anecdote in which he notices that an acquaintance has a relative lack of sonic awareness (relating to birds). Again, we might read a lasting change of lifeworld into this reflexive cognisance of sonic matters.

Contrastingly, the changes that Adam reports in his own listening relate to a change in the soundscape itself and cannot be ascribed to a heightened sonic awareness derived from participation in the project. The rejuvenated interest in listening, that he reports in emphatic terms, has come about because of a decrease in road sound that has allowed for the sounds of nature and wildlife to become more prominent. These types of sonic concern are consistent with the pre-existing project of listening and aural mapping reported by Adam during the first interview (see Appendices 4 and 5). That opportunities for collaborative field recordings with Adam were frustrated by the pandemic leaves us to speculate on any potential changes to aural experience that might have come about from such an engagement, especially given his already active and refined practice in this area.

The impact of the pandemic on the study has already been cited in the text on various occasions. It is not something that escaped Adam's notice either. He is forthcoming

about his opinion on the study, which he feels very positive about. However, the impact of

successive "lockdowns" and varying degrees of restrictions on social interaction has

evidently rendered the actual engagement different from his conception of what it could have

been. The impact interview reveals that Adam had anticipated a project with the potential to

"really capture what goes on in places like Everton", and feature a marked interaction with

those involved. Adam's phrasing, noted by an "enunciative" comment in the analysis

document, suggests some degree of success in the former and less in the latter (see

Appendix 7). The impact of the lockdown on Ken's experience of the project is less well

defined in the interview. What does come through is the link that Ken makes between

community arts engagements (in which he participates regularly) and face-to-face social

interactions. While it might be fair to say that he does not have a specific concept of what

the current project could (or should) have been, his feelings of separation from other

activities that he was due to take part in are telling. What was taken from him were

opportunities to participate in leisure activities as social engagements.

This last consideration is given more weight by considering what it was that Ken

enjoyed about the project. One of his opening remarks in the impact interview was, "I

enjoyed doing it and trying to help you and... take the picturegraphs and stuff". Furthermore,

he states that he appreciated the opportunity to "[get] out in the fresh air and amongst the

trees and stuff like that... Walking round... 'cause I do... enjoy walking round different parks".

In these statements, field recording is placed implicitly beside walking and photography

(important experience-orienting activities that emerged from Ken's earlier lifeworld analysis),

and all three activities are framed in a collaborative and social context. Again, the linking of

our collaborative activities to existing practices that are important to Ken is evident, and

some degree of permanence to changes in his listening habits might be expected as a

result. The engagement also had positives for Adam. Reflecting on our interactions in the

context of the pandemic, he noted that this opportunity for storytelling provided an important focus amongst the wider societal limitations on creativity that he was experiencing.

A final thought might be offered on E's involvement throughout the engagement. Nothing seems more understandable than the prioritisation of family matters for a mother during the pandemic. In saying this, certain gender-based expectations are evident in my thinking. Perhaps this can be measured against the fact that both family and motherhood were key themes that emerged from our interview. To build on this slightly then, I would suggest that the experience of female participants in the study might indicate something about power and domination. The contrast between the positive focus that the interactions were able to provide for male participants, and the need for female participants to focus elsewhere seems significant.[115] Although no broad conclusions can be drawn from the observation, the serious nature of these other foci (family matters, bereavement and depression) may indicate something about gender roles and disparities in access to projects of this kind. Given the focus of the current study on austerity, power and domination, I feel that this is a consideration that must be acknowledged in a discussion of impact.

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[115] E declined participation in telephone call recordings, and a second female participant opted out of the study for personal reasons.

9. Conclusion

In this study, soundscape composition has been used to explore practical, ethnographic engagement in an area that has been impacted by austerity measures. In doing so, it has answered calls from within the relevant literature for field recording-based, ethnographic interactions to be documented with academic rigour (Drever, 2002 and Rennie, 2014). In organising this process, and the reading of the literature, according to the four stages of ethnographic study outlined by Drever (2002), it has been possible to outline specific contributions to our understanding of the discipline in each area. A particular focus upon reflexivity and the management of power imbalances in the artist-researcher/participant relationship has been presented throughout. The main work, *About Us – For Us* is a sonic write-up that is supported by an exegesis. It is hoped that, in following academic conventions, the claim for the validity of sonic, ethnographic presentations can be strengthened.

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