A MIXED METHODS STUDY EXPLORING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN ADULT AMATEUR SINGING GROUPS IN A MULTICULTURAL URBAN SETTING

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I, Diana Parkinson, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

Singing is reported to be one of most popular artistic activities enjoyed by European adults, with 2.14 million people reported to be taking part in group singing in the UK. However, issues of diversity and inclusion have rarely been discussed in the literature relating to adult amateur group singing. Using a mixed methods approach, the aim of this exploratory study was, therefore, to understand more about the factors that affect diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. The study adopted a conceptual framework for investigating inclusion that was developed in the workplace and that focused on understanding how groups' practices, climate and leadership can affect their members' perceived inclusion.

Interviews with 31 group representatives and a participant questionnaire completed by 383 members of adult amateur singing groups in a multicultural urban area revealed that diversity among and within the participating singing groups appeared to be both more complex and fluid than has generally been reported. The groups varied in size, composition and repertoire, and the diversity of their membership, while superficially appearing to show little overall diversity, varied across groups.

The study revealed high levels of perceived inclusion among respondents, and this did not generally appear to be affected by diversity characteristics. However, group practices, group climate and, to a lesser extent, group leadership all had a significant effect on how included individuals felt in their groups, while repertoire emerged as the most significant factor affecting both diversity of membership and perceived inclusion within the participating groups. As well as highlighting potential benefits for singing groups of promoting inclusion, the findings suggest that for singing groups to successfully embrace diversity within their membership, this must be nurtured by the inclusiveness of the groups themselves.

Impact statement

Research into diversity and inclusion within organisations is a still evolving field and much of the research to date has focused on workplace settings and has been carried out in the USA. In particular, there has been very little research into how inclusion is operationalised in community music settings, such as adult amateur group singing, in the UK. With its specific focus on the nature and extent to which diversity and inclusion are manifest within participating singing groups in a multicultural urban area, this study has provided an insight into the ways in which diversity and inclusion are manifest within adult amateur singing groups, a topic which has not been explored in any other research to date.

Overall, the study identified a range of ways in which adult amateur singing groups can be inclusive in their practices, climate and leadership and, drawing these different aspects of inclusive group practices, climate and leadership together, proposed a framework for understanding inclusion within adult amateur group singing. With further testing and refinement, this framework could help adult amateur singing groups to assess and, potentially, to improve the ways in which they support the inclusion of their members, and of those joining their groups, which, in turn, may enable groups themselves to flourish.

The findings from this study imply that reviewing and enhancing the inclusiveness of group practices, climate and leadership should be a regular aspect of organisational management. With modifications, this framework could be used, for example, to support amateur orchestra and bands to review their practices, climate and leadership in the light of these findings. Professional music-making groups might also use the proposed framework of inclusion to consider the ways in which diversity and inclusion can be supported within their organisations, as might other types of leisure group or voluntary associations, such as group-based physical activity programmes for older people and group-based arts-focused activities, such as community drama groups.

Understanding more about diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing also enables us to understand better how we can address wider barriers to social inclusion and build social capital. This is particularly important for individuals from marginalised groups, as the benefits of group singing have been shown to be especially important for those who are excluded in other aspects of their lives. By providing insight into the factors that support or hinder inclusion, this research can, therefore, support access to adult amateur group singing and help to ensure that individuals are able to achieve the maximum benefit from participating.

Finally, this study has generated new learning by applying a conceptual framework which was originally developed to understand inclusion in the workplace to the context of adult amateur group singing. The framework of inclusion that has been proposed in this study supports future research by demonstrating the relevance and value of the workplace framework for inclusion to non-workplace contexts such as adult amateur group singing, showing how it can lead to a better understanding of the complex mechanisms that underpin diversity and inclusion within organisations.

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Undertaking a PhD is very much a solo activity and, given the length of time involved in designing the research, carrying out the data collection, analysing and then writing up the results, can be likened to a marathon. This analogy allows me to express my gratitude to the different people who have supported me, in different ways, during my PhD marathon.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Singing together with other people appears to fulfil fundamental human needs, accompanying acts of celebration, mourning, worship, work, play, and protest (Olson, 2005). Singing is reported to be the third most popular artistic activity by 11% of Europeans (European Commission, 2013) and, in recent times, virtual group singing has offered comfort and hope to those isolated through the Covid-19 pandemic (Kearney, 2020). Yet singing groups are often seen as exclusive spaces, dominated by those who are well-educated and from white ethnic backgrounds (Bell, 2004; Chorus America, 2003; Clift et al., 2008; Rensink-Hoff, 2009; Sandgren, 2009). Exploring diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing will, therefore, help us to understand better how to ensure that this vital community resource can be accessible to all.

1.1   Adult amateur group singing

Group singing takes many different forms, largely determined by cultural traditions in different countries (Livesey, Morrison, Clift, & Camic, 2012). This study focuses on groups of adults singing together regularly in the UK, and which are not comprised of professional singers, created for therapeutic purposes, or which only come together on an ad hoc, informal basis. As such, adult amateur group singing in this study takes place in the community and offers opportunities for individuals to come together on a regular basis to sing as a group. This definition includes a wide variety of different types of group, such as community choirs, choral societies, gospel choirs, chamber choirs, folk groups, church choirs, barbershop groups, symphony choruses and workplace choirs. Professional, therapeutic and informal groups are excluded from this definition as it was felt that the composition and organisation of such groups is very different from that of amateur, leisure-based singing groups.

A large body of research has documented the benefits of participation in group singing to individual well-being and health, with recognised beneficial effects on health-related quality of life, anxiety, depression and mood, as well as physical health benefits such as improved lung function (see systematic reviews by Clift, Nicol, Raisbeck, Whitmore, & Morrison, 2010; Lewis et al., 2016; and Reagon, Gale, Enright, Mann, & van Deursen, 2016). Group singing has also been seen to foster a stronger sense of personal identity and greater confidence (Daykin et al., 2016) and to provide an opportunity for personal growth, learning and self-expression (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Clift et al., 2007).

Other studies have revealed the benefits of group singing in improving social interaction (Bailey & Davidson, 2003; Clift & Morrison, 2011) and fostering a sense of group cohesion (Langston & Barrett, 2008). The benefits of group singing, and particularly its interpersonal benefits, have been shown to be especially relevant for individuals who are disenfranchised and marginalised in society, such as through imprisonment, homelessness or mental illness (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Cohen, 2012; Dingle et al., 2012). Group singing, it has been argued, fulfils a basic need for vocal collaboration and social connectedness (Davidson & Faulkner, 2006) and offers an important community resource that creates social capital (Langston and Barrett, 2008).

Issues of diversity and inclusion have rarely been discussed in the literature relating to adult amateur group singing. Singing groups have often been presented as a "monolithic, unitary construct" (Daugherty, 2002, p. 12), composed predominantly of individuals who are female, well-educated, and from white ethnic backgrounds (Bell, 2004; Chorus America, 2003; Clift et al., 2008; Rensink-Hoff, 2009; Sandgren, 2009). A review of community choirs and singing in the USA noted "the visible lack of racial diversity in community choirs … is not reflective of our evolving twenty-first century American society" (Bell, 2004, p. 50). However, some researchers have suggested that participation in group singing is changing, resulting from an increase in 'community choirs' as inclusive, accessible singing groups for the general public (see Adler, 2013; Chapman, 2011; Deane, Dawson, & McCabe, 2013;

Yerichuk, 2015) and in the increased media attention given to adult group singing

(Chapman, 2010; Clift & Camic, 2015). However, no research has yet investigated whether

and how any such changes have affected diversity in the membership of adult amateur

singing groups and there has been little considerable of whether, or how, singing groups

endeavour to be inclusive.

1.2   Diversity and inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are often portrayed as closely interrelated concepts and the terms

sometimes used interchangeably. However, they are separate and distinct constructs and,

as previous research has shown, inclusive organisations and diverse organisations do not

necessarily have the same attributes (Roberson, 2006). Indeed, the relationship between

the two concepts has been succinctly explained by Tapia (2009), who states, "diversity is the

mix. Inclusion is making the mix work" (p. 12). Although there are many definitions of both

terms, it is generally accepted that diversity encompasses a range of characteristics, such as

ethnicity, gender identity, educational background, socio-economic status, and religious

beliefs (Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003). On the other hand, there is less consensus around

the definition of inclusion, which can be considered both as a *process* whereby individuals

become accepted as members of an organisation (Patel, Tabb, & Sue, 2017) and as a *state*

in which individuals feel a sense of belonging to a group (Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, &

Kossek, 2008). One well-accepted theoretical approach has been offered by Shore, Randel,

Chung and Dean (2011) who describe inclusion as the degree to which an individual feels

they are a valued member of a group through experiencing treatment that satisfies their

needs for belongingness and uniqueness. Shore and his colleagues propose that inclusive

leadership, inclusive practices and an inclusive climate are key contextual factors in enabling

individuals to experience a sense of inclusion in a group.

Inclusion and diversity have increasingly been recognised as important aspects of

organisational effectiveness. For example, in a workplace context, research has shown that

greater diversity can lead to positive outcomes, such as increased creativity and innovation (Billing & Sundin, 2006; Nijstad & Paulus, 2019; Roberge & van Dick, 2010; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010), improved physical and psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2001), reduced staff turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009) and increased citizenship behaviour, such as helping colleagues (Den Hartog, De Hoogh, & Keegan, 2007). Diversity is supported by an active focus on inclusion (Ferdman, 2014; Winters, 2014), which also brings important benefits to organisational performance, such as increased employee commitment and improved performance (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Findler, Wind &, Mor Barak, 2007). A conscious effort on understanding and promoting diversity and inclusion has, therefore, attracted increasing interest from organisations and researchers (Ferdman & Deane, 2014).

1.3   Challenges to diversity and inclusion in adult amateur group singing

Very little research has, however, explored the processes that underpin adult amateur group singing, particularly in terms of the factors that enable individuals to join and become part of adult amateur singing groups. On the other hand, there is considerable evidence of the barriers that impede access to group singing (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1). Indeed, some have suggested that *not singing* has become the norm in western, affluent societies – a situation that has resulted from excluding practices within musical education, a lack of funding and support for music education generally, as well as from cultural beliefs around singing (Joyce, 2005; Knight, 2016; Richards & Durrant, 2003; Welch, 2016). Researchers have shown how music education has tended to focus on western classical music, thereby excluding people from non-western cultural backgrounds (Horne, 2007; Pascale, 2005). As a result, it is suggested that an elitist culture of musicality has developed that prevents large numbers of people from taking part in musical activities such as singing (de Quadros, 2015; Joyce, 2003, 2005). In a discussion of the practices involved in choral singing, Garnett concludes that the practices enacted by many singing groups which focus on certain modes

of diction, vocal production and musicianship skills "privilege the white, educated middle classes" (Garnett, 2005, p. 268).

Perceptions of group singing can also form a barrier to participation, particularly for men. A body of research has shown how the gendering of music education, as well as vocal changes in puberty, can result in boys developing negative perceptions of singing, at least as experienced in schools (Ashley 2010; Demorest, 2000; Freer, 2006, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012; Green, 1997; Harrison, 2007; Harrison, Welch, & Adler, 2012; Koza, 1993). Ashley describes how some boys think of singing as an activity for "sissies" which is "to be avoided by 'real boys'" (Ashley 2010, p. 54). The gender imbalance frequently reported in adult amateur singing groups, where women are commonly reported to outnumber men by two to one, reveals a possible impact that these adolescent perceptions may have had on male participation in adult group singing (Bartel & Cooper, 2015; Clift et al., 2007, 2008; Parkinson, 2016; Rensink-Hoff, 2011).

Socio-economic factors may also present barriers. Research has shown that children from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to learn to play an instrument (Hume & Wells, 2014) and may face greater alienation from cultural activities (Bull, 2014), factors that are likely to discourage later participation in certain kinds of music-making. Equally, family and work commitments can present barriers, particularly for people of lower socio-economic status. In a study following up former participants in a school choir in the USA who were described as being of low socio-economic status, two-thirds reported that family and work commitments prevented them from taking part in group singing (Malone, 2011).

The findings from research investigating the under-representation of specific groups within group singing also reveal that there may also be other less readily acknowledged barriers to participation. For example, while a few studies have described the experiences of people with learning disabilities within educational and community singing programmes (Haywood, 2005, 2006; Ludlow, 1995, Menehan, 2009), a literature review revealed very little specific investigation of the topic as a whole (Salvador, 2013), highlighting the need for

more research in this area. Furthermore, despite a growing awareness of transgender singers and the barriers they face (Manternach, 2017), research in this field has mainly focused on educational settings.

This evidence of the barriers that individuals may experience in participating in adult amateur group singing reveals that many of these barriers are systematic and structural, requiring fundamental changes in our education system and social norms. However, it also highlights a need to understand better the processes by which diversity and inclusion can be promoted with the membership of singing groups. Specifically, understanding *how* groups act to promote or impede inclusion can bring another dimension to our understanding of the subject.

1.4   This research

The aim of this doctoral research was, therefore, to understand more about the factors that might affect diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. As such, this study sought to explore complex phenomena as well as to contribute to organisational impact by promoting questioning and influencing change within the groups studied (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003).

1.4.1   Research aim and questions

This was an exploratory study that sought to explore the ways in which adult amateur singing groups support perceived diversity and inclusion, and to further our understanding of issues of diversity and inclusion within organisations. There were three principle linked research questions:

1. How diverse are adult amateur singing groups and in what ways are they diverse?

2. Do individuals feel included within adults amateur singing groups? If they do, to what extent is this related to their diversity characteristics or other factors?

3. Do adult amateur singing groups' practices, climate and leadership affect (a) the

    diversity of their membership and (b) their members' perceptions of inclusion? If they

    do, in what ways are diversity in groups' membership and group members'

    perceptions of inclusion affected by group practices, climate and leadership?

Answering these questions should help to provide a greater understanding of how diverse

and inclusive the participating adult amateur singing groups were, as well as how they might

better support diversity and inclusion.

1.4.2   Research perspective

The research was motivated by a personal desire to understand better how adult amateur

group singing is organised and experienced, and, above all, to discover whether there are

ways to improve the experience of joining and participating to ensure that group singing is

accessible and enjoyable for all. Having belonged to a number of different singing groups

and held the position of co-chair of one group, the varied experiences this has generated

have raised my awareness of how many groups appear to struggle with issues related to

diversity and inclusion. For example, joining a small, community choir created a strong

personal sense of belonging as friendships developed and my sense of commitment to the

group increased. However, taking on the role of co-chair gave me a greater responsibility for

ensuring that other members felt similarly, and I began to appreciate the challenges that this

brought with it. For example, some members were struggling to pay their membership fees

and the committee was, initially, reluctant to consider offering concessionary rates. Equally,

I became aware that, despite the fact that rehearsals and concerts were accessible to

someone in a wheelchair, the choir was doing nothing to advertise this.

   Alongside this experience of being part of a group in which I felt both a strong sense of

personal inclusion and responsibility for others' sense of inclusion, I also joined another two

singing groups during the years of my research. These experiences helped me to

appreciate how it felt to come into a group as an outsider and endeavour to become part of the group. I learnt what it felt like to know no-one to talk to during rehearsal breaks, to feel uncertain where to sit and how to behave. More than anything, I realised how not feeling part of the group undermined my experience of singing as it left me feeling uncertain, unfulfilled and left out. I also observed that I experienced this sense of exclusion as a white, well-educated woman who was part of the majority in the groups that I had joined, and I wondered how different these experiences would be for someone from a minority group. At the same time, I also observed, and welcomed, the efforts that the groups made to include me as a new member, by being welcoming and offering both musical and social support when needed.

These various experiences have driven my interest in the subject of my research. I wanted to find out how well adult amateur singing groups are succeeding in providing an inclusive experience for their members and whether there are factors that are particularly important in developing more inclusive and diverse groups. Although there are systemic and structural barriers that affect participation in group singing, I felt that there was much to learn from the experiences of individuals who do take part that can help to make group singing accessible to all who want to participate.

1.4.3   Research methodology

Using a mixed methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), my research has focused on adult amateur singing groups in a specific part of London. This area, the London borough of Camden, presented an interesting site in which to locate the research as the borough has an ethnically diverse and relatively young population from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds (London Borough of Camden, 2020). Moreover, initial mapping established that there appeared to be at least 50 different adult amateur singing groups operating within Camden during the period of the fieldwork.

Using a mixed methods research offered a useful approach for exploring how adult amateur singing groups support diversity and inclusion as it allowed for a range of perspectives to be captured through utilising and integrating the findings from both qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach meant the study could have breadth through the use of quantitative methods, while the qualitative methods would offer greater insight into individuals' experiences. Both these elements seemed important as investigating issues of inclusion and diversity should involve seeking to understand multiple and nuanced perspectives (Rose, 2010).

The research involved individual in-depth interviews with representatives from 31 singing groups and a questionnaire completed by 383 of the members of 17 of these groups. Both the interviews and the questionnaire sought to explore individuals' perceptions, attitudes and experiences of diversity and inclusion, and provided a rich source of both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis. The questionnaire contained scaled questions (collecting quantitative data) and open questions (collecting qualitative data) while the interviews with group representatives largely collected qualitative data, but also involved some collection of quantitative data as interviewees were asked to provide information on the size of their group and the proportion of members with various diversity characteristics. The presentation and discussion of the findings interweaves the textual and numeric evidence from the interviews and questionnaires.

1.5   Overview of the thesis

This chapter has offered an introduction to the subject of the research and has sought to define the key concepts involved and explain their significance. It has also provided a brief account of the methods used to carry out the research and of the data gathered.

The following chapter seeks to present a more in-depth exploration of the research literature relevant to diversity, inclusion and adult amateur group singing (Chapter two) and, drawing on a framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011), highlights what is known and

not known about these topics in the context of adult amateur group singing in the UK.

Chapter three describes in greater depth the methods used to design and carry out the

research, explaining why a mixed methods approach was chosen and how this was applied.

The chapter also describes how framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011)

and how the key antecedents of inclusion that this sets out – inclusive group practices,

inclusive group climate and inclusive group leadership – provided the underpinning

framework for this research. Chapters four, five and six then present the main findings from

the analyses of the data from the questionnaire and interviews relating to diversity, inclusion

and exclusion within the participating groups. The final chapters offer a discussion of these

findings (Chapter seven), and of the conclusions and implications emerging from the study

(Chapter eight) as well as suggesting areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter is based on an article published in the International Journal of Research in Choral Singing (Parkinson, 2018) and explores issues of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. Beginning with an examination of adult group singing itself and what is known about it, the focus then shifts to understanding how diversity and inclusion have been defined and how these topics have been studied within the field of research in adult group singing. Drawing on parallel research in other non-music fields, the literature review applies a framework of inclusion developed by Shore, Randel, Chung, and Dean (2011) to existing research in the field of amateur group singing. The chapter concludes that a greater understanding of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing would help singing groups to function more effectively and to provide a more fulfilling experience for their members and shows how this frames the research questions for the current study.

2.1   Methodology

This literature review was guided by the principles of a systematised review which aims to identify the nature and extent of research evidence in order to provide a "preliminary assessment of potential size and scope of available research literature" (Grant & Booth, 2009). While less ambitious in scope than a systematic review which aims for "exhaustive, comprehensive searching" (Grant & Booth, 2009, p. 95), this nonetheless involved a thorough search of the literature, the results of which were stored and classified in a referencing database.

An initial series of series of searches of literature published in the English language was carried out using different keywords, synonyms and search phrases, such as "group singing", "choir", "inclusion", "exclusion", "diversity" and associated words such as "participation", "belonging" and "community". These terms were variously applied using Boolean searches to combine keywords with operators such as "and", "not" and "or".

The searches were applied to various online databases of sources accessible through the University of London and the Senate House's library services as well as other online databases such as ProQuest's Music Periodicals Database, Scopus and the RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, and specific journals such as the International Journal of Community Music. The results were then supplemented by a process of backwards and forwards searching (vom Brocke et al., 2009), involving reviewing references listed in the sources and additional sources that had cited the articles in order to identify further relevant material.

Drawing from both academic sources and grey literature (i.e. documents that have been produced outside of traditional publishing and distribution channels), and spanning qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods studies as well as conceptual papers, the sources identified were then screened to ensure their relevance to the topics of diversity, inclusion, and adult amateur group singing and catalogues by date, author, methodology, and source type. Literature that addressed the key topics of diversity and inclusion and that focused specifically on adult amateur singing groups was prioritised. However, due to the lack of studies that met these criteria, relevant research pertaining to singing more generally was included as well as research carried out within other musical settings where these brought additional insights to the review. As each document was reviewed, "tags" were then added which served as brief descriptors for the content in the documents (see Appendix A) and facilitated the subsequent retrieval process (e.g. "fellowship", "camaraderie", "leadership").

The lack of specific research, and particularly of conceptual thinking, relating to diversity and inclusion in relation to adult group singing resulted in a widening of the review to include research on diversity and inclusion which had been carried out in other organisational settings such as the workplace, in which, it seemed, these topics had been more comprehensively explored and discussed. An iterative process evolved in which the literature that emerged through these searches also helped to identify new searches, such as the role of leadership and group processes in promoting diversity and inclusion, that could

then be applied to the literature on adult amateur group singing. Although organisational research might not immediately appear relevant to adult amateur group singing, there are fundamental communalities between workplace organisations and singing groups, as both involve bringing groups of people together to perform tasks and relate to one another as part of a team (Kirrane, O'Connor, Dunne, & Moriarty, 2016). Turning to literature on diversity and inclusion within the workplace, therefore, made it possible to explore the theoretical underpinnings of these concepts and, ultimately, to identify a framework which could then be applied to adult amateur group singing.

Once the literature had been categorised, relevance to the key topics remained the principal criteria for inclusion in this review. However, wherever possible, the review prioritised research that had been published in peer-reviewed journals, as recommended by Rowley and Slack (2004) and within a timespan of the last 20 years (2000 – 2020), although exceptions were made when the contribution from an older study, book or thesis was particularly relevant.

2.2   Adult group singing

In order to understand the context of adult group singing, this literature review begins by looking at the historical evolution of group singing, before considering how group singing has been defined. The section then provides a brief overview of the main areas of research relating to adult amateur group singing.

2.2.1   A historical perspective

Through the ages, group singing has played a key role in society, accompanying acts of worship, work, and play, and during times of protest (Olson, 2005). In his detailed review of the history of western choral music, Alwes (2015) traces the development of choral singing from the performance of sacred choral music in medieval times through to the virtual choirs of the twenty-first century. He describes how the earliest evidence of choral singing can be

found in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, and choral singing flourished in the Renaissance when small groups of male singers were brought together to sing music by composers such as Dufay and Josquin des Pres. Organised group singing continued to be nurtured by the Christian Church throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Parrott, 2012), during which period large-scale choral works were written by composers such as Palestrina, Monteverdi and, later, Bach.

It was only in the eighteenth century that formalised non-religious group singing appears to have become popular, with the emergence of singing clubs, madrigal societies and larger, mixed-voice choirs of amateur singers (Hillier, 2012). Indeed, Alwes (2012) describes how, by the later eighteenth century, performances of Handel's oratorios in England and other European countries regularly involved choirs of several hundred singers. Large-scale choral singing continued to flourish during the nineteenth century, so much so that the London Great Exhibition of 1851 was reported as featuring almost round-the-clock oratorio performances, and 3,000 French choristers came to London in 1860 to perform at Crystal Palace (Applegate, 2013).

In the last century, group singing appears to have actively organised as a response to the World Wars (Sayer, 2011) and continued to be actively promoted, such as through organised pre-match singing at the Football Association Cup Final (Russell, 2008). At the same time, it appears that "a plethora of new choral groupings" was beginning to emerge alongside the typical amateur choirs of the nineteenth century, encompassing a wide range of different types of singing groups, including "gay and lesbian choirs, school and university choirs, amateur chamber choirs, jazz, swing, and gospel choirs, pop, folk and show choirs, and many more" (Samama, 2012, p. 84). Group singing was also a powerful form of political protest; Smidchens (2014), for example, describes how forbidden patriotic songs were used to rally for independence in mass public gatherings in the Baltic states during the early twentieth century. Similarly, researchers such as Gilbert (2007), Gunner (2009) and Jolaosho (2014) describe how group singing played a key role in the struggle to end

apartheid in South Africa. Group singing can also be associated with industrial development and national identity, as exemplified by the Welsh Male Voice Choirs that flourished in the UK in the nineteenth century and which provided a lifeline during periods of mass unemployment by giving the men "some sense of purpose and pride" as well as a means to occupy their time and raise money through performances (Ellis, 2017, p. 35).

A new form of group singing which emerged in the twentieth century was the concept of the virtual choir, developed by composers such as Eric Whitacre (Armstrong, 2012), where singers record voice parts that are combined into a single piece of music which is then shared over the internet. In 2013, for example, Whitacre conducted a real-time 'Live Virtual Choir', involving singers from 28 countries participating through the internet, alongside a choir on stage, all of which was streamed live through Skype (Daffern et al., 2019). In recent times, operating as a virtual choir has become the only way in which many singing groups have been able to function during the Covid-19 pandemic ((Murray, 2020).

2.2.2   *Defining adult amateur group singing*

Singing in a choir or with a group of other singers can, therefore, take many different forms (Voices Now, 2017), and, as a result, the terms used to describe these different types of group singing have different meanings for different people. It is, therefore, important to consider how best to define the group singing that is the focus of this study.

The term 'chorus' can be traced back to the ancient Greek word 'khorós', while the word 'choir' first appears to have come into usage in the fourteenth century when 'quyre' was used to describe a band of singers (Hoad, 2003). These days, the Oxford Dictionary defines a choir as "an organized group of singers, especially one that takes part in church services or performs in public" (Stevenson, 2015). Adding a further qualification in their definition of term, the Oxford Dictionary of Music describes a choir or chorus as "an ensemble of singers, usually with more than one voice singing each part" (Kennedy & Bourne, 2006, p. 160). However, the Oxford Companion to Msusic suggests that the term 'choir' is generally applied

to "smaller bodies of singers – to ecclesiastical groups, and to small, expert groups such as are often composed of professionals and called 'chamber choirs'" and suggests that the term 'chorus' describes "larger groups of singers – especially amateur enthusiasts, but also professionals in the theatre and opera house" (Latham, 2011, p. 149).

In the USA, the term 'community choir' or 'community chorus' has been in use since the 1940s when Stromberg described a mixed-voice, group of amateur singers as a community chorus (Stromberg, 1947, p. 23). Simmons (1962) adds a further qualification to this definition by specifying that the purpose of the community choir is "something other than participating in services of worship" (Simmons, 1962, p. 7). As such, it seems that this broad definition of community singing persisted for many years. In 1976, for example, an appeal was published in the Choral Journal for people to take part in a survey of community choruses which specified that "at the present time we are defining community chorus to mean any type of adult choral group" (Olson, 1976, p. 22).

It was only in 1989 that a more empirically-based definition of community choirs emerged when Spell defines a community choir as "an auditioned or non-auditioned group of seventeen or more volunteer singers that regularly rehearses for at least two hours twice each month and presents public concerts" (Spell, 1989, p. 6), basing his minimum number of singers on local choral festival procedures. Tipps (1992) makes use of this definition in his study of a community chorus in Georgia, but goes on to describe the variety of different types of choir that he feels are included within the definition of community choirs, such as church choirs, barbershop groups, ethnic choirs, oratorio societies, symphony choruses and workplace choirs. Tipps' definition was further discussed and developed by Bell (2000) in her exploration of community choirs, where she defines a community choir as:

> *Any auditioned or non-auditioned singing group whose membership consists of adults age 18 and over, whose membership is not part of a larger organization (such as a Barbershop Association or Church Society), and one that rehearses weekly for the purpose of performance not related to worship services.*

(Bell, 2000, p. 11)

However, a very different definition of the community choir can be found in a later study of community singing in Canada in which Joyce (2003) suggests that community choirs are distinguished by their commitment to inclusion and diversity and the practice of mainly multicultural music-making which is taught aurally (Joyce, 2003).

In the UK, the term 'community choir' does not appear in the literature related to singing until 2008, when Clift and colleagues refer to a study carried out by Hillman involving "members of a large community choir" (Clift et al., 2008, p. 50). However, at the time, the author described the choir as "a community arts project" (Hillman, 2002, p. 163), suggesting that the term 'community choir' may have been adopted by Clift and his colleagues from the North American usage of the term. In their evaluation of singing groups in disadvantaged areas in the UK, Deane, Dawson, and McCabe (2013) make a distinction between "standard western classical choral societies that do not audition singers" and community choirs with "a tradition of aural work, a world music repertoire, singing in a circle, and singing for themselves rather than necessarily rehearsing for a performance" (p. 5). Moreover, Chapman (2010) suggests that the emergence of community choirs has led some choral societies to "re-evaluate their function and the image they portray to the wider community" (p. 47), leading them to become more inclusive through offering sight-reading classes and diversifying their repertoire.

These evolving and varied definitions of choirs, choruses, choral societies, and community choirs highlight the different perceptions of group singing that have developed over time and suggest that none of these terms may adequately represent all the different types of group singing to which the present study relates. Indeed, a review of the singing groups listed on websites hosted by networks such as *British Choirs on the Net, The British Association of Choirs* and *Gerontius* reveals a wide range of groups of all different sizes and types, variously referring to themselves as 'choir', 'chorus', 'choral society' and 'community choir'. Equally, adult amateur group singing can take place in less formalised ways, as can

be seen in the description provided by Hield (2013) of a folk singing session taking place in a pub, where the participants "strike up a song when there is space" (p. 102).

The term 'group singing' is, therefore, used in this study to refer to a particular subset of singing groups that comprises amateur singing groups which are not professional, and which are not created for therapeutic purposes but which meet regularly to rehearse and perform as a group. As such, 'group singing' takes place across a range of venues and contexts and brings people together in groups of various sizes to sing different kinds of music in a variety of ways. In addition, to differentiate this form of group singing from the very different form of group singing that takes place in schools, the definition of group singing for this study focuses on singing groups which bring together groups of adults.

2.2.3   Contextualising singing groups

Exploring what is meant by adult group singing also reveals that researchers have located singing groups within different settings. Some, for example, have focused on singing groups as 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998) where groups of individuals come together to learn and co-operate over a mutual interest. In their study of workplace choirs, Balsnes and Jansson (2015) show how the concept of the 'community of practice' applies to group singing through the entwining of the social and musical aspects of group singing. Bonshor (2016) also uses the concept of 'community of practice' in his study of knowledge and power within adult amateur choral communities, describing how "members have a common interest in singing, with the shared goals of learning songs together and participating in choral performances" (p. 301).

On the other hand, others have located singing groups within the context of leisure activities, where group singing can be considered a "serious leisure pursuit" (Nash, 2012; Liu & Stebbins, 2014). Based on the concept of 'serious leisure' originally propounded by Stebbins (1982) to describe activities that share work-like properties, these researchers have described how group singing involves ongoing commitment and can serve "as an organizing

principle for daily life" (Nash, 2012, p. 595) which offers a "deeply rewarding activity for its participants… capable of producing significant self-fulfilment and life satisfaction" (Liu & Stebbins, 2014, pp. 543-544). Nash argues that group singing has implications for participants' sense of belonging or community as it creates a space that mitigates negative forces outside the group and where belonging to the group matters deeply to participants.

Some have also suggested that adult amateur singing groups can be seen as voluntary sector organisations (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009) in that they involve regular meetings and public performances, and have goals around artistic quality. Rowold and Rohmann describe how adult amateur singing groups function as heterogeneous work groups where members have highly interdependent work tasks. In a similar vein, Kirrane and colleagues have explored the teamwork involved in a chamber choir, concluding that:

> *"There is a need for greater conceptual and empirical work in developing a model of effective team functioning that specifically reflects the contingencies of choral groups."* (Kirrane et al., 2016, p. 11)

2.3   Research into adult amateur group singing

Despite the different contexts in which adult amateur group singing can be located, it would seem that most research into adult group singing has focused on three main areas: individuals' participation in singing groups, their motivation for taking part, and the benefits experienced by the members of singing groups. In addition, some researchers have attempted to identify the extent to which group singing offers particular value, compared to other activities or in particular contexts.

2.3.1   *Participation*

A survey carried out across Europe suggests that singing, either as an individual or in a group, is one of the most popular forms of musical participation, with singing ranking as the

third most popular artistic activity reported by 11% of Europeans (European Commission, 2013). Voices Now, an organisation supporting choirs across the UK, reported research indicating that there were over 2.14 million people singing regularly and over 40,000 singing groups in the UK although this included school choirs and youth groups (Voices Now, 2017). While there is no specific data available concerning the total number of adults who belong to singing groups in the UK, a survey of nearly 10,000 adults in England carried out in 2018 revealed that 6% of respondents had taken part in group singing or had had a singing lesson in the previous year (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2018). Given the rise in media attention given to group singing (such as Gareth Malone's various TV series and the radio programme 'The Choir' on Radio 3), it is likely that these estimates are too low. Support for this view is found in a report commissioned by the European Choral Association which claims that there has been 85% increase in the number of choral singers in Europe, from 22.5 million in 2013 to 37 million in 2015 (Bartel & Cooper, 2015, p. 22). Similarly, Chorus America (2019) reported that the percentage of adult Americans who sing in a group increased from 14% in 2008 to 17% in 2019.

2.3.2 Motivations

Given the relative, although somewhat unquantified, popularity of group singing, it is not surprising that a considerable amount of research has explored the reasons why people take up singing. Some researchers believe that the desire to sing originates from experiences in childhood (Freer, 2009; Powell, 2017) which can lead people to take up singing later in life. Similarly, Chorus America has found that "interest in choral singing develops early in life and is influenced by school and family experiences" (Chorus America, 2003, p. 7), and Knight (2010) reports that nearly three-quarters of participants in her study of singers and non-singers in Newfoundland felt that their early musical experiences had helped to forge their singing identity.

Other researchers have focused on the appeal of the communal or musical aspects of group singing. In reviewing previous studies which had investigated singers' motivations, Bell (2004) observes how singers were particularly motivated by a desire to make music with others and to perform and Wilson (2011) identified motivation to participate as a love of singing and enjoyment of the repertoire. Wilson also highlights the desire to develop musical skills and knowledge, reflecting a wider body of work related to the benefits of musical participation in offering opportunities for life-long learning (Boog & Burt-Perkins, 2009; Coffman, 2002). Meanwhile, some researchers have suggested that it is a combination of social, musical and personal factors motivates individuals to join a choir (Ververis & Marshall, 2015).

Many of these studies suggest that the most powerful factors in motivating individuals to join a singing group are musical ones. However, research carried out with adults in university choirs (Jacob et al., 2009) suggests that singers' continued participation is driven by social and personal factors, such as the friendships formed with other members and the sense of community they experienced. A final motivational factor to consider is the influence of the conductor; Rensink-Hoff (2009) found that considerable numbers of participants in her study of singers in eleven Canadian choirs had chosen to join a choir in order to sing under the leadership of a good conductor, echoing previous research by Bell (2000), Sichivitsa (2003) and Sugden (2005).

2.3.3   Benefits

Alongside the research into why people join singing groups, a considerable body of research has focused on the benefits that can be attributed to group singing, and several systematic reviews have sought to synthesise this research (see Clift et al., 2008, 2010; Lewis et al., 2016; Reagon, Gale, Enright, Mann, & van Deursen, 2016). The first of these (Clift et al. 2008) identified 38 papers related to singing, well-being and health and reported a range of recurrent themes around emotional, social and, to a small degree, physical health benefits.

A further systematic review by Clift and his colleagues (2010) identified a total of 51 papers from which they drew largely similar conclusions, while also highlighting the benefits of group singing for psychological and social wellbeing.

More recently, systematic reviews by Lewis et al. (2016) and Reagon et al. (2016) have focused on the health-related benefits of group singing and have indicated beneficial effects on health-related quality of life and mood. These findings have subsequently been demonstrated across a large, international sample of singers (Moss, Lynch, & O'Donoghue, 2018). Other physiological benefits of group singing have been suggested, such as in improving lung function for people suffering from cancer (Gale, Enright, Reagon, Lewis, & Van Deursen, 2012) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (Clift & Gilbert, 2016), and in boosting oxytocin levels which can help reduce stress and anxiety (Fancourt et al., 2016).

Meanwhile, in a review of the grey literature related to music, singing and well-being, researchers brought together a series of studies showing improvements to individual well-being, such as the joy of singing and making music, as well as personal benefits such as a stronger sense of personal identity (Daykin et al., 2016). Evidence that group singing increases self-confidence and self-esteem (Clift et al., 2010; Reagon, Gale, Enright, Mann, & van Deursen, 2016; Kokotsaki & Hallam, 2007; Sun & Buys, 2013), supports personal growth and learning (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Clift & Hancox, 2001; Clift et al., 2007), and enables self-expression (Bailey & Davidson 2005) has also been reported in the academic literature. For example, the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through a cross-national study involving over 1000 singers in Australia, England and Germany highlighted the way in which singing brings a sense of meaning and purpose to singers' lives (Livesey et al., 2012). Meanwhile, a study of members of a singing group for individuals who were experiencing homelessness revealed how participating in the group could help members to feel more visible and enhanced their sense of identity (Coyne, 2018).

Other studies also have revealed the benefits of group singing in reducing isolation (Dingle et al., 2012; Lamont, Murray, Hale, & Wright-Bevans, 2017; Skingley, Clift, Coulton,

& Rodriguez, 2011), improving social interaction (Bailey & Davidson, 2003; Clift & Morrison, 2011; Schalk, 2015) and enabling people to make new friends (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Durrant & Himonides, 1998). Indeed, Bailey & Davidson (2002) suggest that group singing can positively influence emotional, social and cognitive processes by enhancing mental engagement and creativity and promoting a sense of flow. Furthermore, they suggest that the mental concentration demanded by participating in singing and the social affiliation of being part of a group can act as "change agents" (p. 246) leading to positive changes in their lives. Meanwhile, Langston and Barrett (2008) suggest that group singing develops a sense of fellowship among singers which serves to foster group cohesion and they call for more research to investigate 'fellowship', which they believe plays "a significant role in the success or otherwise of other organizations and communities" (Langston and Barrett, 2008, p. 133).

Some researchers have also reported that group singing has a synchronising effect on respiration and heart rate which, they contend, may lead singers to "change their egocentric perspective of the world to a *we-perspective* which causes them to perceive the world from the same point of view" (Vickhoff et al., 2013, p. 13). Further support for this theory has also emerged through research in the field of neuroscience where communal music activity has been shown to play a neurobiological role in fostering integration (Freeman, 2000). More recent research has suggested that group singing may offer a fast track to community cohesion (Pearce, Launay, & Dunbar, 2015), where the 'ice-breaker' effect of singing with others serves to bypass the need for individuals to have prolonged interaction in order to feel close to one another. Additionally, it seems that participating in adult amateur singing provides opportunities for civic development, by enabling group members to learn management skills, connect with other community institutions, and engage in representational activities (Baggetta, 2009).

While some limitations have been noted in the strength of the evidence, particularly around the bias of many studies (Lewis et al., 2016), as well as around limited scale (Clift et al., 2010), length of intervention (Clift & Gilbert, 2016) and methodological limitations

(Reagon et al., 2016), the evidence of the benefits of group singing to both individuals and wider groups highlights the value of singing groups in creating "social capital that benefits the whole community" (Langston and Barrett, 2008, p. 133).

2.3.4   The unique value of group singing

With strong evidence of the benefits of group singing, some researchers have suggested that group singing may be a particularly powerful, and potentially unique, mechanism for improving well-being. For example, a recent study comparing the psychological benefits derived from group singing to those experienced by solo singers and members of sports teams found that choir members reported significantly higher levels of well-being than those who sang alone or took part in team sports (Stewart & Lonsdale, 2016). As such, the authors suggest that "the well-being benefits afforded by choral singing could be distinct in comparison with other leisure activities" (Stewart and Lonsdale, 2016, p. 24). However, a study carried out by Pearce et al. (2016) did not find any evidence of greater mental or physical health benefits from taking part in group singing compared to other types of adult education classes, although they acknowledge that differences might have emerged in a longer study involving more qualitative analysis.

Meanwhile, other research has shown that the benefits of group singing, and particularly its interpersonal benefits, are especially relevant for individuals who are disenfranchised and marginalised in society, such as through imprisonment, homelessness or living with a chronic mental illness or disability (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Cohen, 2012; Dingle et al., 2012). In particular, Dingle et al. suggest that joining a choir presents an opportunity to develop social identity, which in turn is linked to increased social connectedness and improved health (Dingle et al., 2012, p. 418). Some have also described how collective musical activity such as group singing results in a state of 'merged subjectivity' where individuals lose their sense of self and become part of a greater whole (Clarke, DeNora, and Vuoskoski, 2015).

It can, therefore, be seen that considerable research has identified and examined the different benefits associated with group singing. Researchers have also begun to consider more complex issues, such as the extent to which the benefits of group singing can be directly linked to the experience itself, and how these benefits are experienced in different contexts and by different groups of people. Nonetheless, research to date has done little to identify the social processes involved in group singing and, in particular, how issues of diversity and inclusion affect the extent to which individuals may benefit from participating.

2.4   Understanding diversity and inclusion

Before looking at the literature related to group singing within the context of diversity and inclusion, it seems appropriate to begin by addressing how the concepts of diversity and inclusion have been defined and how they are connected.

2.4.1   Diversity

The concept of diversity has been evolving over the last few decades "into a rather amorphous field, where the very word itself invokes a variety of different meanings and emotional responses" (Anand & Winters, 2008, p. 356). Where diversity was once simply seen as the way in which individuals are alike or different from one another in demographic terms (McGrath, Berdahl, & Arrow, 1995), diversity is now understood as a far more complex issue. For example, in their discussion of diversity and inclusion practice in the workplace, Hays-Thomas and Bendick (2013) define diversity as "the mixture of attributes… that in significant ways affect how people think, feel, and behave at work, and their acceptance, work performance, satisfaction, or progress in the organization" (p. 195). Others suggest that, as well as more immediately apparent aspects of diversity, such as ethnicity and gender identity, diversity exists in less obvious dimensions, such as educational background, socio-economic status, or religious beliefs (Jackson et al., 2003). It is, therefore, important

to appreciate that diversity is complex and that different aspects of diversity may intersect (Weisinger, Borges-Méndez, & Milofsky, 2016). Equally, Bell and Hartmann (2007) draw attention to the way in which much of the current discourse around diversity rests on a white normative perspective. They explain this further:

> *This perspective starts from the dominance of white worldviews, and sees the culture, experiences, and indeed lives, of people of color only as they relate to or interact with the white world.* (Bell and Hartmann, 2007, p. 907)

Despite the complexities around defining what is meant by diversity, some researchers have found that greater diversity can lead to positive outcomes, such as increased creativity and innovation (Billing & Sundin, 2006; Nijstad & Paulus, 2019; Roberge & van Dick, 2010; Stahl, Maznevski, Voigt, & Jonsen, 2010), improving physical and psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 2001), reducing turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009), and increasing citizenship behaviour, such as helping colleagues (Den Hartog, De Hoogh, & Keegan, 2007). However, negative outcomes from diversity have also been noted, such as employees in more diverse organisations feeling less attached to the organisation as they feel different from others around them and less able to identify a group to which they belong (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992). More diverse organisations may also have increased levels of conflict due to relational differences between individuals from different backgrounds (Joshi and Roh, 2009), or more inhibited decision-making and change processes due to a lack of integration and cohesion (see Mannix & Neale, 2005 for a review).

In their review of diversity issues in the UK non-profit sector, Tomlinson and Schwabenland (2010) describe how many organisations have evolved a 'business case' for diversity, justifying a focus on diversity initiatives through their economic benefits. However, Tomlinson and Schwabenland argue that it is more important for oragnisations to base their business case on social justice, where individuals and groups are not excluded due to their background or status. Others propose that diversity is supported by an active focus on inclusion (Ferdman, 2014; Winters, 2014) and, over time, the discourse that was once

focused on diversity has now shifted in its focus to inclusion (Nair & Vohra, 2015),

recognising that inclusion moves beyond valuing diversity, into leveraging and integrating

diversity into everyday work life (Roberson, 2006).

2.4.2   Inclusion

As with diversity, it would seem that there is no single agreed definition of the concept of

inclusion, and, moreover, that the conceptual underpinnings of inclusion are still evolving

(Shore et al., 2011). Some see inclusion as a *process* whereby individuals become

accepted as members of an organisation, which can be measured by "the degree to which

an employee is accepted and treated as an insider by others in a work system" (Pelled,

Ledford, & Mohrman, 1999, p. 1014), or by the extent to which diverse groups can be seen

to participate meaningfully in an organisation, community, or society (Patel, Tabb, & Sue,

2017). Others see inclusion as a *state* in which individuals feel a sense of belonging to a

group and place the focus on individuals' perceptions of inclusion, where inclusion is

evidenced by the extent to which individuals perceive themselves to be part of an

organisation (Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, & Kossek, 2008).

Some studies have noted how the concept of inclusion draws from a number of

different theoretical approaches (see, for example, Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, & Jans,

2014; Nair & Vohra, 2015). These underpinning theoretical approaches include social

identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) which posits that individuals desire to belong to groups that

have distinct and positive identities and, in so doing, include those they consider to be like

them while excluding those they perceive to be different. Belonging to a group, then,

becomes a way of defining one's sense of self, where individuals are no longer viewed as

unique individuals but as the embodiments of their identity groups (Davis, 2009). Equally,

those who feel excluded may seek to form a group based on their own norms and in which

they feel included. In his review of studies of educational engagement, Kelly (2009) argues

that some individuals are pushed into disengagement as a result of belonging to a minority

racial or ethnic group or a lower social class background, and that forming their own new groups can be a response to exclusion.

Another underpinning theoretical approach highlighted in relation to inclusion is optimal distinctiveness theory (e.g. Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014; Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez, 2017). Optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991) posits that individuals strive simultaneously for assimilation and differentiation, and seek to belong to groups that satisfy both needs and provide equilibrium. In informing the concept of inclusion, optimal distinctiveness theory, therefore, adds a sense of uniqueness to that of belongingness.

Alongside this, the concept of inclusion has also been linked to intergroup contact theory (Jellison & Taylor, 2007; Patel et al., 2017) which suggests that consistent and meaningful contact between members of a group reduces prejudice and lessens negative attitudes towards group members who do not share the same characteristics, such as ethnicity or ability/disability (Allport, 1954; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). In addition, social exchange/reciprocity theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, & Wise, 2008) has been drawn upon by those defining inclusion as it adds the notion of reciprocity, whereby interactions between group members generate obligations, which in turn, have the potential of creating "high-quality relationships" between group members (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 875). The concept of inclusion can, therefore, be seen to draw elements from these different theories in seeking to explain the complex phenomena associated with group membership and behaviour.

Meanwhile, the importance of inclusion as a fundamental human need has been well-established (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Fiske, 2004; Schutz, 1958). Indeed, Maslow (1943, 1987) places "belongingness and love needs" at the third level of his hierarchy of needs after safety and basic physiological needs. A number of studies of social behaviour have shown that feeling included can lead to increased trust (Hillebrandt, Sebastian, & Blakemore, 2011) and pro-social behaviour (DeWall, Twenge, Busman, Im, & Williams, 2010), with consequent benefits to individual health and well-being (Begen & Turner-Cobb, 2015). In the workplace,

research has demonstrated the benefits of inclusion to employees' well-being (Mor Barak &

Levin, 2002) and job satisfaction (Acquavita, Pittman, Gibbons, & Castellanos-Brown, 2009).

Moreover, inclusion has increasingly been recognised as important in the effectiveness

of organisations (e.g. Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Patel, Tabb, & Sue, 2017). For example,

some researchers have shown the benefits to organisational performance in terms of

employees showing increased commitment and improved performance (Cho & Mor Barak,

2008; Findler, Wind &, Mor Barak, 2007), as well as in reducing conflict within organisations

(Nishii, 2013). Recent research has also identified benefits from work group inclusion in

terms of members helping each other and being creative (Chung et al., 2020). Nonetheless,

some have suggested that there can be negative effects from a focus on inclusion. In her

discussion of inclusion/exclusion, Dobusch (2014) suggests that inclusive measures can

have excluding effects as they may serve to challenge and disrupt the privileges enjoyed by

members of majority groups and thus lead to tension and resentment. Dobusch also notes

how focusing on how the existing members of an organisation experience a sense of

inclusion is likely to ignore the wider context of social inclusion/exclusion and stresses that

taking a holistic approach to inclusion should involve making a connection between

organisational power relations on the one hand and individual perceptions of

inclusion/exclusion on the other.

In seeking to advance our understanding of inclusion, Shore, Randel, Chung and Dean

(2011) have, therefore, evolved a definition of inclusion as the degree to which an individual

feels that they are a valued member of a group, through experiencing treatment that satisfies

their needs for "belongingness and uniqueness" (p. 1265). Shore and colleagues argue that

uniqueness – where individuals feel valued and accepted for who they are – and

belongingness – where individuals feel part of a group – combine to create a sense of

inclusion. This concept has been further expanded to encompass a sense of "authenticity",

where individuals can feel valued for being unique as well as for being similar to one

another, thus appealing to both minority and majority group members (Jansen, Otten, van

der Zee, and Jans, 2014). In understanding the process of inclusion, Shore and his

colleagues propose that inclusive leadership, inclusive practices and an inclusive climate are

key contextual factors in enabling individuals to experience a sense of inclusion.

Inclusive practices

Shore and her colleagues (2011) contend that inclusive group practices form one of the

three components necessary to create an inclusive organisation. Inclusive group practices

have been defined in a workplace context as centring around decision-making influence and

access to information (Pelled et al., 1999), equal treatment that also acknowledges individual

differences (Janssens & Zanoni, 2008), and collaborative work arrangements and conflict

resolution procedures (Roberson, 2006). Nonetheless, Shore and colleagues (2011) also

recognise that little explicit attention has been given to the practices that facilitate inclusion

and suggest that the connections between these practices and inclusion lacks explicit

theorising.

Inclusive climate

Inclusive climate is defined by Shore and colleagues as one in which organisational policies,

procedures, and actions are consistent with fair treatment of all social groups, and

particularly groups that tend to be marginalised or stigmatised (2011). As a result, Nishii

(2013) suggests that an inclusive climate is created through individuals' perceptions of

feeling fairly treated, valued for who they are, and included in core decision making, while

Boekhurst (2015) emphasises the way in which an inclusive climate is created through a

shared understanding that inclusive behaviours are expected, supported, and rewarded.

Inclusive leadership

According to the framework conceived by Shore et al. (2011), the final component in creating

inclusion is inclusive leadership, which supports group members as individuals, involves

them in decision-making, encourages diverse contributions and helps group members to contribute fully (Randel et al., 2018). In addition, it has been suggested that inclusive leaders are open and receptive to employees, enabling them to feel safe to express new ideas (Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon & Ziv, 2010), as well as being appreciative of others' contributions (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). Some have also linked inclusive leadership to other leadership theories, such as servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011) which highlights the importance of leaders being empowering while also being authentic and humble.

2.4.3   *The relationship between diversity and inclusion*

Diversity and inclusion are often portrayed as closely interrelated concepts and the terms sometimes used interchangeably (Ferdman, 2014). However, previous research has shown that inclusive organisations and diverse organisations do not necessarily have the same attributes (Roberson, 2006). Indeed, the relationship between the two concepts has been succinctly explained by Tapia (2009), who states, "Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work" (p. 12). While diversity focuses on the demographic composition of organisations, inclusion focuses on the meaningful participation of all individuals within organisations (Roberson, 2006; Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008).

At the same time, a lack of diversity can be seen as a symptom of a lack of inclusion (Bendick, 2008); research has shown that those who belong to the "mainstream" are far more likely to feel included in organisations than individuals with minority characteristics (Mor Barak & Levin, 2002). The concept of exclusion, therefore, connects diversity and inclusion because it suggests that perceptions of inclusion are determined by social identity (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008). However, although some portray inclusion as the "invisible other side of the coin" to exclusion (Dobusch, 2014), others see the relationship not as a binary concept but as "a sort of sliding scale…so that inclusion and exclusion are the extreme poles of a continuum of relations of inclusion/exclusion" (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 85). This perspective is

helpful in revealing how individuals can be simultaneously included and excluded to different degrees and in different ways (Ferdman, 2017).

In their review of literature related to diversity and inclusion relating to health research, Chambers et al. (2017) suggest that much of the research in the field of diversity and inclusion has been carried out in the USA and question the transferability of the findings to other contexts. They also note that much of the research to-date has focused on gender and race/ethnicity and suggest that other aspects of diversity have received far less attention. Others have also argued that there is a need for more research exploring issues of diversity and inclusion within organisations, and particularly for "research that can contribute to understanding diversity efforts in voluntary associations" (Leiter, Solebello, & Tschirhart, 2011, p. 10).

2.5   Diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing

Focusing on diversity and inclusion in the context of adult amateur group singing places a spotlight on the participation and experiences of individuals within adult amateur singing groups as well as on the processes by which such groups are organised. This next section aims to describe the ways in which diversity and inclusion have been discussed in the literature related to adult amateur group singing.

2.5.1 Diversity within adult amateur group singing

A review of diversity issues in voluntary sector organisations found that there had been little actual discussion of diversity issues in the British non-profit sector (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010), and there appears to be little research to be found within the field of research into adult amateur group singing that explicitly addresses issues of diversity. However, an analysis of the existing literature reveals a number of themes that relate to diversity within adult amateur group singing.

Culture

Firstly, there is considerable evidence from existing research into adult amateur group singing that cultural barriers affect participation in group singing. Some even suggest that *not singing* has become the norm in western, affluent societies (Joyce, 2005; Knight, 2016; Richards & Durrant, 2003; Welch, 2016). Others have argued that music education has tended to focus on western classical music, thereby excluding people with other cultural backgrounds (Horne, 2007; Pascale, 2005). As a result, some suggest that an elitist culture of musicality has developed that prevents large numbers of people from participating in adult amateur group singing (de Quadros, 2015; Joyce, 2005). This argument is reinforced by Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, and McQueen (2012) who highlight the theme of musical elitism in their study of music-making among older adults and suggest there is a lack of research exploring the barriers faced by those who wish to take part in music-making.

Singing ability

Other researchers have focused on the way in which group singing is an activity that excludes individuals who believe themselves to be unable to sing (Demorest, Kelley, & Pfordresher, 2016; Knight, 2016; Numminen, Lonka, Pauliina, & Ruismäki, 2015; Whidden, 2009). Although it is difficult to establish how many people this affects, research carried out among students at an American university revealed that almost 60% believed that they could not accurately imitate melodies (Pfordresher & Brown, 2007). Nonetheless, systematic assessments of singing ability in the general population have shown that around 85% to 90% of the general population can sing in tune (for a review, see Dalla Bella, Berkowska, & Sowin, 2011) although a lack of standard procedures for determining poor pitch singing may influence the accuracy of this statistic (Loui, Demorest, Pfordresher, & Iyer, 2015). All the same, this finding suggests that a substantial number of people exclude themselves from group singing due to a perceived inability to sing in tune, despite the evidence that the ability to sing in tune can be nurtured with appropriate support (Welch, 2009).

<u>Gender identity</u>

While research into diversity and inclusion has generally revealed the ways in which women are excluded and under-represented in organisations (Chambers et al., 2017), in the context of adult amateur group singing, researchers have reported that women tend to outnumber men by two to one (Bartel & Cooper, 2015; Clift, Hancox, Morrison, et al., 2008; Parkinson, 2016; National Endowment for the Arts, 2015). This gender imbalance is generally attributed to the gendering of vocal music education, in which boys are discouraged from participating in 'female' pursuits like singing (Harrison, 2007; Legg, 2013), as well as to vocal changes in puberty that result in negative perceptions of singing among young men (see, for example, Ashley, 2010; Freer, 2010; Harrison, Welch, & Adler, 2012). On the other hand, it may be that, as Green (1997) suggests in her review of music, gender and education, more women take part in group singing because it is an area of music-making that is accessible to them as it represents "by far the greatest musical performance opportunity available to women" (p. 33). While Green sees this as affirming patriarchal definitions of femininity, others have suggested that singing allows women to break free from oppression by giving women a voice and an identity (Joyce, 1996; Kleinerman, 2005). The female-dominated space within many singing groups may, therefore, create an environment where women feel powerful and united "in the face of the pervasive misogyny that fragments us internally and seeks to isolate us collectively" (Joyce, 1996, p. 257).

Considering group singing as a leisure occupation may provide another explanation for the predominance of women in the singing groups studied. Based on a review of research into women and leisure, Henderson and Gibson (2013) contend that leisure activities provide women with opportunities for empowerment as well as for developing social support and friendships. Thus, women may be drawn to group singing as a leisure occupation that is both energising and nurturing. This, in turn, may help to explain why women are reported to

experience greater emotional benefits than men from participating in group singing (Clift &

Hancox, 2010; Clift, Hancox, & Morrison, 2012; Parkinson, 2016; Sandgren, 2009).

Some researchers have also begun to raise awareness of transgender singers and the

barriers they face in participating in singing groups (Manternach, 2017; Rastin, 2016), and

they call for a greater understanding of how "the rapidly changing gender landscape of the

twenty-first century" (Palkki, 2017, p. 22) affects adult group singing.

Race/ethnicity

Few researchers appear to have paid much attention to the racial or ethnic background of

individuals participating in adult amateur group singing. Although Bell (2004) and Rensink-

Hoff (2011) both report that previous studies had revealed little racial and ethnic diversity in

the membership of singing groups, Bell notes that many studies had not examined singers'

racial or ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, she suggests that researchers had also not

sought to access existing groups of racially and ethnically diverse singers.

Nonetheless, a survey carried out by the The National Endowment for the Arts in the

USA (2015) found that a third (33%) of respondents who took part in group singing were

from African American, Hispanic or other non-white backgrounds. Although the survey did

not distinguish between amateur and professional group singing, this finding is, nonetheless,

significant as it indicates that, in the USA at least, participation in adult group singing may be

far more racially and ethnically diverse than has previously been recognised.

Overall, there is little research to be found that explores the participation of individuals

from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds in the group singing in the UK;

Clift et al. (2012) reported that participants in their transnational survey of singers were

"substantially white" (p. 246). However, secondary analysis of data from a national survey

commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (2018) suggests that,

among adults aged 16 and over in England who had taken part in group singing or who had

had a singing lesson in the previous year, 12% were from BAME backgrounds, compared to

13% of adults from BAME backgrounds in the general population (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Research has, however, highlighted the way in which many people from BAME backgrounds feel excluded from group singing. In her doctoral dissertation, Joyce (2003) revealed how many people from minority groups did not feel that the world of group singing was for them. Joyce uses the term 'White space' to denote the "interlocked system that is based upon hierarchies and relations of power" by which belonging to a sub-dominant class, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation can all lead to exclusion (Joyce, 2003, p. 14). As such, she suggests that it would be interesting to explore how choirs work to produce 'White space', "by mobilizing discourses of propriety, respectability, and competitive performance" (Joyce, 2003, p. 251).

Meanwhile, the most in-depth discussion of diversity within an adult singing group is provided by Yerichuk (2015), whose survey of members of a community choir in Canada revealed that, despite initially reporting very little ethnocultural diversity, open questions allowed singers to describe "complex and nuanced" ethnocultural backgrounds that indicated "diversity along multiple axes, such as religious affiliation, nationality, parental immigration and ethnic ancestry" (p. 226). Yerichuk called for further research to explore the "complex questions of how cultural diversity is defined, enacted, and even who is defining the terms of inclusion within community choirs" (p. 228).

<u>Educational background</u>

Singers are largely reported to be well-educated (Bell, 2004; Chorus America, 2003; Rensink-Hoff, 2011). In 2015, the National Endowment for the Arts in the USA reported that almost three-quarters (73%) of those taking part in group singing had a college education, compared to just over half (55%) of the general American population (National Endowment for the Arts, 2015). Outside of the USA, research based on a sample of over a thousand

singers in amateur choirs in the UK, Sweden and Australia revealed that over half had experienced higher education (Clift & Camic, 2015).

However, in smaller-scale studies, some researchers have reported a more diverse educational background among singers in the groups they researched. For example, in a study of a community choir in Scotland, Hillman (2002) found that only a minority of the members had continued their education beyond the age of eighteen, while a survey of the members of two Norwegian hospital choirs also revealed higher participation among people who were not university-educated (Vaag, Saksvik, Theorell, Skillingstad, & Bjerkeset, 2012). It may be, then, that some types of singing groups have greater diversity in terms of singers' educational backgrounds than is generally reported.

Age

Researchers have consistently reported that most members of adult amateur singing groups are aged over 40 (Bell, 2004; Chorus America, 2003; Clift et al., 2008). Nonetheless, some evidence has emerged that larger numbers of younger people are taking part in group singing than is generally understood. For example, Bell (2008) reports anecdotal evidence of choirs with a young, diverse membership and this appears to be further borne out in the report produced by the National Endowment for Arts (2015) which states that nearly a fifth (17%) of singers were aged between 18 and 24, compared to 13% in the general population of American adults. Equally, Bartel and Cooper (2015) found that the median age of singers across European countries was lower than the global population median age, suggesting that this pointed to an "over representation" of younger singers.

Health issues and disabilities

It seems that there has been very little research into the participation of adults with health issues and disabilities within adult amateur group singing. Although some studies have focused on singing groups for people with mental or physical health issues or disabilities

(e.g. Buetow, Talmage, Mccann, Fogg, & Purdy, 2014; Clift, Manship, & Stephens, 2017; Fancourt et al., 2016; Gale, Enright, Reagon, Lewis, & Van Deursen, 2012; Hassan, 2017; Warran, Fancourt and Wiseman, 2019), a literature review looking at the inclusion of people with special needs in choral settings (Salvador, 2013) revealed very little specific investigation of the topic. As a result, Salvador concluded that "most school and community choirs are populated primarily by students with typical physical, cognitive and behavioural abilities" (p. 37).

Moreover, there appears to have been little new research into this topic since this review was published. One exception, albeit not specific to group singing, is a study by Baker and Green (2016) which investigated the experiences of people with visual impairment within adult music-making in the UK. The researchers concluded from this that their findings raised important questions about the social and music educational inclusion of those with visual impairment. The need for greater research in this area was also highlighted in a study of individuals involved in community arts and sports organisations (Fujimoto, Rentschler, Le, Edwards, & Härtel, 2014), where the researchers urged for more attention to be given to the inclusion of people with disabilities and other minorities within community activities.

Socio-economic background

As discussed previously (see Chapter 1, section 1.3), socio-economic background may also present a barrier to participation in adult amateur group singing. Adults from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to have learnt to play a musical instrument during childhood (Hume & Wells, 2014) and less likely to have been exposed to classical music in their home environment (Bull, 2014). In a study investigating the influences affecting participation in singing, Whidden (2009) found that many of her participants cited a lack of consistent funding for music education throughout their childhood as having an impact on their participation in singing. Furthermore, Shaw (2017) notes the financial implications of

participating in group singing, such as membership fees and the costs of getting to

rehearsals and performances, which act as a further barrier for those with lesser financial

resources. Meanwhile, a study of participation in lifelong learning in music ((Beynon, 2004)

concluded that participation in music-making in retirement was dominated by those from

privileged backgrounds who had both "opportunities and confidence that are not afforded to

the working poor and lower classes" (p. 7). Similarly, Bull (2009) argues that class

inequalities permeate the practice and performance of classical music. While not all adult

amateur singing groups are performing music from the western classical canon, the musical

alienation experienced by individuals from lower socio-economic groups may act as a

disincentive to participation in all forms of group singing.

The changing nature of group singing

Nonetheless, some researchers have suggested that the way in which people engage in

group singing is changing, citing a rise in 'community choirs' as inclusive, accessible singing

groups for the general public (Adler, 2013; Chapman, 2010; Deane et al., 2013; Yerichuk,

2015). This change may reflect a broader trend in music participation as described by

Campbell and Roberts (2015) and Finnegan (1989), who highlight the impact of the

Community Music movement, with its focus on empowerment, participation, access, quality,

and partnership (Higgins, 2007b), on participation in adult amateur singing groups. Indeed,

Finnegan suggests that, in relation to local amateur music-making groups generally, "it is by

no means so evident that an 'elite' or 'middle' class label is correct" (p. 44).

However, with the exception of the greater ethnic diversity reported in the USA by the

National Endowment for the Arts (2015), there is little evidence of greater diversity in adult

amateur singing groups beyond a few individual studies whose findings indicate that some

types of singing group may have a more diverse membership than has been seen in other

research (see, for example, Eastis, 1998; Hillman, 2002; Vaag, Saksvik, Theorell,

Skillingstad, & Bjerkeset, 2012). It is clear, then, that to gain a better understanding of

diversity within adult amateur group singing, it is necessary to explore a range of diversity characteristics across different types of singing groups.

2.5.2   Inclusion and exclusion within adult group singing

However, gaining a better understanding of diversity within adult amateur group singing only presents one aspect of participation. In their discussion of theoretical practices related to choral conducting education, Varvarigou and Durrant (2011) highlight the need for a better understanding of how singers in different contexts experience choral participation to inform the planning and implementation of effective and enjoyable choral singing activities. In this study, the nature of singers' experience of choral participation is focused on their sense of inclusion within the group and the factors that contribute to or undermine this.

However, there appears to have been little research to date that specifically investigates diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. Only two studies could be found with this specific focus: a study of inclusion and participation in a multicultural gospel choir in Norway (Schuff, 2014), and an investigation of diversity and inclusion within a community choir in Canada (Yerichuk, 2015). However, both have taken very different approaches to the subject. On the one hand, Schuff's study focuses on how participating in the group enables newly arrived immigrants and refugees to feel they are acknowledged as valuable participants in cultural interaction and, thus, serves as an entry point to Norwegian society. On the other, Yerichuk's study considers what it means for a group with a largely white membership to actively pursue cultural inclusion. Both studies, therefore, shed new light on aspects of inclusion and diversity within adult amateur group singing, but neither approach the topics from the perspective of creating a group in which individuals feel included.

More recently, Yerichuk and Krar (2019) carried out a review of research into inclusion within community music settings, and noted that inclusion seemed to have become increasingly important to scholars in recent years. However, they concluded that very little

research had provided any sustained discussion or analysis of inclusion and noted a

tendency within the literature to approach inclusion primarily through a musical focus (such

as, for example, not requiring new members to pass an audition to join the group). At the

same time, they observed that scholars had employed a number of different frameworks that

related to inclusion, such as Higgins' concept of hospitality (Higgins, 2007a) as used by

Balsnes (2016) in her study of Norwegian gospel choir, and a feminist post-structuralist

framework (Weedon, 1997) as used by Bird (2017) in her study of a choir for lesbian, gay,

bisexual, pansexual, transgender, genderqueer, queer, intersexed, agender, asexual and

ally individuals (LGBTQIA+) in New Zealand. Nonetheless, Yerichuk and Krar (2019)

reported that many studies were not underpinned by any theoretical frameworks but focused

directly on approaches and strategies for inclusive practices, which they categorised into

musically inclusive practices, socially inclusive practices, and considerations of leadership

and control.

As described earlier in this chapter (see Section 2.4.2), this review is based on the

framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011) who posit that inclusive group

practices, climate and leadership are key contextual factors in enabling individuals to

experience a sense of inclusion within an organisation. These three concepts are similar to

those identified in Yerichuk and Krar's review (2019), however using the framework

developed by Shore et al. situates this study within a broader, organisational context, thus

providing an opportunity for wider application of the findings.

Inclusive/exclusive group practices within adult amateur singing groups

Initially, there appears to be very little research that looks at the ways in which the practices

enacted by and within singing groups affect diversity and inclusion. Indeed, there appears to

be a general lack of research investigating how the social and organisational practices of

singing groups can facilitate inclusion. However, some researchers have identified group

practices that would seem to support inclusion. For example, in his study of choral societies

in the American city of Boston, Baggetta (2009) reported that the majority of the 26 groups whose leaders he interviewed organised at least one non-rehearsal-based social event per year, and provided a break during rehearsals, often with refreshments, to give members a chance to socialise. Similarly, in her study of community choirs in the north of England, Kelly (2015) describes the importance of groups allowing their members time "for being – rather than singing" (p. 3), such as through sharing refreshments. Similarly, Sharlow (2006) highlights the value of social activities such as retreats, games, and other celebratory events, in establishing a sense of community within singing groups. It is also important that groups regularly review their members' needs (Farrant, 2017), particularly as individuals are likely to look for an alternative group if they feel that the group is not sensitive to their individual needs (Kramer, 2011). Some have also highlighted the importance of group practices that support people without previous experience of singing or ability to read music (Bird, 2017; Carpenter, 2015; Kennedy, 2009).

Nonetheless, some studies have shown how group practices can create barriers to inclusion. For example, Griffiths (2020) has shown how the classical music field promotes white and male dominance in its cultural values. Similarly, de Quadros (2015) and O'Toole (2005) describe how singers can feel alienated by groups' choice of repertoire, while Bell (2008) highlights the impact of admission procedures such as auditions. Meanwhile, Garnett (2005) sees expectations around musical literacy, diction and rules around group behaviour as ways to "privilege the white, educated middle classes" (p. 268), creating boundaries that exclude those who do not fit within this model.

The findings from these studies suggest that there are both formal and informal practices taking place within adult singing groups that affect members' sense of inclusion. However, it seems that only a few researchers have considered the practices of singing groups in the specific context of inclusion. One exception to this is a review by Salvador (2013) who draws from research within the field of music to identify specific group practices for including individuals with different physical and cognitive abilities within singing groups.

These practices include allowing singers to remain seated in rehearsals, giving singers the opportunity to learn music at home in advance of rehearsals, providing enlarged scores and recording rehearsals, and using buddies to help with social or academic difficulties (p. 43). Equally, Yerichuk (2011) notes that offering concessionary membership rates can reduce economic barriers to participation. She also advocates for an active commitment to inclusion, such as taking account of different faiths when scheduling events and performing in venues that are accessible for people of all abilities. Meanwhile, Bonshor (2016) and Hess (2012) both suggest that democratic group practices contribute to an inclusive climate by enabling singers to share power, responsibility and knowledge.

Outside of these studies, it seems that little attention has been paid to understanding how the processes involved in adult singing groups can enable group members to feel included. However, writing in Chorus America's journal, Menehan (2009) has highlighted the legal implications for singing groups in the USA of failing to take account of the needs of singers with disabilities as some provisions of the US Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) apply to choral organizations. Similarly, in the UK, the Equality Act (2010) requires organisations to ensure that no unnecessary barriers are present which could prevent individuals from participating in their activities (Making Music, 2015). Actively managing issues related to inclusion is, therefore, likely to be of increasing importance in the context of adult amateur group singing.

Inclusive/exclusive climate within adult amateur singing groups

While there has been little research explicitly addressing group practices within adult amateur singing groups, there is no shortage of evidence concerning the potential of adult group singing to create an inclusive climate through engendering a sense of belonging (e.g. Clift, Manship, & Stephens, 2017; Davidson & Faulkner, 2006; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Tarrant et al., 2016) and enabling members to form social bonds (e.g. Kreutz, 2014; Weinstein, Launay, Pearce, Dunbar, & Stewart, 2016). Other studies have shown how the creation of

social bonds through group singing is particularly vital for members of marginalised groups. For example, in a case study of a Norwegian choir, the singing group was seen to serve as family for newly arrived immigrants (Schuff, 2014). Equally, interviews with homeless participants in singing groups in Canada (Bailey & Davidson, 2005), with Bosnian refugees in a community choir in Australia (Southcott & Joseph, 2010), and with LGBTQIA+ individuals in a men's chorus in the USA (Moy, 2015) have also shown how a singing group can replace lost family for singers.

However, there is little to be drawn from previous research that reveals the processes by which singing groups create an inclusive climate in which everyone feels respected and valued as an individual. This gap in the research may be partly because the essence of group singing involves creating a blended sound in which individual voices do not stand out, and where, ultimately, members disappear into the group (Wharton Conkling, 2000). The invisibility of singers, therefore, appears to be somewhat at odds with valuing and respecting singers as individuals. Nonetheless, some studies have revealed how important feeling recognised and valued is for the members of singing groups. Hess (2012), for example, describes moments in her own experiences of choral singing where she experienced a sense of being appreciated:

> *[Moments] where I was not seen as part of a monolithic identity... moments*
> *where the conductor encouraged laughter and camaraderie… where the*
> *conductor honoured my musicianship.* (Hess, 2012, p. 38)

Similarly, in an account of the development of a choral outreach programme in the USA, Sweet describes how a conductor made her feel valued:

> *I was no longer just one anonymous voice among many – my voice and point of*
> *view mattered.* (Romey, Sweet, & Wanyama, 2009, p. 83).

Recognition from peers can also be important in enabling singers to feel respected and valued by the group. In his interviews and focus groups with choral singers in England,

Bonshor (2016) found that positive feedback from peers could act as "confirmation of the singer's integration into the choral 'team' or 'community'" (p. 297). Similarly, Bailey and Davidson (2005) describe the importance of group members caring and showing concern for one another, while Silber (2005) highlights the 'relational' aspects of group singing involving peer interactions in the choral community. The value of peer recognition was also revealed in interviews with singers and conductors conducted as part of a qualitative investigation of the impact of music on singers' lives (Krallmann, 2016) where singers described how positive feedback from others helped them to feel valued.

Some researchers have also suggested that creating a non-judgemental and supportive environment helps singers experience a sense of safety within the group which is fundamental to a collective identity (Balsnes, 2016; Blandford & Duarte, 2004; Bonshor, 2014; Tonneijck, Kinébanian, & Josephsson, 2008; van der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Willingham, 2005; Yerichuk, 2010). This appears to be particularly important for those who have experienced adverse life events (von Lob, Camic, & Clift, 2010) or who face prejudice and discrimination in their lives (Leske, 2016; Palkki & Caldwell, 2017). Indeed, Mellor (2013) highlights the importance of the emotional, inter-relational and psycho-social aspects of singing as a group process in supporting the health and well-being of group members.

Nonetheless, some researchers have highlighted instances where individuals feel excluded by the discriminatory behaviour of other group members. In a study of gender and race identity within women's vocal ensembles in the USA, Boerger (2000) describes situations where white members ignored their African American counterparts or behaved in ways that made them feel unwelcome. Boerger argues that this kind of behaviour creates "White spaces" where the privileged behaviours and perceptions of white members form an invisible barrier to integration.

Other researchers have also revealed how the behaviour of individuals or of the group as a whole can lead singers to feel excluded and disengage from the group. For example, in a qualitative study of an LGBTQIA+ choir in Australia, Leske (2016) describes how

individuals joining the group could experience a sense of exclusion, resulting from an "initial sense of a clique within the choir" (p. 10). Leske's study is particularly poignant in revealing how, for some, the choir was a "site of safety, asylum, inclusion, activism, wellbeing, and healing" but for others, it could be experienced as "a site of judgment and exclusion" (p. 1).

Meanwhile, respondents to an online survey carried out with members of Military Wives Choirs in England reported that 'internal politics', such as other members' attitudes and behaviours, had led some individuals to consider leaving the choir (Clift, Page, Daykin, & Peasgood, 2016). Similarly, in a large-scale survey of singers' experiences in German choirs, interactions with other choir members had led over a third of respondents to report negative experiences of singing, to the extent that some had left or had considered leaving the group (Kreutz & Brünger, 2012). Equally, some people felt they no longer wanted to belong to the group if the culture of the group became less inclusive, as revealed in Coffin's study of a women's barbershop group in Canada (2004).

Some researchers have highlighted other aspects of group climate that can cause singers to feel less included within their groups. For example, Baird (2007) found that singers tended to feel more isolated in larger groups, while Yerichuk (2011) found that members could feel excluded when their personal goals did not match those of the choir. Similar factors were identified by Pitts and her colleagues (Pitts, Robinson, & Goh, 2015; Pitts & Robinson, 2016) who found that a mismatch between individuals' personal goals and those of the group was a primary cause of disengagement.

It appears, then, that the decision to maintain or cease participation in group singing is, therefore, dictated by the personal fulfilment that singers gain from taking part in group singing; if their experiences of participating become too difficult, uncomfortable or insufficiently rewarding, then singers will simply stop taking part. This need for fulfilment reflects the idea of amateur group singing as a form of "serious leisure in which people need to have a sense of growth or progress in order to maintain their commitment" (Brewer and Garnett, 2012, p. 266). Sustaining participation, therefore, relies on the fulfilment of different

musical, social and personal needs. As such, there is clearly much to learn about singers'

experiences of participating in group singing and the way in which different factors create

can create an inclusive group climate which helps sustain individuals' motivation to

participate in group singing.

Inclusive/exclusive leadership within adult amateur singing groups

Finally, applying the framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011), the role that

group leadership plays in creating or impeding inclusion within singing groups. However,

most studies of the leadership of singing groups have focused on the musical leadership of

adult amateur singing groups, and other aspects of leadership are not necessarily well-

understood (Jansson, 2013, 2015; Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011). Furthermore, while some

researchers have described how some singing groups operate with organisational structures

comparable to those of voluntary sector organisations (Rowold & Rohmann, 2009), most

research into the leadership of adult singing groups focuses on the conductor as group

leader. As a result, there appears to have been little research into the ways in which other

leaders within the group, such as management committee members or informal leaders,

contribute to the leadership of the group as a whole. Nonetheless, Bonshor (2016) and

Einarsdottir (2014) both highlight the role that stronger singers play as 'team leaders' within

their groups.

The strong influence of the conductor on singers' experiences has, however, been

widely reported (e.g. Brown, 2012; Durrant, 2005; Jansson, 2015; Rensink-Hoff, 2011;

Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Most portray this influence as a positive factor in motivating

singers and supporting their on-going engagement. Brown even suggests that the behaviour

and attitude of the conductor is a stronger influence on individuals' motivation to participate

in group singing than either musical or social factors.

Other researchers have recognised the holistic nature of choral conducting, noting that

"singing has a strong social function as well as a musical function" (Durrant, 2005, p. 92) and

have emphasised the importance of the "nurturing qualities" of the conductor (Judd &

Pooley, 2014, p. 281). For example, Bonshor (2017) describes how conductors can facilitate

a supportive environment by fostering rapport and establishing communication that is based

on mutual respect, while Kelly (2015) notes how conductors can use humour to "glue a

group of people together across their differences and through challenging times" (p. 3).

Consequently, Brewer and Garnett (2012) encourage conductors to "factor in their own

impact on the singers as they consider how to balance the collective needs and

responsibilities with the individual ones" (p. 56), urging conductors to recognise the value of

the social dimensions of their group's activity.

Some researchers have also shown how a conductor's behaviour can damage

participants' experiences of group singing (Bonshor, 2017; Kreutz & Brünger, 2012; O'Toole,

2005; Sweet, 2014). Bonshor and Sweet both reveal instances where a conductor's

behaviour had led participants to discontinue their participation in singing. Highlighting the

pivotal role of the conductor, Silber (2005) sees the relationship between the conductor and

the group as one of the fundamental processes involved in making music, describing how

singers must accept the conductor's authority and adhere to their rules. Some go further,

suggesting that placing the conductor at the head of a hierarchical system can result in a

lack of individual fulfilment for singers which, ultimately, can lead to their disengagement

from singing (Hess, 2012; O'Toole, 2005).

Yet, overall, there has been little investigation of the aspects of the conductor's role

that affect inclusion, particularly from singers' perspectives, or that looks specifically at the

ways in which conductors are responding to issues of diversity and inclusion.

2.6   Chapter summary

Drawing from research conducted in the workplace, this literature review has utlised a

framework for investigating inclusion within adult amateur group singing that focuses on

understanding how group practices, climate and leadership can all affect inclusion. Applying

this framework to existing research in adult singing has, however, shown that relatively little is known about how leadership, practices and climate within singing groups enable, or prevent, members from experiencing, a sense of belonging and of being valued.

Equally, this literature review has shown how current research into diversity, within adult group singing, particularly in the UK, is also quite limited. Given the increasing popularity of group singing, not enough is known about how diverse adult amateur singing groups are, particularly in terms of the multiple factors that represent diversity, or how diversity may vary across different types of group. The following chapter will, therefore, describe how the methodology for this study was developed to explore diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The literature review described in the previous chapter highlighted the need for a greater understanding of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing and supported the impetus for the current study. This chapter describes the way in which the present study was conceived, organised and carried out. It sets out the rationale for the mixed methods approach employed and describes the way in which this informed the design, implementation, analysis and reporting of the research. The limitations of the study and the challenges encountered are also described.

3.1 Research paradigm

Morgan (2007) defines a research paradigm as a set of "systems of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods that they use to study them" (p. 49). This research was guided by a set of beliefs that underpinned the methodology developed, namely that; there is a reality that is external to the knower, and which is diverse, complex and multi-faceted; that it is impossible to conceive this reality objectively as knowledge is shaped by our experiences and views; that research should serve a practical purpose in the world by seeking to inform policy and practice; and that research methods need to be appropriate to the purpose and setting of the research. These beliefs resonate with a pragmatic approach which considers "what works" to answer research questions (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007a; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007b) and enables research to address questions that do not sit wholly within either a quantitative or qualitative methodology. At the same time, with its focus on issues of inclusion and diversity, this research is most closely aligned with the critical theory paradigm developed by early social theorists such as Max Horkheimer (Calhoun, Gerteis, Moody, Pfaff, & Virk, 2012) and, later, by feminist scholars such as Nancy Fraser (1989). Horkheimer argues that a critical theory approach involves seeking to explain what is wrong with the current social

reality, then identifying the actions needed to change this, and providing clear methods for

transformation (Bohman, 2013). Therefore, research taking a critical theory approach strives

to bring about change in the participants in the research as well as in the systems being

studied. Taking this approach meant that this study would stimulate reflection and

discussion in the participating groups, as well as identifying broader learning and ways to

bring about change.

3.2   Research aim

Research has shown that many adult amateur singing groups in Western Europe and North

America are dominated by individuals from white ethnic backgrounds, who tend to be aged

over 40 and from well-educated backgrounds (Bell, 2004; Clift et al. 2008; Rensink-Hoff,

2011). Equally, research has shown that diversity is supported by an active focus on

inclusion (Ferdman, 2014; Winters, 2014), which also has other equally important benefits in

terms of improving the experiences and wellbeing of individuals (Begen & Turner-Cobb,

2012; Mor Barak & Levin, 2002; Vaag et al., 2012) and the commitment and performance of

groups' members (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Findler, Wind &, Mor Barak, 2007).

The aim of this doctoral research was, therefore, to understand more about how

diversity and inclusion are manifest and enacted within adult amateur group singing. As

such, this study sought to explore complex phenomena, as well as to contribute to

organisational impact by promoting questioning and influencing change within the groups

studied (Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003).

3.3   Over-arching theoretical framework

Having defined the aim of the research, it is also important to consider the over-arching

theoretical framework within which this research sits. A theoretical framework provides a

general "orienting lens that shapes the types of questions asked, who participates in the

study, how data are collected, and the implications made from the study" (Creswell, 2014, p. 297).

As discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2), there are a number of theoretical approaches that are relevant to this study, including social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), intergroup contact theory (Jellison & Taylor, 2007; Patel et al., 2017), and social exchange/reciprocity theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Maiter, Simich, Jacobson, & Wise, 2008). These theories underpin the 'framework of inclusion' elucidated by Shore, Randel, Chung, and Dean (2011) which formed the foundation for this research (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2). As such, the definition of inclusion provided by Shore et al. centres on individuals having a sense of belonging and of being valued for their uniqueness and, as Figure 3.3-1 shows, they suggest that this is created through individuals experiencing inclusive climate, practices and leadership.
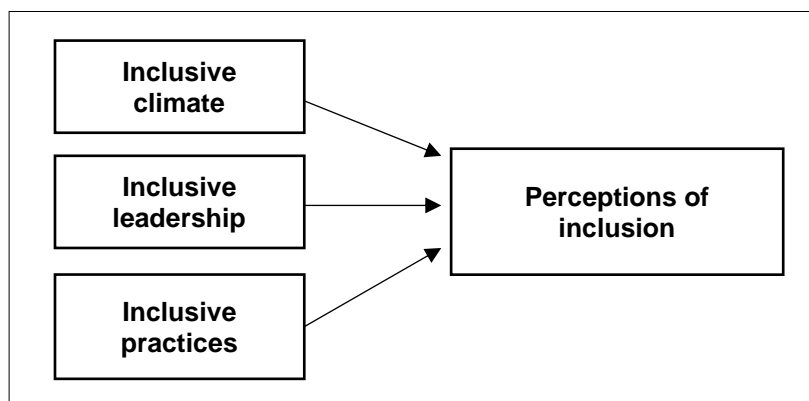
Figure 3.3-1: *Antecedents of inclusion, adapted from Shore et al. (2011, p. 1276)*

This framework seemed particularly appropriate as it "provides a basis for stimulating research on diversity that is focused on capitalizing on the unique value of diverse individuals" (Shore et al., 2011, p. 1282) and, therefore, provided a theoretical foundation through which to explore diversity and inclusion within adult amateur singing groups.

3.4   Research questions

Within the over-arching framework for the research, research questions were designed to guide the research, namely:

4. How diverse are adult amateur singing groups and in what ways are they diverse?

5. Do individuals feel included within adults amateur singing groups? If they do, to what extent is this related to their diversity characteristics or other factors?

6. Do adult amateur singing groups' practices, climate and leadership affect (a) the diversity of their membership and (b) their members' perceptions of inclusion? If they do, in what ways are diversity in groups' membership and group members' perceptions of inclusion affected by group practices, climate and leadership?

Answering these questions would help to provide a greater understanding of how diverse and inclusive the participating adult amateur singing groups were, as well as how they might better support diversity and inclusion.

3.5   Selection of research approach

In designing the research, the next step was to select an approach that would effectively address the research aim of the study in seeking to understand more about the factors that affect perceptions of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. As Wergin (2018) explains, a study whose purpose is "not to intervene but instead to observe and/or understand what is happening in an organization or community" (p. 46) can enable the researcher to "discover new knowledge, integrate existing knowledge in creative ways and inform real-world practice" (p. 57).

3.5.1   Mixed methods research

Adopting a mixed methods approach, which involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a research project (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), provided a way for this study to include a range of perspectives and, thus, supported a more thorough

exploration of a topic that has, as yet, received little research attention. While there are different perspectives on the purpose, processes and philosophy associated with mixed methods research, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2007) offer a definition based on their analysis of these different perspectives, where mixed methods research is described as:

> *The type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration.* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007b, p. 123)

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend that the adoption of a mixed methods approach allows the research to be driven by the questions that it seeks to answer (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), rather than by a particular ontological or epistemological position.

There are reported to be some distinct advantages to using a mixed methods approach (Creswell, 2013; Hammond, 2005; Greene, 2007; Terrell, 2012). Above all, it is suggested that using a mixed methods approach allows the research to have both breadth and depth, in which the quantitative research component can enable the possibility of generalisations to be made, which is strengthened by the more detailed understanding that can be gained through the qualitative research (Terrell, 2012). In particular, it has been argued that the process of combining findings from quantitative and qualitative aspects of research can generate new perspectives that bring creativity and innovation to the research (Hammond, 2005). Indeed, Greene (2007) argues that the express purpose of taking a mixed methods approach is to reflect the multidimensionality and complexity of human experience:

> *[Mixed methods research] actively invites us to participate in dialogue about multiple ways of seeing and hearing, multiple ways of making sense of the social*

> *world, and multiple standpoints on what is important and to be valued and*
>
> *cherished.* (Greene, 2007, p. 20)

Ultimately, some researchers have argued that using mixed methods enables the research to address complex social problems (Creswell, 2013), as the ability to converge numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data enables research problems to be better understood (Mertens, 2003).

Nonetheless, there are also challenges to be acknowledged in implementing a mixed methods approach. For example, Bryman (2007) describes how researchers commonly struggle to combine their analysis and interpretation of the quantitative and qualitative data into a coherent narrative. Equally, Giddings and Grant (2007) note that the qualitative aspect in mixed methods research is often placed in a subservient role to the quantitative aspect. They caution researchers to integrate their findings in a way that allows the inconsistencies in the data to emerge in order to present new questions and possible solutions. As a result, this study sought to balance the collection of quantitative and qualitative data (see Section 3.6.3) and to explore similarities and differences in the textual and numeric evidence in the presentation and discussion of the findings (see Section 3.11).

3.5.2   *The relevance of mixed methods to this study*

Overall, it seemed that taking mixed methods approach would provide an appropriate and useful method for exploring how diversity and inclusion are manifest and enacted within adult amateur singing groups. In particular, using a mixed methods approach would allow the study to encompass a larger sample than a purely qualitative approach could do, thus enabling a range of perspectives to be captured, while the qualitative aspect would bring additional in-depth insight. Both these elements seemed important as investigating issues of inclusion and diversity should involve seeking to understand multiple and nuanced perspectives (Rose, 2010).

Looking to previous research for further support of this approach highlighted, once again, the scarcity of studies with a specific focus on diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. Of the two studies identified with this specific focus (Schuff, 2014; Yerichuk, 2015), both researchers had taken different approaches in their studies. On the one hand, Schuff's study took a qualitative case study approach involving participatory observation and interviews with choir members and group leaders, thus providing insight into the experiences and views of individuals within the group. Yerichuk's investigation of diversity and inclusion within a community choir in Canada also focused on a single group, but took a mixed methods approach, involving a survey and analysis of documents produced by the choir. While Yerichuk recognised the limitations of using a survey "to detail experiences and tensions" (p. 223), she argued that a survey was an effective way of investigating complex issues as it enabled participation from all choir members. Yerichuk also emphasised the value of focusing the research on the ethnocultural backgrounds and social/musical experiences of existing members of the group, on the basis that all members have ethnocultural backgrounds that merit study.

Mixed methods have also been used in a number of studies relating to group singing and wellbeing. For example, a team of researchers conducted a cross-national mixed-methods study to explore the physical, psychological, social, and environmental wellbeing of choral singers (Morrison et al., 2010). The researchers argued that this approach enabled them to address the shortcomings of previous studies which had generally involved a small-scale or qualitative approach. The use of a rigorously developed instrument for assessing health-related quality of life enabled the researchers to measure the perceived effects of choral singing on wellbeing across a large sample and produced results that had not previously been reported. Their analysis of comments made in response to open questions was used to bring the results to life, thus providing insight into the mechanisms that served to promote a sense of wellbeing (p. 32). Meanwhile, in an exploration of negative associations with amateur choral singing, Kreutz and Brünger (2012) felt that using a mixed

methods approach enabled them to identify "strong and consistent resonances" (p. 237) in their findings.

A mixed methods approach has also been used to explore different aspects of group singing in particular contexts, such as for cancer survivors and their carers (Gale, Enright, Reagon, Lewis, & Van Deursen, 2012; Reagon, Gale, Dow, Lewis, & van Deursen, 2017), in a community prison choir (Cohen, 2012), in a group for people living with aphasia following a stroke (Tamplin, Baker, Jones, Way, & Lee, 2013), among singers in the Torres Strait Islands (Sun & Buys, 2013), and for older people in a community arts programme (Teater & Baldwin, 2014).

In the broader context of diversity and inclusion within organisations, Baron (2014) suggests that there is a growing recognition of the value of using a mixed methods approach and "a greater reliance on the pragmatic mixed methods paradigm" (p. 296). However, no systematic reviews of current research into diversity and inclusion could be identified that have assessed the methods used in these studies and some researchers suggest that qualitative methods are generally preferred for research into diversity and inclusion (Leeds University Business School, 2019).

Consequently, it seemed that there was considerable evidence to support the decision to adopt a mixed methods approach in this study. Not only would this bring breadth and depth to the research, but it would also allow multiple and diverse perspectives to emerge, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the study in addressing its aim of exploring factors that affect perceptions of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

3.6 Research design

The decision to use a mixed methods approach in this study was, therefore, influenced by the nature of the research questions to be investigated and by the relevance of this approach to the nature of this research. However, adopting a mixed methods approach also involved making decisions about the way in which this would be implemented which, in turn, determined how the research would be designed.

3.6.1 Data sources

Firstly, sources had to be identified that would enable the study to address the research questions (Salkind, 2010). With a focus on diversity and inclusion in adult amateur singing groups, the most obvious source of primary data was, therefore, members of adult amateur singing groups who could provide first-hand information about their own diversity characteristics and their perceptions of inclusion. At the same time, the information they could provide would only relate to their own individual experiences within the group. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to seek information from the representatives of singing groups about their group's membership and practices in order to get a wider perspective on these topics.

3.6.2 Access to sources

Decisions about the design of the research were also influenced by a desire to ensure breadth and depth in the research design (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007b). Other studies exploring diversity and inclusion within adult amateur singing groups have focused on single groups; Schuff's study (2014) involved interviews with seven members of a multicultural gospel choir in Norway, while Yerichuk (2015) collected data from 43 members of a community choir in Canada. Seeking to obtain data from a larger sample of singing groups and individuals would, therefore, make it possible to explore perceptions of diversity and inclusion among individuals as well as across different types of singing group.

As discussed in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.3.1), previous research has indicated that singing groups are largely composed of singers who are female, from white ethnic backgrounds and who tend to be aged over 40 and well-educated (Balsnes, 2016; Bell, 2004; Chorus America, 2003; Rensink-Hoff, 2009; Parkinson, 2016; Sandgren, 2009). However, not enough is known about how diversity may vary across different types of group, nor whether the diversity of singing groups is changing (Adler, 2013; Deane et al., 2013; Yerichuk, 2015). To assess the diversity of groups' membership, a survey of group members, therefore, seemed the most appropriate way to collect information on this topic.

However, the practicalities of obtaining access to research subjects also needed to be borne in mind. Gaining access to the members of singing groups requires permission from the 'gate-keepers' of these groups. In the case of singing groups, 'gate-keepers' tend to comprise music directors/conductors, membership officers and management committee members. These 'gate-keepers' were also potential sources of information pertaining to diversity and inclusion within the groups as these individuals were well-placed to provide an overview, albeit from their own perspective, of the diversity of their group's membership and information about their group's practices, climate and leadership. Individual interviews with these group representatives was, therefore, built into the research design as this would provide an opportunity to collect primary data as well as a means of negotiating access to the members of the groups.

3.6.3   *Priority and timing of data collection*

Decisions also had to be made about the priority given to the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research and the timing of the data collection (Creamer, 2018). In designing mixed methods studies, Creamer explains that there are three main types of study: studies where the qualitative strand is given priority; studies where the quantitative strand is given priority; and studies where the qualitative and quantitative aspects are given equal priority. As Table 3.6-1 shows, the balance of both qualitative and quantitative aspects in this study's

research questions indicates that the mixing had equal priority as both the qualitative and

quantitative aspects of the research would address the various research questions.

Table 3.6-1: Qualitative and quantitative aspects of the research questions

Research questions	Quantitative aspects	Qualitative aspects
How diverse are amateur adult singing groups and in what ways are they diverse?	Closed questions to measure the diversity characteristics of group members; Analysis of diversity characteristics by group type.	Open questions exploring group members' perceptions of the diversity of their group. Open questions exploring group representative's perceptions of the diversity of their group.
Do individuals feel included within adults amateur singing groups? If they do, to what extent is this related to their diversity characteristics or other factors?	Scaled questions measuring group members' perceptions of inclusion; Analysis of inclusion scores by group type, respondent age, gender identity, ethnicity, education etc.	Open questions exploring group members' perceptions of their inclusion within the group.
Do adult amateur singing groups' practices, climate and leadership affect (a) the diversity of their membership and (b) their members' perceptions of inclusion? If they do, in what ways are diversity in groups' membership and group members' perceptions of inclusion affected by group practices, climate and leadership?	Scaled questions measuring group members' perceptions of their group practices, climate and leadership. Analysis of group practice, climate and leadership scores by group type, respondent age, gender identity, ethnicity, education etc.	Open questions exploring group members' perceptions of their group's practices, climate and leadership Open questions exploring group representatives' perceptions of their group's practices, climate and leadership.

There are also different stages during a mixed methods study in which the qualitative and

quantitative data are collected (Creamer, 2018). The timing of data collection may be

sequential, with one method (either qualitative or quantitative) being used to explain or

elaborate subsequent data collection using the other method (Morse, 2003). Equally, a

study may have a concurrent triangulation design (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, &

Hanson, 2003) in that quantitative and qualitative data are collected during the same phase

of the research. In a concurrent triangulation design, the results from both datasets are then

merged by comparing and contrasting them and the discussion looks at how the results from

each dataset converge, diverge, or are related, as illustrated in Figure 3.6-1.
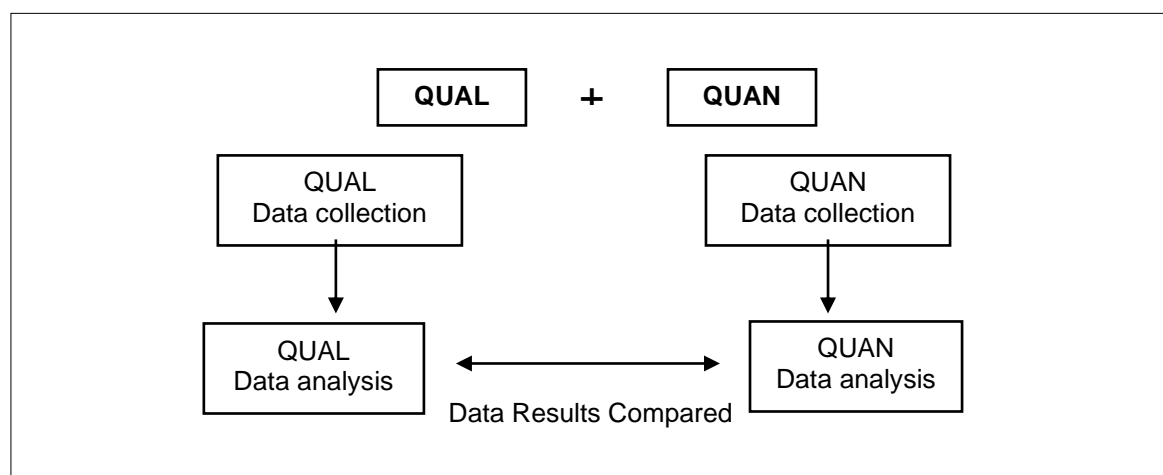
Figure 3.6-1: A concurrent triangulation design (Creswell et al., 2003)

Using a concurrent triangulation design in this study meant that issues of diversity and

inclusion within adult amateur group singing could be explored by gathering different

perspectives and different types of data that would enable a deeper understanding of the

issues than one perspective or single type of data could offer. As Figure 3.6-2 shows, the

research was, therefore, designed so that a set of interviews with group representatives

would be accompanied by the administration of a survey to the members of these singing

groups in order to investigate individual experiences of diversity and inclusion.
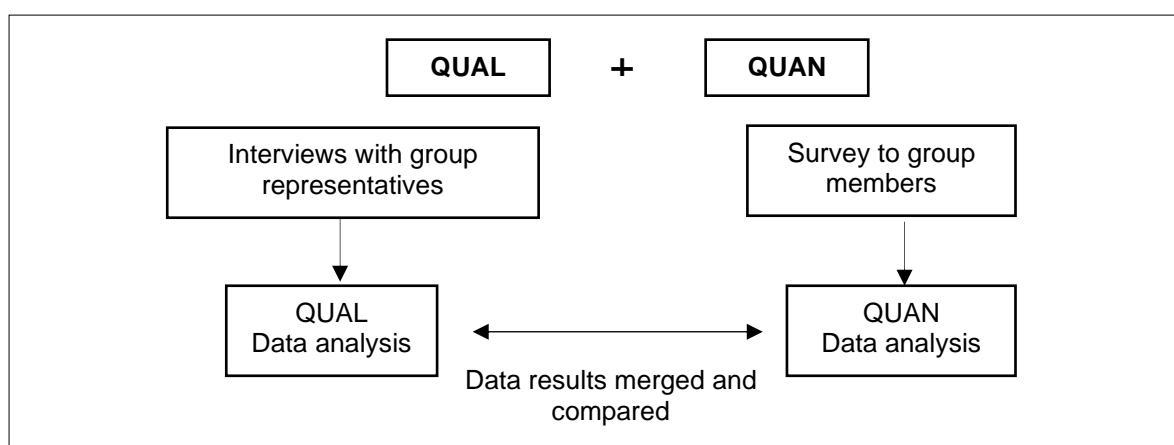
Figure 3.6-2: Design of the current study

3.7   Location of the research

The design of the research was also influenced by the need to ensure that the scale of the

research was manageable while balancing this with the desire to obtain data from as wide a

range of groups and individuals as possible. It was, therefore, decided to locate the

research within a specific geographical area of London as this would be likely to cover a

range of singing groups with a potentially diverse membership. Choosing a single site in

which to locate the research was, therefore, akin to taking a case study approach, where the

geographical area chosen would act as the case study unit:

> *The case study method "explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a*
>
> *case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth*
>
> *data collection involving multiple sources of information... and reports a case*
>
> *description and case themes."* (Creswell, 2013b, p. 97)

This approach would provide a means to gain a deeper understanding of the subject as it

would involve in-depth, detailed study of the singing groups within a particular area.

Preliminary desk research revealed that the London borough of Camden presented an

appropriate site in which to locate the research. The borough of Camden, one of 32 local

authority districts in London, contains an ethnically diverse and relatively young population from a range of socio-economic backgrounds (London Borough of Camden, 2020). The borough is described as having a "vibrant, thriving, inclusive community" (London Borough of Camden, 2017, p. 4) and a local Council which actively seeks to promote diversity and social cohesion (London Borough of Camden, 2017). Camden is also one of the smallest boroughs in London, occupying just 22 square kilometres and only 1.4% of London by area, but is sixth highest in population density (London Borough of Camden, 2020). The borough has a Transport Strategy (London Borough of Camden, 2019) which aims to ensure good access to jobs, services, education and leisure opportunities, such as amateur singing groups.

An initial mapping of singing groups in Camden using desk research conducted through internet search engines such as Google as well as online databases of choirs and singing groups (e.g. lists provided by organisations such as Gerontius, British Choirs on the Net, and Making Music) revealed the existence of 51 singing groups which met the criteria of being singing groups for adults which were both amateur and non-therapeutic in nature.

3.8   Ethics

Ethical approval for the study was provided by the Institute of Education, University of London's Research Ethics Committee on the basis that participation was voluntary and based on informed consent, that data would be held confidentially and securely and that the findings would be reported anonymously. In accordance with guidelines provided by the British Psychological Society and the British Sociological Association, group representatives were sent an information sheet which outlined the key ethical principles that guided the research and provided their written consent before taking part (see Appendix B). Preliminary information was also provided to group members both by email and at the start of the survey describing the purpose and context of the research, how the data would be used, and the average length of time to complete the survey. This also made clear that the information

they provided would be kept confidential, but respondents were not promised anonymity as the survey asked respondents if they would like to receive a copy of the findings and, if so, to provide their name and contact details.

Given the voluntary nature of participation in the study, it did not seem that there was any particular risk of harm to participants. However, participants were provided with the contact details of the academic supervising this research at the Institute of Education and advised they could contact them should they have any concerns; none did so.

3.9   The interviews with group representatives

Having described the way in which the study was designed and organised, this next section focuses on the interviews with group representatives which comprised the main qualitative aspect of the data collection.

3.9.1   Design

Drawing from the literature review and underpinned by the overall research questions, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix C) were designed to explore group representatives' perceptions of the diversity of their group's membership and to investigate how their group sought to be inclusive in its practices, climate and leadership. Interviewees were asked to describe the nature of their group (its history, size, repertoire, location etc.) and were asked about their group's practices in terms of recruitment, consultation and management as well as about their group's approach to issues of diversity and inclusion.

3.9.2   Interview sample

Singing groups were identified through desk research (see Section 3.7) and were sent an email outlining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation through nominating an individual involved in running the group to take part in a telephone or face-to-face interview. These emails were often followed up with telephone calls and further emails to

clarify the research purpose and parameters. Some representatives also had to seek

consent from their group's management committee. The process of negotiating consent for

the interviews was, therefore, a lengthy one, due also to the need to take account of groups'

rehearsal and performance commitments. Of the 51 groups contacted, 18 groups did not

respond to the attempts to contact them and did not, therefore participate in the research. A

further two groups declined to participate; one explained that they did not have the resources

to support the research, while the other felt that the research was not of sufficient interest to

them to warrant their participation.

In all, 31 groups agreed to take part in the research. This represented nearly two-

thirds (61%) of the 51 adult amateur singing groups located in Camden. The participating

groups were spread across the borough. As Table 3.9-1 shows, over half were located in

areas of average or higher economic prosperity i.e. in wards with Lower-layer Super Output

Area (LSOA) scores that set them outside the 30% most deprived on the Index of Multiple

Deprivation.[1] However, as singers may travel some distance to sing with a group of their

choice, this does not necessarily reflect the affluence, or otherwise, of groups' members.

Table 3.9-1: Location of the groups participating in the study by IMD ranking

Position on Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking of LSOAs within England	No. of LSOAs within Camden	No. of groups participating in the research by LSOA
Within 10% most deprived	0	0
10 – 20% most deprived	22	4
20 – 30% most deprived	15	11
Outside 30% most deprived	96	16
Total	**133**	**31**

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[1] The Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas (or neighbourhoods) in England. It ranks Lower-layer Super Output Area (i.e. small areas in England with an average of 1,500 residents) from most deprived to least deprived area (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2015).

3.9.3 Group type

The groups participating in the research were categorised into four main types in order to assess the range of different types of group participating in the research and to enable similarities and dissimilarities to emerge in the subsequent analysis of the data. These four group types were developed through reviewing the groups' websites and through the interviews with group representatives and are described below.

Auditioning groups

Singing groups were categorised in this study as 'auditioning groups' when members were selected by audition, were arranged in sections according to their voice part and took part in regular rehearsals and concerts. Analysis of photographs on their websites generally reflected this formal approach, with singers arranged in rows and dressed in black concert wear. These groups largely, but not exclusively, sang a music from the western classical choral canon.

Hybrid groups

Singing groups that were categorised as 'hybrid groups' were those which appeared to combine elements of the traditional choir model (e.g. formal presentation, classical repertoire) with a community choir ethos (e.g. seeking to welcome all singers, whether or not they can read music). Moreover, these groups did not require their members to pass an audition in order to participate.

Community groups

Groups were categorised as 'community groups' when they had an ethos and mode of operation that reflected, to varying extents, "a tradition of aural work, a world music repertoire, singing in a circle, and singing for themselves rather than necessarily rehearsing for a performance" (Deane, Dawson, & McCabe, 2011, p. 5). These groups did not audition their members and tended to rehearse with far less formality than the auditioning and hybrid groups. Their repertoire was varied, encompassing jazz, pop, rock, reggae, gospel, soul, folk, Latin American and other 'world music'.

> *Specialist groups:*
>
> Singing groups were categorised as 'specialist groups' when their membership was restricted to people who were of a particular religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, health condition, or who had a common life experience (e.g. homelessness). These groups sang a range of different types of music, including Jewish liturgical music, music from the western classical canon, pop, rock, and music from around the world.

Although the majority of the groups could be allocated to one of the four types, two groups had characteristics that could have placed them in two types. In each of these cases, the group was placed in the type that was most likely to reflect members' experience of being part of that group. For example, a group for individuals of a particular gender identity which also required its members to pass an audition was categorised as a specialist group; the fact that all its members were of the same gender identity was viewed as more important in categorising the group than the fact that members had to pass an audition. Similarly, a group for people to sing music associated with a particular culture was categorised as a community group, rather than a specialist group, as the group welcomed anyone to join as long as they were interested in singing that kind of music.

3.9.4   Representativeness

As Table 3.9-2 shows, the interviews with group representatives were carried out with individuals representing a range of different types of singing group, which also reflected the range of groups identified in the borough (see Section 3.7)

Table 3.9-2: The groups participating in the study

Type of group	No. of groups participating in the research	No. of groups identified in Camden	% of groups participating in the research
Auditioning groups	8	10	80.0
Hybrid groups	5	5	100.0
Community groups	10	26	38.5
Specialist groups	8	10	80.0
Total	**31**	**51**	**60.8**

However, while all the hybrid groups and the majority of the auditioning and specialist groups identified in Camden participated in the research, a far smaller proportion of the community groups did so. This was for various reasons; some never responded to the initial request to participate while others indicated that a lack of resources meant they were unable to commit time to engage in the research. Nonetheless, community groups represented the largest number of the groups participating in the research.

3.9.5   Carrying out the interviews

The majority of the interviews (24 of n = 31) were conducted with a member of the group's management committee or steering group (such as the chair, membership secretary, concert manager or treasurer) while seven interviews were carried out with the group's conductor or musical director who, in most of these cases, also held responsibility for the management of the group. Given the variety of roles among those interviewed, the questions asked of the interviewees were, therefore, tailored to reflect their position in the group and their relationship with their group members.

The interviews were principally carried out by telephone, although interviewees were given the choice of taking part in a face-to-face interview and two representatives chose to do so. In addition, one representative was interviewed using an online messaging service

(WhatsApp Inc. 2009) as they were away from the UK and had poor internet connection, making a telephone interview difficult. The interviews themselves ranged in length from 14 minutes to nearly an hour, resulting in over 50 hours of recorded data. In line with ethical protocols, the interviews were audio-recorded with the interviewees' explicit permission.

3.9.6   Transcription and verification

The audio-recordings were transcribed according to Gillham (2005)'s recommendation that speech hesitations such as 'um' and 'er' and other repetitive interjections such as 'you know' and 'yeah' should be omitted. The transcripts were then sent to the interviewees to check their accuracy and to provide the interviewees with an opportunity to review their responses. Some interviewees chose to make corrections to their comments in the original interview, while others made additional comments or provided extra information. For example, one group representative forwarded an email exchange with a group member who had complained about the insensitive handling of their disability during a recent concert performance, as they felt this would show "what can happen in practice" (group representative, auditioning group).

3.9.7   Analysis of the interview data

The interview transcripts were then imported into NVivo 11 (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 11, 2015), a software package that facilitates the coding and analysis of qualitative data. A directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used in the analysis of the qualitative data where the initial coding scheme was derived from the literature review around the key concepts of inclusion and diversity. Thus, initial themes ('nodes') were derived that focused on diversity, group practices, group climate and group leadership. Within each theme, 'child nodes' were then developed from the content of the interviews, drawing together comments that reflected similar views or experiences, or that encapsulated unique perceptions, as illustrated in Figure 3.9-1. These are presented in

tables at the start of each section where the qualitative data is analysed (Chapters 4, 5,

and 6.) In addition, a complete summary of the themes and sub-themes emerging in the

analysis of the qualitative data can be found in Appendix D.
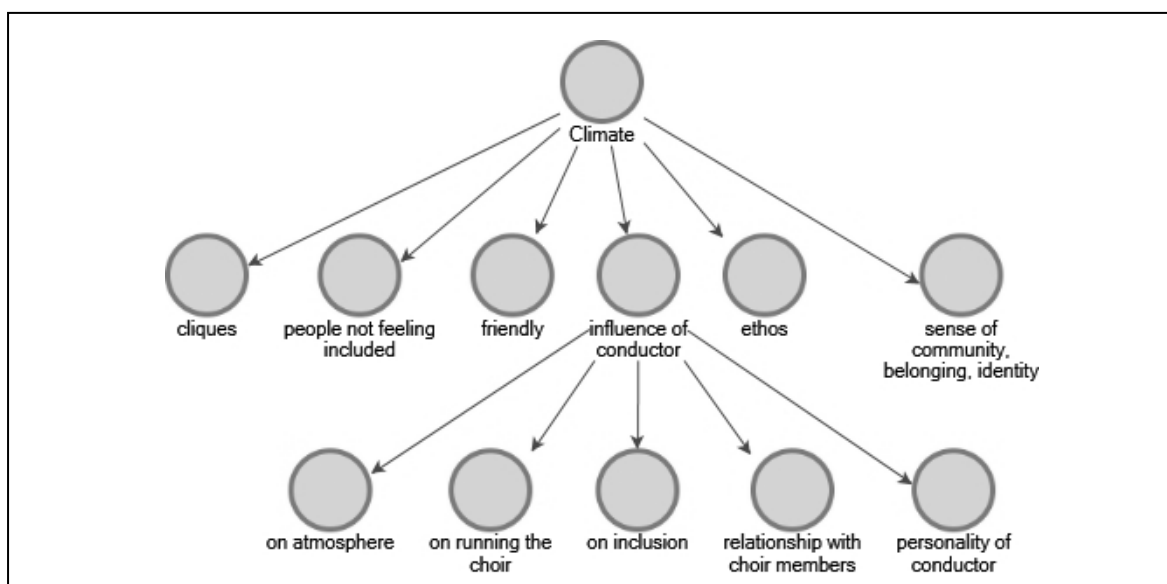
Figure 3.9-1: *Group climate 'child nodes'*

In addition, a qualitative content analysis of the interviews aimed to summarise the

informational content of the data (Morgan, 1993; Sandelowski, 2000). This facilitated a

"quasi-statistical analysis" of the data (Robson, 2002) in which the data were summarised

numerically using Microsoft Excel (Microsoft Office Professional Plus 2010, Version

16.0.11328.20468) to categorise and compare the responses from the different group

representatives in the study.

3.10   The survey to members of singing groups

Alongside the interviews with group representatives, the current study also sought to explore

how individual members of singing groups experienced issues of diversity and inclusion

within their groups. While other methods could have been chosen to do this, sending a

survey to the members of singing groups was felt to have a number of advantages. In

particular, the anonymity of the survey format, particularly when online, allows respondents

to answer freely and without being influenced by others (Baron, 2014). In addition, a survey can be filled out at a time that is convenient to respondents, and, when completed online, means that respondents input their answers themselves, thus saving a considerable amount of time in data-inputting, and reducing the risks of error (Stopher, 2012). A survey can also be widely distributed, particularly when online, so reaching a larger number of people and providing wider coverage than other methods (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003).

Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that there are also a number of disadvantages to using surveys for research. Despite the evidence of increasing use of mobile phones to access the internet, online surveys may be less accessible to some demographic groups than others; Weber and Bradley (2006) suggest that access is affected by ethnicity, socio-economic status and age. Moreover, while online surveys were reported as receiving a response rate of over 50% when they were first introduced, the response rate has subsequently deteriorated due to email filters and survey fatigue (Saleh & Bista, 2017).

In addition, the design of a survey is fixed and cannot respond as an interviewer would in order to probe or clarify respondents' answers. As a result, some researchers (e.g. Farran, 1990 and Pugh 1990, cited in Westmarland, 2001) have argued that surveys are too crude and simplistic to do justice to the social issues they often seek to address. However, given that the aim of this survey was to explore individual members' perceptions of diversity and inclusion in their groups, the advantages of using a survey were felt to outweigh the disadvantages. In addition, a paper version of the survey instrument (the 'participant questionnaire') was developed to mitigate the risk that some individuals would not be able to take part in an online survey (Nicolaas, Calderwood, Lynn, and Roberts, 2014).

3.10.1 Conceptualisation

Designing a questionnaire to investigate group members' experience of diversity and inclusion involved a process of moving from the key concepts of diversity and inclusion to defining ways in which these could be measured (Viswanathan, 2011). However, as

Viswanathan highlights, "a measure of a concept is not the concept itself, but one of several possible error-filled ways of measuring it" (p. 3) and Viswanathan emphasises the need to base the definition of a construct in the literature. In this study, with its focus on issues of diversity and inclusion within the context of adult amateur group singing, there were, therefore, two main areas of literature to draw from in defining the constructs to be used; diversity and inclusion on the one hand, and group singing on the other. However, the literature review had established that there was very little existing research specific to issues of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. This meant, therefore, that as well as considering relevant literature relating to adult amateur group singing, developing the constructs for the questionnaire was also informed by research conducted among other types of musical groups as well as by research studies carried out in the workplace.

3.10.2 Structure

The questionnaire was structured so that respondents were initially asked questions about the group they belonged to and their membership of this group before being asked more sensitive questions about their levels of perceived inclusion and their perceptions of their group's practices, climate and leadership. A final section asked for information on respondents' diversity characteristics and perceptions of diversity in their group.

3.10.3 Format and accessibility

The questionnaire was designed as a paper-based form that could be printed and handed out to the members of singing groups as well as in the format of an online questionnaire which could be accessed by group members through an email hyperlink. Particular attention was paid to ensuring that the online questionnaire was accessible to all. For example, options were presented for respondents to use a screen reader, to enlarge the font size, or increase the contrast, thereby making completing the questionnaire easier for those with visual impairments. Care was also taken in both the paper and online versions to set out the

questions so that the questionnaire did not appear cramped and to use a font that was easily legible. The questionnaire was designed to take between 10 minutes and 20 minutes for respondents to complete, as other researchers have reported a better response to questionnaires of this length than to longer questionnaires (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009).

3.10.4 Generating the questions

As an exploratory survey seeking to advance understanding of the topics of diversity and inclusion within the context of adult amateur group singing, generating the questions for the questionnaire involved drawing on relevant research across different fields. In his guide to developing surveys for social research, de Vaus (2014) describes a "descending ladder of abstraction" (p. 45) where the researcher moves from abstract concepts to identifying specific dimensions and then to developing indicators or questions. This process, therefore, involved a process of mapping questions used in previous research studies relating to the key topics of interest and selecting ones that appeared most relevant to this study. For example, Table 3.10-1 shows how the dimensions relating to inclusion were drawn from the literature review and used to develop the items that were included in the questionnaire (see Appendix E for the full review of the literature used to inform the development of the questions).

Table 3.10-1: Development of the question relating to perceived inclusion

Dimensions identified in the literature	Measure
Sense of belonging (e.g. Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Dingle, Brander, Ballantyne, & Baker, 2012; Jansen et al., 2014; Livesey, Morrison, Clift, & Camic, 2012; Pearce, Launay, van Duijn, et al., 2016; Pitts, Robinson, & Goh, 2015; Raanaas, Aase, & Huot, 2018; Stamper & Masterson, 2002; Tamplin et al., 2013)	I feel a sense of belonging with the group
Authenticity/sense of self (Balsnes & Jansson, 2015; Bird, 2017; Ferdman, 2014; Hopper, Curtis, Hodge, & Simm, 2016; Jansen et al., 2014)	I feel I can be myself in the group
Feeling cared for by the group (Jansen et al., 2014); Feeling safe in the group (Durrant, 2005; Kirrane, O'Connor, Dunne, & Moriarty, 2016; Schuff, 2014; van der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Willingham, 2001; 2005; Yerichuk, 2010)	People in the group care about me I feel supported (musically) by people around me
Sense of being valued/appreciated Heywood & Beynon, 2007; Jansen et al., 2014; Krallmann, 2016)	I feel appreciated by people in the group

The development of each question also needed to ensure the validity of the subsequent analysis of the data by having a "sufficient range of variables so that all of the pertinent factors or dimensions are likely to emerge" (Schäfer, Sedlmeier, Städtler, & Huron, 2013, p. 5). At the same time, the process of developing each question had to take account of respondents' overall expectations around survey length and complexity and avoid overloading each question with too many indicators. Indeed, de Vaus (2014) stresses that the researcher should try to simplify the task of completing the questionnaire by limiting its length and enhancing the conversational nature of the instrument. As such, the questionnaire also included open-ended questions as these would allow participants to explain their answers in their own words and would add depth to the analysis of responses to the scaled questions (O'Cathain & Thomas, 2004).

3.10.5 Designing the scales

Designing the scales used to assess respondents' perceptions of inclusion also involved deciding on the format of the scales and, in particular, deciding whether to adopt numerical or verbal labelling. Initially, the decision was taken to adopt a numerical scale as using numerical scales would generate continuous data that would facilitate and strengthen the subsequent statistical analysis of the data (Saris & Gallhofer, 2014). Furthermore, in their guide to questionnaire design, Krosnick and Presser (2010) suggest avoiding yes/no formats and report that scales are more reliable when they have more than three points. Others have noted that using response categories that fit the survey topic and that are not too detailed also helps to improve the response rate to the survey (Bradburn, Sudman, & Wansink, 2004). The initial scaled questions, therefore, involved asking respondents to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree).

3.10.6 Initial review

A first draft of the questionnaire was sent for review and testing to five personal contacts who were involved in group singing but outside the geographical area of the study. Although they provided positive feedback on the overall content and structure of the questionnaire, their feedback also led to some substantial revisions to the design of the questionnaire. In particular, the reviewers indicated that they disliked the ten-point Likert scale response options to many questions and found these hard to complete. In addition, they highlighted duplication in some of the questions and felt that some sections of the questionnaire should be reduced in length. They also suggested that some questions were too intrusive and suggested removing the question asking about sexual orientation. This feedback was important as, above all else, the questionnaire needed to feel relevant and accessible to respondents.

As a result, their feedback led to the decision to move from using numerical Likert scales to using attitude agreement scales. Krosnick and Presser (2010) suggest that verbal labels are advantageous as they "clarify the meanings of the scale points while at the same time reducing respondent burden by removing a step from the cognitive processes entailed in answering the question" (p. 14). Nonetheless, the decision to use labels also meant that the data generated would become ordinal in nature and would have to be analysed using non-parametric tests (Field, 2003). The questionnaire was also reduced in overall length by omitting questions that were too similar in nature, and the question about respondents' sexual orientation was removed.

3.10.7 Piloting the survey

Good practice indicates that research tools should be thoroughly tested in order to identify potential problem areas or deficiencies in the research instrument (Kelley et al., 2003; Stopher, 2012). A pilot study was, therefore, planned prior to implementation of the full study. It was envisaged that this would test the length of time needed to complete the survey, the relevance of questions to respondents, clarity of language, and issues with formatting and lay-out. Additional questions were, therefore, added to the pilot questionnaire to enable respondents to provide feedback on their experiences of completing the survey. Furthermore, the data generated through the pilot provided an opportunity to carry out some initial analysis and test the planned analytical procedures.

Contact details of individuals who might be willing to pilot the survey were identified from members of adult amateur singing groups who had taken part in previous research (Parkinson, 2016) and who had given consent to be contacted again. Care was taken to avoid including singers from the Camden area in the pilot in order to ensure that the sample for the final study would not be compromised. The questionnaire was uploaded to an online survey host (SurveyGizmo, 2011) and group members were sent an email inviting them to take part in the pilot study; 110 individuals subsequently completed the pilot questionnaire.

3.10.8 Post-pilot refinements

Based on the feedback provided by the respondents to the pilot survey and analysis of the data they provided, a number of further modifications were made to the participant questionnaire. This included adding a new variable ('welcoming to new members') to the group climate measure as well as asking respondents about their reasons for leaving previous groups. Furthermore, as some respondents pointed out that they belonged to a number of different groups, an option was also added to enable people to complete the questionnaire again if singing in different groups. In addition, prompted by an email from one person to whom the link had been sent, an option was developed, using a questionnaire that mirrored the main one, to capture the experiences of individuals no longer singing in any groups. The final version of the participant questionnaire used in this study can be found in Appendix F.

3.10.9 Validity and reliability

As described in Section 3.10.4, content validity of the questions on the questionnaire was supported by the literature review described in Chapter 2. Each measure was designed to explore a distinct domain as delineated in Shore et al.'s framework of inclusion (2011). The items for each measure were developed through reviewing existing scales and selecting items that appeared to be most appropriate for the context of adult amateur group singing.

A two-stage process of piloting the survey also helped to further establish validity as respondents were asked to provide feedback on the relevance and appropriateness of the measures used to investigate the main topics under consideration (perceived inclusion; group practices; group climate; and group leadership). This led to the addition of some items (e.g. "I feel supported (musically) by people around me" to the perceived inclusion measure) and deletion of others (e.g. "I feel that I fit in here" was deemed too close to "I feel a sense of belonging with the group" to be useful).

Subsequently, Cronbach's alpha tests were carried out to measure internal consistency within each of the measures. As Table 3.10-2 shows, this revealed that all measures met the recommended minimum of .7 for newly developed scales (Nunnaly & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 3.10-2: Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire measures

Measure	No. of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Perceived inclusion	5	.859
Group climate	5	.841
Group practice	7	.787
Group leader attributes	6	.827
Group leader behaviour	5	.789

However, tests to assess inter-item correlations within the measures revealed that, as Table 3.10-3 shows, two measures had scores that exceeded the ideal range of between 0.2 and 0.4 (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). This finding suggests that these measures would benefit from additional development before they can be deemed fully reliable and indicates that some caution should be exercised in interpreting the results of the questionnaire and drawing firm conclusions from this.

Table 3.10-3: Inter-item mean correlations for the questionnaire measures

Measure	No. of items	Inter-item mean correlations
Perceived inclusion	5	.547
Group climate	5	.531
Group practice	7	.355
Group leader attributes	6	.447
Group leader behaviour	5	.453

In addition, it was not possible to test the questionnaire measures using other standard reliability tests. For example, the test–retest reliability depends on two primary assumptions,

one of which is that respondents' true scores would remain stable across time (Viswanathan, 2011). In the context of measuring perceived inclusion, this is unlikely to be the case as respondents' sense of inclusion may well vary over time. Nonetheless, the process of careful development, testing and refinement provides evidence of the measures having considerable construct validity (i.e. measuring what they aim to measure) as there is no empirical coefficient for this. Furthermore, the ability to triangulate the data to be due to the concurrent collection of both quantitative and qualitative data also allows the quantitative data from respondents' answers to clarify their response to an open-ended question, and vice versa (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).

3.10.10   *Administration of the survey*

Participation in the study was voluntary; individuals were recruited by the group representatives interviewed during the preceding phase of the study (see Section 3.9), who were asked to distribute the survey to their group members. An additional benefit to groups of taking part in this phase of the research was the offer of a summary of the analysis of the responses from their group members, enabling them to gain insight into diversity and perceptions of inclusion within their own group.

The survey was set up as an online survey, although a paper version of the questionnaire was also developed for group members who might not have internet access or wish to complete the questionnaire online. A link to the online survey, or a set of paper copies of the questionnaire, was then sent to all the 31 group representatives who had taken part in the interviews and who had also indicated their willingness to support this phase of the research.

Four representatives indicated they no longer wished to send out the survey; in two cases, they felt it would not be appropriate to do so as their group included a number of professional singers; in another case, the group had ceased activity; and in another, the representative simply no longer wanted to be involved in the research. In addition, ten

representatives failed to respond to the request and, despite a further email, never sent out

the survey to their members. In six cases, group representatives asked for paper copies of

the questionnaire to be provided for their members, and, in one case, this involved several

visits to the group to explain the purpose of the research, distribute, and subsequently collect

the completed questionnaires. In all, the online survey was kept open for two months, during

which time emails were sent to the group representatives asking them to remind their

members to complete the survey.

3.10.11   Survey sample

Once the survey was closed and the paper responses had been inputted, a total of 389

responses were recorded. However, after duplicate responses and ones where only a

minimal amount of data had been provided were removed, 383 responses constituted the

final sample on which the subsequent analysis was based. This can best be described as a

non-probability convenience sample, a method that is particularly identified with exploratory

research (Baron, 2014). Baron argues that a good convenience sample is particularly

valuable as it focuses on "respondents with topic relevant lived experience and is drawn

from a clearly defined target population" (p. 299), however there are limitations to the extent

to which the sample can be viewed as representative, as discussed in the next section.

3.10.12   Representativeness

As Table 3.10-4 shows, 383 responses were received from the members of 17 groups,

representing over half of those participating in the interviews ($n = 31$), and a third of all the

adult amateur singing groups identified in Camden ($n = 51$). As Table 3.10-4 also shows,

responses were distributed across different types of group, however the proportion of groups

whose members completed the survey ranged from four-fifths of the hybrid groups to less

than a fifth of the community groups. This was largely a reflection of the number of groups

that had participated in the interviews, in which less than half of the community groups had

taken part, compared to the majority of the auditioning, hybrid and specialist groups (see

Section 3.9.2). Thereafter, half of the groups whose representatives were interviewed went

on to distribute the survey to their members, apart from the hybrid groups, of whom four-

fifths distributed the survey. There was no obvious reason to explain this variance.

Table 3.10-4: The groups who distributed the survey to their members

Type of group	No. of groups who distributed the survey	No. of groups whose representatives were interviewed	No. of groups identified in Camden	% of groups in Camden represented in the survey response
Auditioning groups	4	8	10	40.0
Hybrid groups	4	5	5	80.0
Community groups	5	10	26	19.2
Specialist groups	4	8	10	40.0
Total	**17**	**31**	**51**	**33.3**

This variance in distribution also affected the survey response; as Table 3.10-5 shows, the

responses from members of auditioning and hybrid groups represented over two-thirds of

the total survey response while the responses from members of community and specialist

groups represented less than a third. Nonetheless, based on estimates provided by the

group representatives of the total size of their groups, it would appear that the responses

from members within the different types of group ranged from around a third to over half of

all their members. This can be considered a relatively good response, given the recognised

challenges of data collection by survey (see Section 3.10) but it still cannot be considered as

providing a response that is representative of all members of singing groups in the area.

Table 3.10-5: The survey responses completed by group members

Type of group	No. of responses from group members	% of the total survey response	% of the total no. of group members
Auditioning groups	145	37.9	30.9
Hybrid groups	132	34.5	57.9
Community groups	56	14.6	35.2
Specialist groups	50	13.1	46.3
Total	**383**	**100.1**	**39.7**

Despite limitations around representativeness, the respondents were well-positioned to provide information on the topics under investigation. Most had considerable experience of adult group singing, the vast majority (83% of $n = 368$) having been members of their groups for more than one year. In addition, around two-thirds (66% of $n = 369$) had belonged to other singing groups before joining their current group), and nearly a third (31% of $n = 369$) belonged to other singing groups as well as their current group.

3.10.13   Analysis of the questionnaire data

Analysis of the questionnaire data then sought to investigate whether there were:

a. associations between respondents' perceptions of inclusion, group practices, climate and leadership;

b. differences in levels of perceived inclusion and perceptions of group practices, climate and leadership between groups of respondents based on the size of their group, the type of group they belonged to, the length of time they had belonged to the group, and their diversity characteristics; and

c. outliers (individual respondents or whole groups) who reported particularly high or low levels of perceived inclusion and the characteristics of these respondents or groups.

Analysis of the quantitative data from the survey was carried out using IBM SPSS Statistics

for Windows (version 26) as this facilitates the process of carrying out statistical enquiries.

Frequency tests were carried out to identify trends in respondents' characteristics and

responses. In addition, aggregated scores were created for each of the principle measures

(perceived inclusion; group practices; group climate; and group leadership) by converting

each response to a number (for example, 'very much' to three, 'quite a bit' to two, 'not much'

to one, 'not at all' to zero) and summing the results. Where respondents had answered

'don't know' to one or more items, these responses were reported in the frequency tables but

their answers were subsequently excluded when the aggregate scores were calculated.

Pearson's Chi-Square statistic tests were then carried out to examine whether there

were statistically significant differences in the answers respondents gave to the quantitative

measures (Field, 2003). However, Chi-square tests give inaccurate results when the

expected numbers on which they are based are too small (McDonald, 2014). Where

necessary, response categories were, therefore, combined to ensure that Chi-Square tests

were based on samples where 80% of the expected numbers were greater than five. For

example, with relatively small numbers of respondents from different BAME backgrounds, a

new variable was created which enabled respondents to be categorised either as white or as

BAME, the latter combining respondents from the different BAME backgrounds into one

group.

These results were further examined using Bonferroni post hoc tests (Sedgwick, 2014)

to control for so-called type 1 errors, resulting in the null hypothesis being falsely rejected

(Field, 2003), and to pinpoint specific areas of significant difference. This involved taking the

adjusted Z-values from the results of the Chi-Square tests, calculating new Chi-Square

values from these, and then calculating precise estimates of P-values for each one to

establish the existence or lack of statistical significance (Gignac, 2014). In addition, to take

account of the likelihood of having false positive results given the number of tests used, a

threshold was set for significance by calculating a new P-value based on .05 divided by the

number of tests involved. Finally, the direction and strength of the relationships within and between different aspects of inclusion were examined using Scatterplots and linear regression (Spearman's correlation coefficients).

Analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaire was conducted by importing the text from the open questions into NVivo 11 and using a directed content analysis approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) to code the data (see Section 3.9.7). As this was a mixed methods study, quantitative analysis was also undertaken to ascertain the frequency of respondents' answers within the themes identified. This is shown in tables at the start of each section where the qualitative data is discussed.

3.11   Integrating the data

One of the challenges of using a mixed methods approach is to find a way to integrate the reporting of the qualitative and quantitative data in a coherent and balanced manner. This was addressed through developing a triangulation protocol (O'Cathain, Murphy, & Nicholl, 2010) which guided the process of analysis and data integration.

Initially, the four datasets (i.e. the quantitative and qualitative data from the interviews with group representatives and the qualitative and quantitative data from the survey of group members) were analysed separately using methods appropriate for each type of data (see Sections 3.9.7 and 3.10.13). Focussing on the conceptual results then provided a common denominator for qualitative and quantitative findings (Foster, 1997) so that the statistical results from the quantitative analysis, presented first, could be further explored and elaborated through the findings from the qualitative analysis. In addition, the qualitative data was reported with numbers to show how many respondents' comments had been coded under a particular theme or sub-theme.

The process of integrating the data also involved distinguishing salient findings, based on relevance to the research questions, from those that offered little pertinent information (Foster, 1997, p. 8). For example, where respondents offered information that related to

musical leadership (e.g. suggesting that the conductor should encourage singers to vary the dynamics of their singing more), such data was not included. On the other hand, unexpected findings (such as the importance for some respondents of sharing laughter and fun) were considered important and included.

There were also times when the findings arising from one method did not reflect the findings from the other, which needed to be addressed. For example, while the statistical analysis of the quantitative survey data did not reveal any significant associations between respondents' diversity characteristics and their perceptions of inclusion, there was some evidence of this in the qualitative survey data. Consequently, the findings do not always present a clear, unambiguous set of results. However, these tensions and conflicts do not necessarily diminish the research; rather, they reflect the complexity of the topics in question and reveal the multifaceted nature of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

3.12   Reporting

A mixed methods approach also informed the presentation and discussion of the findings, so that the textual and numeric evidence are interwoven (Creamer, 2018, p. 103). For example, tables and charts are used to present statistical findings, while direct quotations from interviews and responses to open questions in the questionnaire are used to illustrate and enrich the text. The presentation and discussion of the findings was also organised into themes so that similarities and differences in the qualitative and quantitative data could be presented and discussed. These themes and sub-themes are presented in tables at the start of each section where the qualitative data is analysed (Chapters 4, 5, and 6.) In addition, the significance levels of the statistical tests run are reported in American Psychological Association style (i.e. showing three digits but omitting the leading zero). P-values of less than .001 are shown as "< .001" and, for greater clarity, statistical significance is also indicated with asterisks. In addition, throughout the findings sections, "*n*"

is used to specify the number of individuals responding to a particular question as not all respondents answered all questions.

3.13   Limitations

It is also important to recognise the limitations of this study which influence the findings and limit the extent to which these can be generalised to a wider population.

3.13.1 Ontological and epistemological foundation

Having determined that previous research into diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing has rarely utilised any particular theoretical foundation (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.2), the decision was made to apply the framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011) to this study. This provided an ontological foundation for the research, based on a belief that inclusion is an experience that can be recognised and measured, and that there are enough common elements to the experience of inclusion to make it a distinct and valid topic. However, the key components of the framework – group leadership, group practices and group climate – have been identified in a workplace context and have not been previously tested in other contexts. It may be, therefore, that there are different, or additional, elements to be considered that affect diversity and inclusion within the context of adult amateur group singing.

3.13.2 Scale

This study was carried out across adult amateur singing groups in the London borough of Camden, with interviews carried out 31 representatives and questionnaires completed by 383 members of these groups. The number of respondents on which the study is based, therefore, represents a tiny proportion of the estimated 40,000 singing groups in the UK and of the 2.14 million individuals participating in these groups (Voices Now, 2017).

Moreover, as described previously (see Section 3.7), Camden is a highly diverse area, in terms of both the range of ages and ethnic backgrounds of its residents and the socio-

economic variation in communities across the borough. While this setting may reflect some other urban areas in the UK, it is unlikely to have many communalities with less diverse cities and, even more so, with rural areas in the UK. The range of singing groups seen in Camden and the opportunities that this offers for individuals to find a group that appeals to them may simply not exist in other parts of the country. In addition, the location of groups across all parts of the borough and supported by good transport links, means that those wishing to sing in an amateur group are less likely to face barriers in accessing a group than individuals in areas with less provision and poorer transport links. The findings from this study, therefore, cannot be seen as generalisable to adult amateur group singing more broadly; instead, they offer insight into the ways in which issues around diversity and inclusion play out in a multicultural urban context.

It is also impossible for the current study to do justice to the full diversity of adult amateur group singing, as the research may not have uncovered all the singing groups operating in the area. For example, no groups were located that functioned specifically within BAME communities; the members of the only gospel group, a form of singing associated with African American culture (Moore, 2003), which participated in this research were all reported to be from white ethnic backgrounds. The only other gospel group located in the area did not respond to requests to participate in the research.

Moreover, the groups participating in this study were all groups that enabled their members to engage in group singing as a leisure activity which was additional to, rather than part of, their daily lives. Consequently, these groups needed to advertise their existence to people who might otherwise not come across them and this made them easy to locate for inclusion in this study. It should be acknowledged, then, that the methods used to identify singing groups in the area studied were inadequate in terms of uncovering groups whose existence may be less obvious to outsiders to the group and that the 'voices' of those belonging to these groups are, therefore, missing from this research.

Moreover, it is likely that other singing groups exist that do not need to advertise their existence to others because they are embedded within daily life. For example, some singing groups may come together as part of religious or social activities associated with particular cultural or religious traditions, such as in temples or synagogues, or at community or family events to mark important occasions, such as births, marriages and deaths. These groups may not even exist as formal groupings of singers but may simply coalesce spontaneously and dissolve once the occasion that gave rise to them has ended. The exclusion of less formalised singing groups from this research (see Chapter 1, section 1.1) highlights a need for future research to explore how such forms of adult amateur group singing are enacted.

3.13.3 Research approach

Using a mixed methods approach enabled the study to be informed by qualitative and quantitative analysis and, therefore, to have both breadth and depth. However, the limitations of a mixed methods approach should also be recognised, in that using different methods means that the research does not benefit necessarily from the focus that a single approach might have brought. Carrying out an in-depth small-scale qualitative case-study could have enabled the study to explore in far greater depth the ways in which diversity and inclusion are experienced within a single singing group. Equally, implementing a national survey would have enabled groups and individuals from across the UK to share their perspectives, but was outside the scope of the present study.

Using a mixed methods approach also brought other challenges which would not have arisen if a single method had been used. In their guide for research practice, Plano Clark and Ivankova (2017) describe the "messiness" of mixed methods research, and "the tensions inherent in a research approach that purposefully brings together multiple perspectives, approaches, and contexts" (p. 278). In designing this study, using a mixed methods approach meant decisions had to be made about the amount of qualitative data to be gathered through the questionnaire and how to keep this manageable. As a result, open

questions were used sparingly and only when the data they would generate would serve to elucidate key aspects of the research.

3.13.4 Research methodology

There are also limitations to be recognised around the methodology employed to carry out the research. For example, the interviews with group representatives also served to enlist their support with administering the participant survey. Group representatives, therefore, became gatekeepers, as permission to distribute the survey to the members of their groups relied on consent from these representatives. Those who feared that their group members might have presented their group in a negative light may have chosen to refuse access to their members. In addition, asking interviewees about their group's diversity involved asking them to give their perceptions of the proportion of members from different ethnic backgrounds, genders or ages. As singing groups do not tend to collect this information, their answers were therefore based on estimations and cannot be seen to provide accurate data. Nonetheless, this information was still valuable as it presented their perceptions of the situation.

Furthermore, the design of questionnaire and the selection of measures was based on the literature review and was, therefore, informed by an understanding of inclusion that was largely derived from research in the workplace. The decision to take this approach was both the result of a lack of appropriate material identified in previous research related to group singing and informed by an understanding of singing groups as organisations which could be studied using methods developed in other organisational research. Nonetheless, the decision to develop a bespoke measure means that the findings are based on a questionnaire that has not been previously tested and validated. As a result, the questionnaire uses proxy indicators which may not have accurately measured the phenomenon. Furthermore, different methods of data collection may have affected the

responses given by respondents, as those who were given paper surveys may have answered differently had they been completing the survey online, and vice versa.

3.13.5 Potential bias

Finally, it is important to recognise that the findings are based on the views and experiences of individuals who were, at the time, members of the participating groups and, as such, they may provide a biased perspective on their group's operation. Individuals who had not felt welcomed into a group may not have stayed for long and are therefore less likely to have been included in the survey sample. Although an attempt was made to counter this non-response bias (Atif, Richards, & Bilgin, 2012) by designing a separate survey to collect responses from individuals who had left their group, only six individuals completed this survey. However, additional questions were also added to the main questionnaire to ask respondents about their reasons for leaving previous groups and 127 individuals (33% of the sample) provided information on this. On the other hand, this study did not attempt to reach individuals who have never joined singing groups and cannot, therefore, shed any light on the barriers encountered by these individuals.

It is possible that the individuals who participated in the research may have been more sympathetic to issues of diversity and inclusion than those who did not participate, resulting in self-selection bias in the sample (Lavrakas, 2008). However, as it was impossible to obtain data about non-participants in the study, it would not have been appropriate to use any selection models to attempt to statistically correct for selection bias (Cuddeback, Wilson, Orme, & Combs-Orme, 2004). At the same time, it should be recognised that, as one of the main aims of the research was to explore factors that support inclusion within singing groups, the individuals who took part in the survey were well-positioned to provide this information.

However, while the interviews provided a considerable amount of data relating to group representatives' perceptions of their group's membership, practices, and leadership,

the interviewees could only offer their own personal perceptions, which may not have been

shared by others in the group. Moreover, given the focus of the interviews on socially

desirable issues such as diversity and inclusion, interviewees may have felt inclined to over-

state the extent of diversity in their group or the way in which their group supported inclusion.

This potential over-reporting of socially desirable behaviours or attitudes can result in further

bias in the findings (Lavrakas, 2008).

3.13.6 Researcher perspective

There are also limitations to this research due to the position occupied by the researcher.

As explained in the introduction (see Chapter 1), I am currently a member of two adult

amateur singing groups and, for most of the period of this study, was the co-chair of one of

these groups. This has meant that I have been able to live through and alongside my

research, using my own experiences to bring insight and challenge the emerging findings. I

have also seen, for example, how one of these choirs, a community choir, has tried to

become more inclusive by organising more social activities, involving members in decision-

making, and being more aware of different individuals' needs. The other choir, an

auditioning group, recognises the challenges that being inclusive represents but, as

illustrated in this study, seems unable to look beyond ethnic diversity to consider how

inclusion can be relevant to different diversity characteristics. Being part of both these

groups and having ongoing conversations with people around me has, therefore, brought

depth to my understanding of the processes involved in enacting inclusion within adult

amateur group singing.

However, being an insider is dangerous as it can lead to a false sense of

understanding (Chavez, 2008, Fawcett & Hearn, 2004). Furthermore, the relationship

between researcher and researched is not so much a dichotomous insider/outsider

relationship as one that starts from a position of "uncertainty", where researchers should

"give up the idea of any assumed, a priori commonality with their research participants and

instead set out to conduct research from a position of uncertainty" (Nowicka & Ryan, 2015, p. 5). I recognise, therefore, that my own views and experiences will have both influenced and limited my ability to understand fully how other singing groups differ from the groups I know, and how other individuals' experiences may be different to my own. Furthermore, I come to this research as an educated, white, able-bodied woman. I cannot, therefore, begin to appreciate how it feels to join a singing group and find myself in a minority due to my gender, ability/disability, ethnicity or educational background. Nor can I appreciate what inclusion feels like to someone who has felt excluded in other aspects of their life, or what exclusion within a singing group might feel like to that person. However, I recognise that every individual brings a wealth of experiences, attitudes and abilities, and that my attempt to explore diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing can only hope to capture and reflect some of the myriad ways in which individuals perceive inclusion and in which singing groups can attempt to support this.

3.14   Chapter summary

This chapter has described the process by which the present study was conceived, organised and carried out. This has involved exploring the rationale for the mixed methods approach employed and the way in which this informed the subsequent design, implementation, analysis and reporting of the research. While recognising its limitations, it is to be hoped that the approach taken allows this study to have "generative promise" (Creswell, 2013b, p. 248), through posing new questions and helping to generate new knowledge around issues of inclusion and diversity within adult amateur singing groups. The following chapters presents the research findings related to diversity and inclusion within the participating groups, beginning with the findings related to the diversity of the groups themselves and of their membership.

Chapter 4: Diversity within the participating singing groups

While there has been little previous research investigating diversity within adult amateur singing groups, studies that have included information on diversity have generally reported that the members of such groups are predominantly female, older, and from white ethnic backgrounds (Clift, Hancox, Morrison, et al., 2008; National Endowment for the Arts, 2015; Parkinson, 2016; Rensink-Hoff, 2011). Nonetheless, some researchers have suggested that participation in adult amateur group singing may be changing (Adler, 2013; Deane et al., 2013), and Yerichuk (2015) suggests that diversity within singing groups may be more nuanced than has previously been understood.

In seeking to explore the ways in which adult amateur singing groups manifest as diverse and inclusive organisations, the first questions to be considered in this study were the extent to which singing groups manifest as diverse in their composition and membership. Based on desk research exploring the number and type of groups in the area as well as interviews with 31 group representatives and responses to a questionnaire completed by 383 group members, this chapter, therefore, presents the findings related to different aspects of diversity within participating groups in the London borough of Camden. A discussion of the implications of these findings, and other findings from this research, can be found in Chapter 7.

4.1   The groups themselves

The initial mapping of singing groups in Camden (see Chapter 3, section 3.7) revealed the existence of 51 adult amateur singing groups across the borough, of which 31 groups participated in this research study.

4.1.1 Type of group

Using information from groups' websites, the 51 groups identified in Camden presented a

wide variety of types of group, ranging from choral societies and chamber choirs to groups

that brought together individuals from a particular housing estate, or individuals with specific

life experiences, such as a group for women who had been trafficked. The 31 groups that

participated in this study reflected this variety, and included groups that sang music from a

range of different traditions as well as groups for individuals with specific personal

experiences such as of homelessness, or groups for individuals with specific health

conditions. Some groups also served particular sub-sections of the population, such as

groups for individuals with common political beliefs, or who were united by their gender

identity, sexual orientation, and even by a love of outdoor swimming.

4.1.2 Size of group

Information on groups' websites revealed that the majority (29 of the 51) of groups appeared

to have a membership of less than 30 singers, while a third of groups had between 30 and

100 members. Only five groups had more than 100 singers.

A more detailed analysis of group size was carried out for the groups that participated

in the study, as group representatives had been asked to provide information on the size of

their group's membership. As Table 4.1-1 shows, this revealed that groups ranged in size

from those with around twenty members to groups with nearly two hundred members. Over

half (18 of the 31) had between 20 and 50 members; none had less than 20 members.

Table 4.1-1: Estimated size of the singing groups participating in the study

No. of members	No. of groups	% of groups
15 – 30	14	45.1
31 – 50	6	19.4
51 – 100	6	19.4
101 – 150	3	9.7
151 – 200	2	6.5
Total	**31**	**100.1**

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Furthermore, based on the information provided by respondents to the participant questionnaire ($n = 383$), a Chi-Square test revealed that group size had a statistically significant association with group type ($X^2(9, n = 383) = 443.06$, $p < .0001$), and, as Table 4.1-2 shows, further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that auditioning groups were likely to have significantly more members than other types of group, while specialist groups were more likely to be smaller than other types of group.

Table 4.1-2: Results of a Chi-Square test related to group type and size using the Bonferroni correction (n = 383)

Chi-Square test result for group type and size: $X^2(9, n = 383) = 443.06$, $p < .0001$					
Type of group	Factor	15 – 50 members	51 – 100 members	101 – 150 members	151 – 200 members
Auditioning groups	Count	5	8	63	69
	Expected Count	37.9	57.2	23.9	26.1
	Adjusted Residual	-7.9	-10.6	11.1	11.8
	p-value	.001***	.001***	.001***	.001***
Hybrid groups	Count	33	99	0	0
	Expected Count	34.5	52	21.7	23.8
	Adjusted Residual	-.4	10.3	-6.3	-6.7
	p-value	.689	.001***	.001***	.001***

Table 4.1 2: Results of a Chi-Square test related to group type and size using the Bonferroni correction (contd.)

Type of group	Factor	15 – 50 members	51 – 100 members	101 – 150 members	151 – 200 members
Community groups	Count	22	44	0	0
	Expected Count	17.2	26	10.9	11.9
	Adjusted Residual	1.5	5	-4	-4.2
	p-value	.134	.001***	.006**	.003**
Specialist groups	Count	40	0	0	0
	Expected Count	10.4	15.8	6.6	7.2
	Adjusted Residual	11.2	-5.4	-3	-3.1
	p-value	.001***	.001***	.003**	.002**

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

4.1.3   Repertoire

Using information from groups' websites, it was determined that around three-quarters of the adult amateur singing groups identified in Camden (39 of the 51) were singing a varied repertoire or one that was drawn from outside the western classical music canon. This included groups singing close harmony, folk, jazz, and music from other parts of the world.

As Table 4.1-3 shows, nearly two-thirds (20 of the 31) of the groups participating in this study focused on singing music outside of the western classical music canon. Eleven groups sang music from a range of styles, while four groups sang music from different countries or faiths, such as Jewish music or Bulgarian folk music, and three groups sang mainly rock or pop music. Of the two groups categorised as singing 'other' repertoire, one group was singing gospel music and the other was singing political songs. Eleven groups (the vast majority of the auditioning and hybrid groups) focused on singing music from the western classical music canon.

Table 4.1-3: Repertoire of the participating groups

Repertoire	No. of groups	% of groups
Mainly classical	11	35.5
A mix of styles	11	35.5
Music from different countries / faiths	4	12.9
Rock/pop	3	9.7
Other	2	6.5
Total	**31**	**100.1**

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100 due to rounding.

A Chi-Square test revealed that, when repertoire was grouped into classical and non-classical, repertoire had a statistically significant association with group type (X^2(3, n = 383) = 194.58 p <.0001), and as Table 4.1-4 shows, further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that the auditioning and hybrid groups were more likely to be singing music from the western classical canon, while the community and specialist groups were more likely to be singing music from a mix of styles or to be singing rock, pop, or music from different countries.

Table 4.1-4: Results of a Chi-Square test related to group type and repertoire using the Bonferroni correction (n = 383)

Chi-Square test result for group type and repertoire: X^2(3, n = 383) = 194.58, p <.0001			
Type of group		**Classical repertoire**	**Mixed repertoire**	**Non-classical repertoire**
Auditioning groups	Count	132	13	0
	Expected Count	99.2	29.2	16.7
	Adjusted Residual	7.4	-4.2	-5.5
	p-value	.001***	.003*	.001***
Hybrid groups	Count	113	19	0
	Expected Count	90.3	26.5	15.2
	Adjusted Residual	5.3	-2	-5.1
	p-value	.001***	.046	.001***

Table 4.1-5: Results of a Chi-Square test related to group type and repertoire using the Bonferroni correction (contd.)

Type of group		Classical repertoire	Mixed repertoire	Non-classical repertoire
Community groups	Count	17	16	33
	Expected Count	45.1	13.3	7.6
	Adjusted Residual	-8.2	.9	10.8
	p-value	.001***	.368	.001***
Specialist groups	Count	0	29	11
	Expected Count	27.4	8	4.6
	Adjusted Residual	-9.8	8.7	3.4
	p-value	.001***	.001***	.001***

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

4.1.4   Associations between group characteristics

A Chi-Square test also revealed a significant association between repertoire and group size (X^2(3, *n* = 383) = 202.88 *p* <.0001), such that, as Figure 4.1-1 shows, group type, size and repertoire were all inter-related.
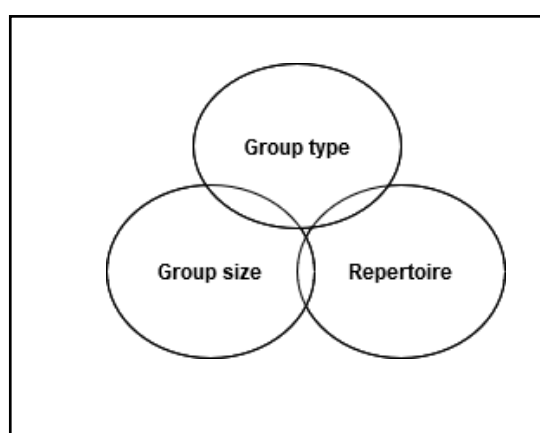
Figure 4.1-1: Significant associations between group characteristics

4.2 Diversity in groups' membership

Having explored the diversity in size and repertoire of the groups participating in the study, the next section looks at diversity in the membership of the groups studied, drawing on an analysis of group members' responses to the participant questionnaire ($n = 383$) as well as the interviews with group representatives ($n = 31$).

4.2.1 Gender identity

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-1 shows, nearly three-quarters (74% of $n = 371$) of group members who completed the participant questionnaire reported their gender as female.

Table 4.2-1: Reported gender identity of respondents (total n = 371)

Reported gender identity	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
Female	72.5	74.2	90.6	45.9	73.6
Male	26.1	25.8	9.4	54.1	25.9
Transgender or other	1.4	0	0	0	.6
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Chi-Square tests revealed a statistically significant difference in the distribution of male and female members across different types of group ($X^2(3, n = 369) = 24.37, p < .001$) and, as Table 4.2-2 shows, further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that specialist groups had a significantly higher proportion of men than other types of group, while community groups had a significantly higher proportion of women than other types of group.

Table 4.2-2: Results of a Chi-Square test related to reported male/female distribution and type of group using the Bonferroni correction (n = 369)

Chi-Square test result for male/female distribution and group type: $X^2(3, n = 369) = 24.37, p < .001$			
Type of group	**Factor**	**Male**	**Female**
Auditioning groups	Count	37	103
	Expected Count	36.7	104.5
	Adjusted Residual	.1	-.4
	p-value	.920	.920
Hybrid groups	Count	33	95
	Expected Count	33.3	94.7
	Adjusted Residual	-.1	.1
	p-value	.920	.920
Community groups	Count	6	58
	Expected Count	16.7	47.3
	Adjusted Residual	-3.3	3.3
	p-value	.001 ***	.001 ***
Specialist groups	Count	20	17
	Expected Count	9.6	27.2
	Adjusted Residual	4.1	-4
	p-value	.001 **	.001 ***

Note: *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of ≤.001.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 4.2-3, there were also significant associations between male/female distribution and how much previous experience respondents had of group singing, with further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealing that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to have had no previous experience of group singing. Similarly, male respondents were more likely than female respondents to belong to groups singing rock or pop, or music from different countries. On the other hand, there were no statistically significant differences in the reported distribution of male and female members across groups of different sizes, nor in terms of how long they had belonged to their groups or whether they were singing with other groups.

Table 4.2-3: Relationships between gender identity and other characteristics

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity and previous group singing experience	$X^2(2, n = 356) = 10.51, p = .005$ **
Gender identity and repertoire	$X^2(2, n = 369) = 10.86, p = .004$ **
Gender identity and group size	$X^2(3, n = 369) = 5.29, p = .152$
Gender identity and length of membership	$X^2(2, n = 355) = 1.19, p = .755$
Gender identity and singing in other groups	$X^2(1, n = 356) = 2.35, p = .126$

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq .01$.

Perceptions of gender diversity in the groups

Gender was only mentioned by nine (3% of $n = 301$)) of the group members who responded to an open question about their perceptions of diversity ("In what ways are the members of the group from similar/different backgrounds to you?").

Table 4.2-4: Overview of themes related to gender diversity in the groups

Perceptions of gender diversity	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Most are the same gender as me	7	63.6
Most are of a different gender to me	2	18.2
Gender diversity of group is changing	2	18.2
Total	**11**	**100.0**

As Table 4.2-4 shows, the majority of these respondents ($n = 7$) saw gender as a unifying factor. Nonetheless, two respondents felt that the gender diversity of their groups was changing. For example, one wrote that "More men are joining, which for me shows how well the group works" (female respondent, specialist group).

Reflecting the responses in the participant questionnaire, the majority of the group representatives interviewed (25 of $n = 31$) felt that their groups were comprised of many more female than male singers (see Table 4.2-5).

Table 4.2-5: Group representatives' perceptions of gender balance in their groups

Perceived gender balance	No. of auditioning groups	No. of hybrid groups	No. of community groups	No. of specialist groups	No. of all groups
More women than men	6	5	8	6	25
Equal numbers of men and women	2	0	1	0	3
More men than women	0	0	1	2	3
Total	**8**	**5**	**10**	**8**	**31**

However, six group representatives reported a different gender balance in their groups, with equal numbers of men and women in three groups, and more men than women in three others. One commented,

> *As choirs go, we're quite lucky. It's roughly fifty-fifty. (Group representative, community group).*

In some of these cases, the gender balance was determined by the type of group itself, as in the case of a group that was specifically for gay men. Another group with more male than female members was a group for individuals who had experienced homelessness, and the gender balance in this group may, therefore, have reflected the fact that more men than women tend to be identified as homeless (Homeless Link, 2015).

4.2.2 Ethnic and cultural diversity

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-6 shows, the vast majority of the group members who completed the participant questionnaire (90% of $n = 362$) reported that they were of white ethnic origin while 10% were from BAME backgrounds. However, the distribution varied considerably by group type, with over a third of respondents in specialist groups from BAME backgrounds.

Table 4.2-6: Reported ethnic origin of respondents (n = 362)

Reported ethnic origin	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
White or white British	96.4	92.8	85.9	61.1	89.8
Black or Black British	.7	1.6	3.1	19.4	3.3
Asian or Asian British	1.5	.8	3.1	2.8	1.7
Mixed ethnicity	0	1.6	4.7	5.6	1.9
Other ethnicity	1.5	3.2	3.1	11.1	3.3
Total	**100.1**	**100.1**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

Chi-Square tests revealed that this difference in the ethnic background of respondents across different types of group was statistically significant (X^2(3, n = 362) = 40.96, p < .001) and, as Table 4.2-7 shows, further tests using the Bonferroni correction confirmed that specialist groups had a significantly higher proportion of members from BAME backgrounds, while auditioning groups had a significantly higher proportion of members from white ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4.2-7: Results of a Chi-Square test related to respondents' reported ethnic origin and type of group using the Bonferroni correction (n = 362)

Chi-Square test result for ethnic background and group type: X^2(3, n = 362) = 40.96, p < .001			
Type of group	**Factor**	**White or white British**	**BAME**
Auditioning groups	Count	132	5
	Expected Count	123	14
	Adjusted Residual	3.2	-3.2
	p-value	.001 ***	.001 ***
Hybrid groups	Count	116	9
	Expected Count	112.2	12.8
	Adjusted Residual	1.4	-1.4
	p-value	.162	.162

Table 4.2-8: Results of a Chi-Square test related to respondents' reported ethnic origin and type of group using the Bonferroni correction (contd.)

Type of group	Factor	White or white British	BAME
Community groups	Count	55	9
	Expected Count	57.5	6.5
	Adjusted Residual	-1.1	1.1
	p-value	.271	.271
Specialist groups	Count	22	14
	Expected Count	32.3	3.7
	Adjusted Residual	-6	6
	p-value	.001 ***	.001 ***

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of ≤.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of ≤.001.

Similarly, a Chi-Square test using the Bonferroni correction revealed that significantly more individuals from BAME backgrounds belonged to groups that sang music from a range of styles (X^2(2, *n* = 360) = 23.32, *p* <.001). Respondents from BAME backgrounds were also more likely to belong to smaller groups than those from white ethnic backgrounds (X^2(3, *n* = 362) = 16.83, *p* <.001), and to have joined their groups more recently (X^2(2, *n* = 349) = 19.36, *p* <.001). However, there were no significant associations between ethnic origin and respondents' singing experience (X^2(1, *n* = 350) = 0.06, *p* = .939) or whether they were singing in other groups or not (X^2(1, *n* = 350) = 0.12, *p* = .735).

Perceptions of ethnic and cultural diversity

Ethnicity was identified by nearly a third of group members who responded to the open question about their perceptions of diversity (30% of *n* = 301) as one of the main factors of perceived similarity or difference with other group members. As Table 4.2-9 shows, nearly three-quarters of these respondents described their fellow group members as predominately white, over a quarter of these respondents felt that their group was composed of people from a range of ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4.2-9: Overview of themes related to ethnic diversity in the groups

Perceptions of ethnic diversity	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Mainly white	65	72.2
Ethnically diverse	25	27.8
Total	**90**	**100.0**

Moreover, as Table 4.2-10 shows, respondents in specialist groups were far more likely to perceive the ethnic background of fellow members as varied or different to their own.

Table 4.2-10: Respondents' perceptions of ethnic diversity by group type (n = 90)

Perceptions of group diversity	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
Varied ethnic backgrounds	17.1	25.0	21.7	61.1	27.8
Majority white ethnic backgrounds	82.9	75.0	78.3	38.9	72.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Similarly, as Table 4.2-11 shows, nearly three-quarters of the group representatives (*n* = 24) reported that the members of their groups were predominantly from white ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4.2-11: Group representatives' perceptions of ethnic diversity in their groups

Perceived ethnic diversity	No. of auditioning groups	No. of hybrid groups	No. of community groups	No. of specialist groups	No. of all groups
Predominantly white	7	4	7	6	24
Some ethnic diversity	1	1	1	0	3
Much ethnic diversity	0	0	2	2	4
Total	**8**	**5**	**10**	**8**	**31**

One representative said, for example:

> *We have no members at all who I regard as being from an ethnic minority.*
> (Group representative, auditioning group)

Another reflected how the lack of ethnic diversity in their group might be a result of the music that they sang:

> *It's inevitable, because of the remit of the choir which is to sing classical music…*
> *The framework is set for us.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

On the other hand, three of the interviewees felt that there was some ethnic diversity in their groups, and four of the representatives felt that there was a wide range of ethnicities in the membership of their group. One described the diversity they perceived in their group:

> *It's really diverse. We have a good mixture of people, good mix of ethnic*
> *backgrounds, good mix of religious backgrounds as well.* (Group representative,
> specialist group)

In addition, nearly half of the interviewees (14) described the cultural diversity in the membership of their groups, with members from a range of nationalities and cultural backgrounds:

> *A lot of people there don't have English as their first language.* (Group
> representative, community group)

> *It's certainly not a British choir. It's very varied.* (Group representative,
> auditioning group)

Similarly, one member of a community group described their peers as coming from "a very diverse range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds", while a member of an auditioning group felt that their group was "quite mixed in terms of educational background, ethnicity, and country of citizenship etc." One respondent from a hybrid group also felt that the ethnic

diversity of their group was increasing, explaining that the group "seems to have become more diverse over the last three years or so."

4.2.3   Age

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-12 shows, over four-fifths of group members who completed the participant questionnaire (82% of $n = 367$) reported that they were aged 45 years and older, and nearly a fifth (18%) were aged between 18 and 44.

Table 4.2-12: Reported age of respondents (n = 367)

Age	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
18 - 24	.7	.8	0	5.4	1.1
25 - 44	20.1	5.5	28.1	27.0	17.2
45 - 64	36.7	44.1	45.4	32.4	40.3
65 - 74	31.7	40.9	17.2	27.0	31.9
75 - 84	10.8	8.7	9.4	8.1	9.5
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.1**	**99.9**	**100.0**

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

A Chi-Square test revealed a statistically significant difference in the age of respondents across different types of group (X^2(3, $n = 367$) = 21.96, $p > .001$) and, as Table 4.2-13 shows, post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that more members of hybrid groups were in older age groups compared to other types of group.

Table 4.2-13: Results of a Chi-Square test related to respondents' reported age and type of group using the Bonferroni correction (n = 362)

Chi-Square test result for respondents' ages and group type: $X^2(3, n = 367) = 21.96$, $p > .001$			
Type of group	**Factor**	**Aged 18 - 44**	**Aged 45 - 84**
Auditioning groups	Count	29	110
	Expected Count	25.4	113.6
	Adjusted Residual	1	-1
	p-value	.317	.317
Hybrid groups	Count	8	119
	Expected Count	23.2	103.8
	Adjusted Residual	-4.3	4.3
	p-value	.001***	.001***
Community groups	Count	18	46
	Expected Count	11.7	52.3
	Adjusted Residual	2.2	-2.2
	p-value	.028*	.028*
Specialist groups	Count	12	25
	Expected Count	6.8	30.2
	Adjusted Residual	2.4	-2.4
	p-value	.016*	.016*

Note: * indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.05. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

Furthermore, a Chi-Square test also revealed a significant association between respondents' age and the length of time that they had belonged to their group ($X^2(3, n = 353) = 13.36$, $p <.001$), and post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that respondents aged between 18 and 44 were more likely than older respondents to have joined their group more than five years previously (see Table 4.2-14).

Table 4.2-14: Results of a Chi-Square test related to respondents' reported age and length of membership using the Bonferroni correction (n = 353)

Chi-Square test result for respondents' ages and length of group membership: $X^2(3, n = 353) = 13.36, p < .001$			
Age	**Factor**	**Aged 18 - 44**	**Aged 45 - 84**
Less than 6 months	Count	10	23
	Expected Count	6	27
	Adjusted Residual	1.9	-1.9
	p-value	.057	.057
7 - 12 months	Count	8	21
	Expected Count	5.3	23.7
	Adjusted Residual	1.4	-1.4
	p-value	.162	.162
1 - 5 years	Count	30	104
	Expected Count	24.3	109.7
	Adjusted Residual	1.6	-1.6
	p-value	.110	.110
More than 5 years	Count	16	141
	Expected Count	28.5	128.5
	Adjusted Residual	-3.5	3.5
	p-value	.001 ***	.001 ***

Note: *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq .001$.

A Chi-Square test also revealed a significant association between respondents' age and the size of the group they belonged to ($X^2(6, n = 367) = 14.63, p < .001$), and a post hoc test using the Bonferroni correction revealed that older respondents (i.e. those aged between 55 and 74) were less likely than younger respondents to belong to groups with less than 20 members.

Similarly, a Chi-Square test revealed a significant association between respondents' age and the type of music sung by their group ($X^2(4, n = 365) = 36.28, p < .001$), with a post hoc test using the Bonferroni correction revealing that older respondents (i.e. those aged between 55 and 74) were more likely than younger respondents to belong to groups singing music from the western classical canon, while those aged between 18 and 54 were more likely to be singing in groups singing a varied or non-classical repertoire. However, Chi-

Square tests did not reveal any significant relationships between respondents' age and how much group singing they had done previously (X^2(4, n = 355) = 0.79, p = .676), or whether they were singing with other groups (X^2(2, n = 355) = 1.62, p = .930).

Perceptions of diversity in age

Age emerged as a key factor identified by nearly a third of the group members who responded to the open question about perceptions of diversity (31% of n = 301) as a source of similarity or difference with other group members.

Table 4.2-15: Overview of themes related to diversity in group members' ages

Perceptions of diversity in age	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Similar age	44	47.3
Different ages	49	52.7
Total	**93**	**100.0**

As Table 4.2-16 shows, around half of these respondents described their fellow group members as of a similar age to themselves, generally describing other members as 'middle-aged' or of post-retirement age. However, over half felt that age was a diversifying factor in their groups. Again, as Table 4.2-16 shows, respondents in specialist groups were particularly likely to report that this was the case.

Table 4.2-16: Respondents' perceptions of age diversity by group type (n = 93)

Perceptions of diversity in age	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
Others are of different ages	59.0	46.7	30.8	84.6	52.7
Others are of a similar age	41.0	53.3	69.2	15.4	47.3
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

As Table 4.2-17 shows, nearly half (*n* = 15) of the group representatives interviewed also described their groups as including singers from a wide range of ages, while six representatives said that their groups predominantly comprised younger singers. For example, one representative from a community group described how "the majority is mid-twenties."

Table 4.2-17: Group representatives' perceptions of group members' ages (n = 31)

Age	No. of auditioning groups	No. of hybrid groups	No. of community groups	No. of specialist groups	No. of all groups
Mix of ages	4	3	5	3	15
Largely aged over 50	3	2	3	2	10
Majority of younger singers	1	0	2	3	6
Total	**8**	**5**	**10**	**8**	**31**

However, nearly a third (*n* = 10) of group representatives felt that their groups mainly comprised singers aged over fifty. One explained:

> *It ranges all the way up to people in their eighties. The majority is somewhere around fifties.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Nonetheless, four respondents commented on the increasing diversity they perceived in the ages of their fellow group members. For example, one respondent in an auditioning group commented that the quality of their group's singing had begun to attract younger singers.

4.2.4   Health issues and disability

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-18 shows, around a third of respondents (33% of *n* = 336) reported physical health issues or a disability.

Table 4.2-18: Number of health issues reported by respondents (n = 336)

Reported health and disability	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
No health issues or disabilities	74.2	74.0	61.9	23.3	67.2
Health issue / disability	25.8	26.0	38.1	76.7	32.8
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

As Table 4.2-19 shows, further analysis of the types of health issue and disability reported by respondents revealed that, while physical frailty (such as being unable to stand for long periods of time), others were affected by more serious long-term health conditions and illnesses. Moreover, although respondents were not asked about mental health conditions or illnesses, some chose to report conditions such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, and agoraphobia, in the 'other' category.

Table 4.2-19: Type of health issues reported by respondents (n = 383)

Type	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Physical frailty	42	11.0
Long-term health condition / illness	38	9.9
Other	28	7.3
Hearing loss	23	6.0
Mobility issues	21	5.5
Registered disabled	17	4.4
Visual impairment	13	3.4

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as respondents could indicate more than one health issue.

Chi-Square tests revealed a statistically significant difference in the proportion of respondents with health issues/disabilities ($X^2(3, n = 336) = 32.16$, $p < .001$) across the different types of group. Post hoc tests revealed that this was due to specialist groups having a significantly higher percentage of members with health issues or a disability ($X^2(3,$

$n = 336) = 32.16$, $p < .001$) than other types of group. This was likely to reflect the fact that

two of the five specialist groups whose members completed the participant questionnaire

were specifically for people with particular health conditions.

Similarly, reflecting the characteristics of specialist groups (see Section 4.1.4),

respondents with health issues/disabilities were more likely to belong to smaller groups

($X^2(3$, $n = 336) = 14.33$, $p < .001$), and to those singing music from varied or non-classical

traditions ($X^2(2$, $n = 334) = 17.63$, $p < .001$). However, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any

significant relationships between whether individuals had health issues/disabilities and the

length of time they had belonged to their group ($X^2(3$, $n = 323) = 5.42$, $p = .193$), how much

singing they had done before joining their group ($X^2(2$, $n = 325) = 1.17$, $p = .623$) or whether

they were currently singing in other groups ($X^2(1$, $n = 325) = 1.80$, $p = .166$).

Perceptions of diversity in terms of health issues and disability

Health issues and disabilities were not generally perceived by respondents as aspects of

diversity that either united or distinguished them from others. Nonetheless, one person

suggested that there were many individuals with "hidden disabilities or with difficult lives" in

the group they belonged to (female respondent, community group) and another commented

on their own health condition, explaining that they had been living with HIV/AIDS since 1983

(male respondent, specialist group). Furthermore, as Table 4.2-20 shows, nearly three-

quarters of the group representatives ($n = 23$) said that their groups included singers with

health issues or a disability.

Table 4.2-20: Group representatives' perceptions of members' health and disability

Perceived extent of health and disability	No. of auditioning groups	No. of hybrid groups	No. of community groups	No. of specialist groups	No. of all groups
No members with health issues or disability	1	0	4	3	8
Members with health issues or disability	7	5	6	5	23
Total	**8**	**5**	**10**	**8**	**31**

One representative described how their group included individuals with a range of disabilities and long-term health conditions:

> *We have a lot of people with disabilities. We have one wheelchair user with mental health disabilities as well. We have people with asthma, people with long-term health conditions, a wide variety.* (Group representative, community group)

Another representative from an auditioning group said that their group included four individuals who were wheel-chair users.

4.2.5   Educational background

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-21 shows, over four-fifths of group members who responded to the participant questionnaire (84% of $n = 326$) reported that they had a university degree or postgraduate qualification.

Table 4.2-21: Reported educational background of respondents (n = 360)

Reported educational background	% of auditioning groups	% of hybrid groups	% of community groups	% of specialist groups	% of all groups
No qualifications	0	0	3.2	8.6	1.5
GCSE's	2.8	1.2	3.2	11.4	3.4
A' levels	10.5	8.2	3.2	22.9	9.8
University degree	50.3	55.3	58.7	25.7	50.6
Postgraduate qualification	35.0	35.3	30.2	28.6	33.4
Other	1.4	0	1.6	2.9	1.2
Total	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.1**	**100.1**	**99.9**

Note: Percentages do not always sum to 100 due to rounding.

As Table 4.2-22 shows, Chi-Square tests revealed a statistically significant difference in respondents' educational background across the different types of group, with post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction indicating that the specialist groups had a significantly higher percentage of members without a university or postgraduate qualification than other types of group. Chi-Square tests also revealed a significant difference in respondents' educational background and the repertoire of the group to which they belonged, with further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealing that significantly more individuals without a university or postgraduate qualification belonged to groups that sang music from varied or non-classical traditions. Otherwise, as Table 4.2-22 also shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any significant associations between group members' educational background and how long they had been a member of their group, the size of the group to which they belonged or their singing experience.

Table 4.2-22: Relationships between educational background and other characteristics

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Group type (aud. + hybrid; com. + spec.)	$X^2(3, n = 322) = 26.46, p = .001$***
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	($X^2(1, n = 322) = 5.79, p = .016$**
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	$X^2(3, n = 322) = 0.97, p = .325$
Length of membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(3, n = 310) = 7.16, p = .067$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(1, n = 311) = 0.36, p = .549$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(1, n = 311) = 0.24, p = .626$

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

Perceptions of diversity in terms of educational background

A quarter of the group members who responded to the open question about perceptions of diversity (25% of *n* = 301) identified educational background as a source of similarly and dissimilarity between group members.

Table 4.2-23: Overview of themes related to diversity in group members' educational backgrounds

Perceptions of diversity in educational background	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Similar educational background	67	88.2
Different educational background	9	11.8
Total	**76**	**100.0**

The vast majority of these respondents (88% of *n* = 76) felt that they shared a similar educational background with other group members. However, a few respondents (*n* = 9) described how their groups included individuals from a range of educational backgrounds. For example, one respondent explained:

> *One of the pleasures of the group is that it is a mixed group in terms of ethnicity, education, social status, etc.* (Male respondent, specialist group)

Group representatives were not asked about their perceptions of the educational background of their groups' members as it seemed unlikely that they would be able to provide any well-informed information on this aspect of diversity.

4.2.6   Diversity in singing experience

Respondents' self-reported data

As Table 4.2-24 shows, most respondents (83% of *n* = 368) reported that they had belonged to their groups for more than one year, and nearly half (45%, n = 383) had been members of their groups for more than five years.

Table 4.2-24: Length of time respondents had been members of their groups

Length of membership	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Less than 6 months	35	9.5
7 – 12 months	29	7.9
1 – 5 years	138	37.5
More than 5 years	166	45.1
Total	**368**	**100.0**

In addition, around two-thirds of respondents (66% of n = 369) had belonged to other singing groups before joining their current group (see Table 4.2-25).

Table 4.2-25: Whether respondents had previous experience of group singing

Experience of group singing	No. of respondents	% of respondents
No previous experience	26	7.0
Only at school	100	27.1
Previous experience of adult group singing	243	65.9
Total	**369**	**100.0**

Finally, nearly a third (31% of n = 369) belonged to other singing groups as well as their current group (see Table 4.2-30).

Table 4.2-26: Whether respondents were currently singing with other groups

Involvement with other singing groups	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Currently singing with one or more other groups	114	30.9
Not singing with other groups	255	69.1
Total	**369**	**100.0**

As Table 4.2-27 shows, Chi-Square tests revealed a statistically significant association between respondents' previous singing experience and whether they were singing in other groups, with post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction indicating those who had previously sung in other groups as an adult were more likely to be currently singing in other groups. Otherwise, as Table 4.2-27 also shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any significant associations between how long respondents had been a member of their group and their singing experience or whether they were currently singing in other groups.

Table 4.2-27: Relationships between respondents' singing experience

Factor	Chi-Square Test results
Singing in other groups & previous group singing experience	$X^2(2, n = 368) = 14.32\ p = .001$***
Singing in other groups & length of membership	$X^2(3, n = 366) = 0.64, p = .887$
Length of membership & previous group singing experience	$X^2(6, n = 366) = 11.49, p = .074$

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

4.2.7 Perceptions of other aspects of diversity in the groups

Overall, the majority of respondents (70% of $n = 368$) felt that people in their groups generally had similar backgrounds to their own. However, as Table 4.2-28 shows, in their responses to the open question related to perceptions of diversity in their group, respondents highlighted other aspects of diversity that had not been measured in the questionnaire.

Table 4.2-28: Other diversity characteristics identified by respondents as a source of similarity or dissimilarity with others (n = 301)

Diversity characteristic	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Socio-economic background	114	37.8
Nationality	20	6.6
Religion	12	3.9
Gender identity	10	3.3
Sexual orientation	4	1.3
Personal values	3	.9
Life experiences	2	.6
Disability	2	.6

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as some respondents identified more than one diversity characteristic.

In particular, over a third of the group members who responded to the question (38% of

n = 301) identified socio-economic background as something that they either had in common

with, or that differentiated them from others. Over three-quarters of these individuals (76%

of *n* = 114) described how members of their group were, like them, generally from privileged

socio-economic backgrounds. For example, one member of a hybrid group described how,

"we are mostly white middle class and have educated our children privately", while another

respondent in an auditioning group said that most group members were "middle-class and

comfortably-off."

On the other hand, some groups were perceived as more varied in the socio-economic

background of their members. One representative from a community group, for example,

described how their group contained a "real mix":

I would say about a third of people are paying the concession rate. So there's

kind of working class and middle class. (Group representative, community group)

For a small number of respondents (7% of *n* = 301), nationality was a factor that created

diversity in the group. For example, one person described how members of their group were

"from different countries, speaking different languages" (female respondent, auditioning

group). Religious beliefs also emerged as a distinguishing factor for a minority of

respondents (4% of n = 301). One person, for example, said:

> *I am Jewish … I would guess that we are twenty, which is around ten percent of*
>
> *the choir, whereas we are less the half a percent in the UK.* (Male respondent,
>
> auditioning group)

For four respondents (1% of n = 301), sexual orientation emerged as a distinguishing factor

in their perceptions of diversity in their group; two of these respondents described how their

sexual orientation differentiated them from others. For example, one said:

> *As far as I know, there are no other lesbians in the group.* (Female respondent,
>
> auditioning group)

Moreover, as Table 4.2-29 shows, Chi-Square tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed

that respondents aged between 18 and 24, those from BAME backgrounds as well as those

who had not completed further education were less likely to feel that they shared a similar

background to others in the group.

Table 4.2-29: Results of Chi-Square tests using the Bonferroni correction showing whether respondents felt other group members shared their diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Others do not share my background
Age ($\leq$ 44: > 44)	$X^2(6, n = 358) = 21.17, p = .002$ **
Ethnic origin (white; BAME)	$X^2(1, n = 354) = 17.03, p = .001$ ***
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + postgrad.)	$X^2(1, n = 316) = 5.94, p = .015$ *

Note: * indicates that the result is statistically significant to a p-value of $\leq$.05. ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a p-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a p-value of $\leq$.001.

This reflected the diversity characteristics reported by group members, where the analysis

has shown that individuals with these characteristics were in a minority in their groups (see

Table 4.2-30).

Table 4.2-30: Respondents' diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic		% of respondents
Age (*n* = 367)	18 - 34	9.3
	35 - 54	23.4
	55 - 74	57.8
	75 - 84	9.5
Ethnicity (*n* = 362)	White or white British	89.8
	BAME	10.2
Educational background (*n* = 326)	Completed education at 18 or earlier	16.0
	Completed further education	84.0

Members of specialist groups were statistically more likely to perceive other group members as having different backgrounds to their own (X^2(3, *n* = 368) = 35.83, *p* <.001) and this was reflected in some respondents' descriptions of their group. For example, one respondent described how, "we are all from different walks of life, ages, moral values and race" (female respondent, specialist group). Others described how they felt that members of their group had individual backgrounds which made them diverse:

> *We are a mixture of individuals. Everyone unique which is great.* (Male respondent, specialist group)

Only five respondents in all (2% of *n* = 301) highlighted the lack of apparent diversity in their groups. For example, one described how they felt "embarrassed" by the lack of diversity in their group, while another respondent in an auditioning group said that they would like their group to have "a more varied intake" of singers. This lack of diversity could, it seemed, be a barrier to increasing diversity in the groups: two group representatives described how having a group composed mainly of singers from similar cultural backgrounds or of similar ages could be off-putting to others:

Two-thirds of them are Danish … as soon as we have our tea break, the Danish

girls...you can't stop them talking. One year, we had two British Black women

with lovely voices, but I think they felt in the minority, which of course they were.

(Group representative, community group)

When somebody older has come along, I think they've felt like they don't

necessarily fit in with everyone else ... It sort of feels like it's self-selecting now.

(Group representative, community group)

4.2.8   Associations between diversity characteristics

Finally, a cross-case analysis of respondents' diversity characteristics revealed significant associations between different aspects of diversity. Firstly, gender identity was significantly associated with educational background (X^2(1, $n = 317$) = 14.51, $p < .001$), and a post hoc test using the Bonferroni correction revealed that male respondents were less likely to have pursued further education than female respondents. In addition, respondents from BAME backgrounds were significantly more likely to report health issues or disabilities (X^2(1, $n = 320$) = 10.55, $p < .001$).

However, as the data presented in the previous section has revealed, these relationships are also related to other factors, such as group type, size, repertoire as well as how long respondents had belonged to their groups and their previous singing experience (as summarised in Figure 4.2-1).
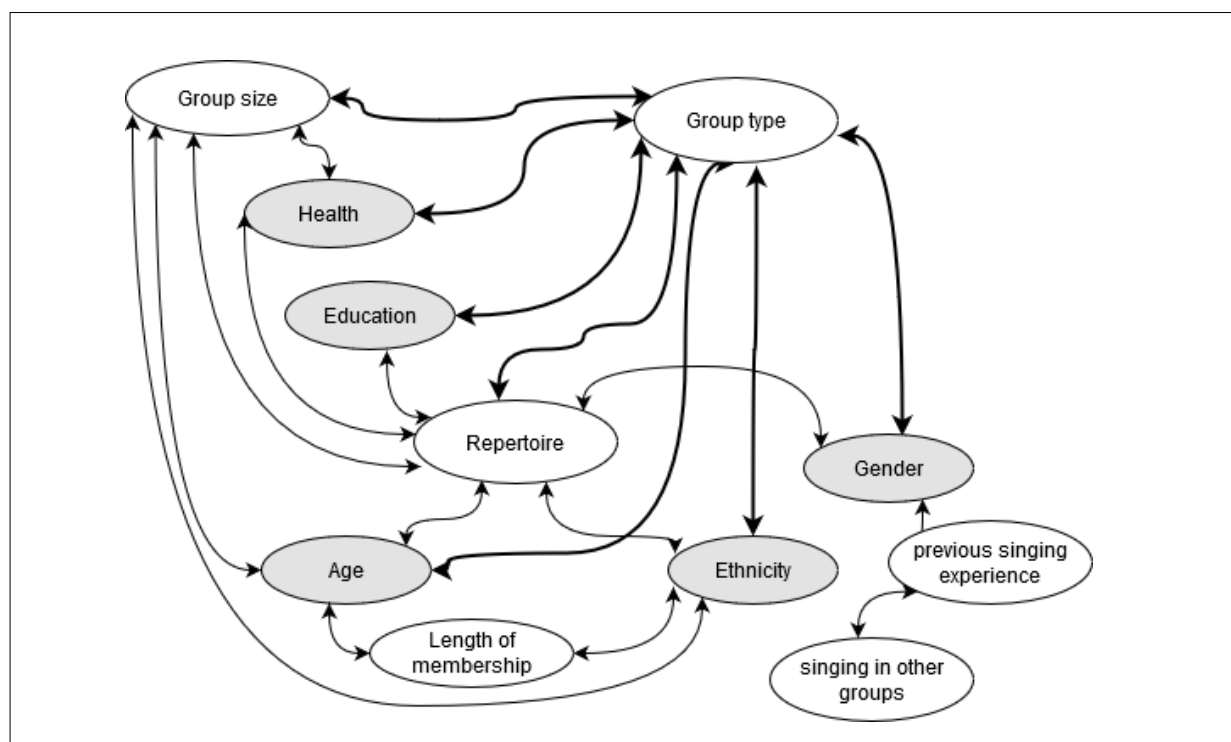
Figure 4.2-1: Significant associations between diversity characteristics and other factors

4.3   Chapter summary

The findings from the analysis of the participant questionnaire data and interviews with group representatives have offered a picture of diversity among and within the participating singing groups that appears to be both more complex and fluid than has generally been reported. They have shown how the participating groups varied in size, composition and repertoire, and how the membership of these groups, while superficially appearing to show little overall diversity, varied across groups. Some groups appeared to have a highly diverse membership while others had little diversity in their membership. Across all the groups, members also highlighted other aspects of diversity, such as the socio-economic, cultural, national and religious background of members as well as their sexual orientation.

The next chapter considers how inclusive group representatives and members perceived their groups to be, and the extent to which this was influenced by diversity characteristics and other factors.

Chapter 5: Perceptions of inclusion within the participating singing groups

This chapter presents the research findings in relation to perceptions of inclusion within the participating adult amateur singing groups in the London borough of Camden. Based on an analysis of interviews with 31 group representatives and responses to a questionnaire completed by 383 group members, it starts by considering the value that group members and representatives place on inclusion. The next section of the chapter then focuses on how included group members felt in their groups, while the following sections draw on the framework of inclusion conceived by Shore, Randel, Chung and Dean (2011) to look at the ways in which groups' practices, climate and leadership support the inclusion of their members. An exploration of the ways in which groups' practices, climate and leadership can create perceptions of exclusion can be found in Chapter 6, while a discussion of the implications of both these sets of findings can be found in Chapter 7.

5.1   The importance of inclusion

It could be argued that inclusion is of no particular relevance to group singing, which is simply an activity that brings individuals together to sing. Group members and group representatives were, therefore, asked whether they felt that creating, and experiencing, a sense of inclusion was important for adult amateur singing groups and their members.

Firstly, group members who responded to the participant questionnaire ($n = 383$) were asked to rate how important it was to them to feel included in their group on a five-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'very much'. A frequency test was then used to investigate the distribution of respondents' scores; as Table 5.1-1 shows, this revealed that more than four-fifths of respondents (88% of $n = 373$) rated feeling included in the group as 'very important' or 'quite important'.

Table 5.1-1: Responses to the importance of inclusion question (n = 373)

How important inclusion was to respondents	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Very important	127	34.0
Quite important	202	54.2
Not very important	40	10.7
Not at all important	4	1.1
Total	**373**	**100.0**

As Table 5.1-2 shows, analysis of the interviews with group representatives (*n* = 31) and of respondents' answers to an open question asking them to explain why feeling included was important to them (*n* = 156) suggested that feeling included within the group was important for a number of different reasons.

Table 5.1-2: Overview of themes related to the importance of feeling included

Perceptions of the importance of inclusion	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions (*n* = 156)		
Enhances quality of group performance	70	44.9
improves harmony, ensemble	11	7.1
stronger teamwork	27	17.3
Increases enjoyment from singing	23	14.7
creates trust, feel less inhibited	10	6.4
Contributes to personal wellbeing	47	30.1
helps combat isolation	34	21.8
improves self-confidence / self-esteem	12	7.7
Strengthens my commitment to the group	14	9.0
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Gives group a social purpose	3	9.9
Helps overcome barriers to participation	6	19.4

5.1.1 Enhancing individual and group performance

Nearly half of respondents who explained why feeling included was important to them (45% of $n = 156$) linked perceived inclusion to the quality of the group's musical performance, suggesting that a collective sense of inclusion enhanced the group's singing. One person explained this further:

> It's important that we sound cohesive, and perform cohesively, and that comes from a sense of unity as well as performance skills. (Female respondent, community group)

Nearly a fifth of these respondents (17% of $n = 156$) described how feeling included was important in establishing the teamwork that they felt was a fundamental part of group singing. For example, one person commented:

> Singing is a quintessentially social activity involving keeping together in time and reciprocal attention to one another. (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Feeling part of the group also enhanced the enjoyment that some of these respondents (15% of $n = 156$) experienced from singing together. For example, one person explained:

> I like to focus my effort on the singing, not on coping with uncongenial social interactions or coldness. Since the atmosphere in the choir is good, the whole experience becomes positive. (Male respondent, hybrid group)

Another described how feeling included within the group was vital to her ability to enjoy singing with the group:

> Otherwise I would not feel relaxed enough to sing with the group, and it would be less fulfilling or enjoyable. (Female respondent, community group)

A small number of respondents (6% of $n = 156$) explained that feeling included was important in terms of creating trust between group members, which enabled them to feel less inhibited and more confident when singing together. One person explained:

Only by feeling part of the group can one sing full-heartedly with them. (Female

respondent, community group)

This sense that feeling part of a group enabled individuals to sing more freely was reflected

by another respondent:

Being part of the group helps me sing better as I feel less restricted. (Female

respondent, hybrid group)

The interviews with group representatives also reflected this sense that perceived inclusion

contributed to the musical cohesion of the group. For example, one interviewee felt that an

inclusive group meant that members would be more musically attentive to one another:

To run a choir, people need to like each other to be listening to each other.

(Group representative, community group)

5.1.2   Strengthening commitment to the group

A small number of the respondents who explained why inclusion was important (9% of

$n = 156$) also indicated that a sense of inclusion was important in strengthening their

commitment to the group. One person expressed this succinctly:

If I don't feel part of the group, then there is no reason to be in the group.

(Female respondent, hybrid group)

Furthermore, it seemed feeling included engendered a sense of personal commitment to

other members of the group. For example, one person described how they experienced a

greater sense of personal responsibility to the group:

If you feel part of the group, you care more. If you care more, you do your own

best and try to help others do their best. (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Thus, one person reflected that creating a sense of inclusion among group members was

vital to the sustainability of the group as a whole:

A choir is a voluntary group, and it won't survive if it is not welcoming and if it can't find that core of dedicated and generous people who put in all the hard work. (Female respondent, hybrid group)

This was echoed by one of the group representatives interviewed who recognised the positive impact of being inclusive on participation in the group and on membership retention:

If people feel that they belong, it really affects their attendance and their commitment and all those sorts of things. (Group representative, hybrid group)

5.1.3 Improving personal wellbeing

Nearly a third of the respondents who described why inclusion was important to them (30% of *n* = 156) suggested that a sense of inclusion contributed to their personal wellbeing. For many of these respondents (22% of *n* = 156), it seemed that feeling included was a way of combatting isolation or a sense of social exclusion, and especially, it seemed, for those with solitary work or home lives. One person explained:

I live alone, so the friendships, fun and mutual caring (let alone the singing) contribute a great deal to the quality and enjoyment of my life. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Indeed, one person described how feeling a sense of belonging to a group was "essential to our wellbeing as social beings" (female respondent, auditioning group), suggesting that the need to feel part of a group related to a fundamental need to connect to others. Others (8% of *n* = 156) described how feeling part of the group improved their self-confidence and self-esteem:

A sense of being part of the group improves one's confidence. Not feeling included can be quite demotivating. (Female respondent, community group)

Sense of self-esteem enhanced, a real sense of group achievement after a

concert. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

One respondent explained how, "battling depression / isolation you need to feel part of something" (male respondent, specialist group) while, for another, feeling part of a singing group and taking part in regular group activities helped to reduce stress levels:

I always have a sense of wellbeing after attending the weekly rehearsals, no

matter how stressful the day has been. (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Another described how feeling part of the group enhanced the quality of their life, by giving them a "sense of being alive" (male respondent, auditioning group).

5.1.4 Increasing the group's social purpose

Three of the group representatives interviewed felt that being inclusive gave the group a wider social purpose through in inspiring an active focus on inclusion and diversity. One explained:

Being able to represent inclusion, diversity and equality really relies on us

understanding what those experiences are. So everyone brings to the choir a

very unique perspective of what the challenges are that we need to overcome to

achieve equality. (Group representative, community group)

Six group representatives, mainly from the community and specialist groups, appeared to feel that an active focus on inclusion was, therefore, important in enabling them to overcome barriers to participation. For one person, this involved an awareness of the ubiquitous nature of these barriers:

We make assumptions working in music that music will be very accessible and

open and inclusive, but it's often very surprising how even in the most open-

minded end of the music industry, in fact ultimately there's a lot of entrenched

barriers to participation. (Group representative, community group)

5.1.5   Factors associated with group members' desire to feel included

In order to conduct further analysis to explore factors that influenced respondents' desire to feel included, respondents' answers to the question, "How important is it to you to feel included within the group?" were converted to a number ('not at all important' to zero, 'not very important' to one, 'quite important' to two, and 'very important' to three) and aggregated into a single score for each respondent. This enabled tests to be carried out to investigate the relationship between respondents' desire to feel included and other group-related and individual factors.

As Table 5.1-3 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant associations between respondents' desire to feel included in their group and their gender identity, ethnic origin, age, educational background, or whether they had health issues or a disability.

Table 5.1-3: Relationships between valuing inclusion and diversity characteristics

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	$X^2(3, n = 360) = 3.54, p = .316$
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	$X^2(3, n = 352) = 0.75, p = .861$
Age ($\leq 44; > 44$)	$X^2(3, n = 357) = 6.64, p = .084$
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + postgrad.)	$X^2(3, n = 319) = 3.15, p = .370$
Health issues / disability (none; ≥ 1)	$X^2(3, n = 329) = 2.68, p = .444$

Similarly, as Table 5.1-4 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant correlations between how much respondents valued feeling included and the length of time that they had been part of their group, how much group singing they had previously done, or whether they sang in other groups.

Table 5.1-4: Relationships between valuing inclusion and singing experience

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Length of membership (<1 yr.; $\geq$ 1yr.)	$X^2(3, n = 358) = 1.75, p = .626$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(6, n = 359) = 7.23, p = .300$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(3, n = 359) = 3.35, p = .341$

Nor, as Table 5.1-5 shows, were any significant associations found between how much respondents valued feeling included and the type or size of group to which they belonged. However, there did appear to be a significant association between valuing inclusion and the type of music sung by the group respondents belonged to, with further tests using the Bonferroni correction revealing that those in groups singing music from the western classical cannon were less likely to place a high value on feeling included than those in groups singing other kinds of music.

Table 5.1-5: Relationships between valuing inclusion and group characteristics

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Group type (sel. + non sel.; comm. + spec.)	$X^2(3, n = 373) = 6.68, p = .083$
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	$X^2(3, n = 373) = 6.46, p = .091$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	$X^2(3, n = 373) = 12.17, p = .007**$

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01.

5.1.6   Section summary

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that inclusion was perceived as important by both individual group members and group representatives. Analysis of the qualitative data further suggested that feeling included was important for musical, social and personal reasons; respondents felt that inclusion contributed to the quality of the group's musical performance, established teamwork and created trust between group members, as well as enhancing the enjoyment that they experienced from singing together. Equally,

respondents suggested that feeling included contributed to their personal wellbeing by helping to combat isolation and enhance their self-confidence and self-esteem. This was particularly important to the members of specialist groups. Some respondents also indicated that feeling part of the group increased their sense of commitment to the group while the positive impact of promoting inclusion on group cohesion and membership retention was noted by both group members and representatives.

5.2   How included group members felt in their groups

Using the measures associated with perceived inclusion that had emerged through the literature review (see Chapter 3, section 3.10.4), group members who responded to the participant questionnaire ($n = 383$) were asked to rate how much they felt that these statements applied to them, using a five-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'very much', as shown in Table 5.2-1.

Table 5.2-1: Measures of perceived inclusion

How do you feel about being part of this group?	I feel a sense of belonging with the group
	I feel I can be myself in the group
	People in the group care about me
	I feel supported (musically) by people around me
	I feel appreciated by people in the group

Examining the individual measures of perceived inclusion revealed that, as Table 5.2-2 shows, the vast majority of respondents felt that they could be themselves in the group (95%), and reported a sense of belonging (90%). Respondents also felt musically supported (91%) and appreciated by others in the group (88%) and felt that others cared about them (85%).

Table 5.2-2: Responses to inclusion measures (n = 378)

Measures of perceived inclusion	Very much (%)	Quite a bit (%)	Not much (%)	Not at all (%)	Don't know (%)
I feel I can be myself in the group	55.3	37.6	4.5	.8	1.9
I feel a sense of belonging within the group	47.1	41.8	8.5	1.3	1.3
I feel musically supported by people around me	43.1	45.5	8.2	1.9	1.3
I feel appreciated by people in the group	33.9	47.4	8.7	2.4	7.7
People in the group care about me	26.7	52.6	11.9	2.4	6.3

An aggregated inclusion score was then calculated for each respondent by converting their responses to each of these five measures to a number ('very much' to three, 'quite a bit' to two, 'not much' to one, 'not at all'' to zero) and summing the results. Further statistical analysis was then carried out to explore how included group members felt in their groups, while responses to an open question about perceived inclusion ("What, if anything, helps you to feel part of this group?") were also analysed to explore how respondents experienced inclusion within their groups.

A frequency test was carried out to summarise respondents' aggregated scores for perceived inclusion; this revealed that respondents generally reported a strong sense of inclusion in their groups, with a mean score of 12 out of 15 ($M = 11.68$, $SD = 2.79$, $n = 326$), as shown in Figure 5.2-1.
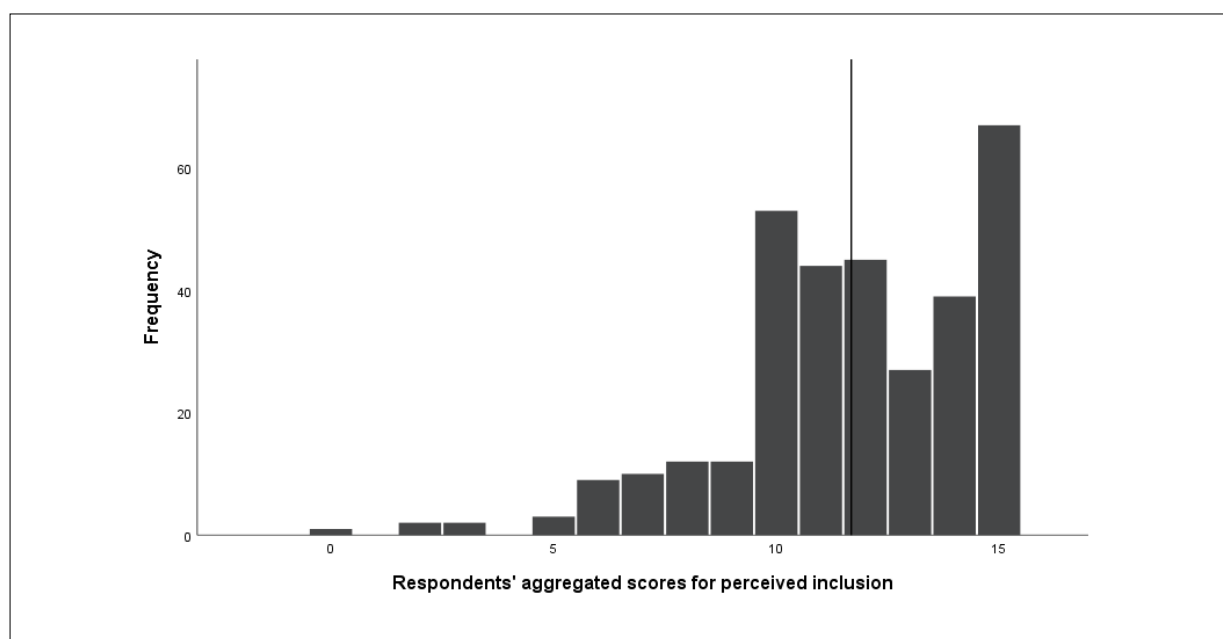
Figure 5.2-1: Histogram of aggregated perceived inclusion scores showing the mean

5.2.1 Factors associated with perceived inclusion

In order assess whether perceived inclusion was associated with respondents' diversity characteristics, respondents' aggregated scores were then recoded into three categories (scores of zero to five as "low", scores of six to ten as "medium" and scores of eleven to fifteen as "high"). As Table 5.2-3 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant associations between levels of perceived inclusion and respondents' diversity characteristics.

Table 5.2-3: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between perceived inclusion and diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	$X^2(2, n = 314) = .003, p = .999$
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	$X^2(2, n = 307) = 5.46, p = .065$
Age (≤ 44; > 44)	$X^2(2, n = 312) = 5.16, p = .076$
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + post-grad.)	$X^2(2, n = 301) = 1.21, p = .547$
Health issues / disability (none; ≥ 1)	$X^2(2, n = 282) = 2.89, p = .236$

Equally, as Table 5.2-4 shows, Chi-Square tests did not indicate any significant associations between perceived inclusion and how long respondents had belonged to their group, whether they had previously sung in other groups, or also belonged to other groups.

Table 5.2-4: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between perceived inclusion and singing experience

Singing experience	Chi-Square test results
Length of membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(2, n = 312) = 0.89, p = .957$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(2, n = 313) = 1.43, p = .490$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(2, n = 313) = 0.95, p = .621$

Similarly, as Table 5.2-5 shows, Chi-Square tests did not indicate any significant associations between perceived inclusion and the size of group to which respondents belonged.

Table 5.2-5: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between perceived inclusion and group characteristics

Group characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	$X^2(2, n = 325) = 2.16, p = .339$
Group type (aud. + hybrid.; comm. + spec.)	$X^2(2, n = 325) = 18.50, p < .001***$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	$X^2(2, n = 325) = 9.36, p = .009**$

Note: ** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.01. *** indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.001.

On the other hand, as Table 5.2-5 also shows, a Chi-Square test revealed a significant relationship between perceptions of inclusion and the type of group to which respondents belonged, and post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that respondents in auditioning and hybrid groups appeared to feel less included in their groups than respondents in other types of group. Moreover, as Table 5.2-5 also shows, a significant relationship was also found between perceptions of inclusion and repertoire, with

respondents in groups singing classical music less likely to feel included than respondents in groups singing other kinds of music.

Finally, a Chi-Square test was carried out to investigate the relationship between valuing inclusion and feeling included.[2] This revealed a statistically significant relationship between the two ($X^2(2, n = 318) = 19.71, p < .001$). Nonetheless, the analysis also revealed that there were expections to this; some individuals placed no value on feeling included but nonetheless reported moderate levels of perceived inclusion, while others placed a high value on feeling included but reported low levels of perceived inclusion.

The link between valuing inclusion and feeling included was also borne out in the qualitative data. Two respondents, for example, appeared to make a link between feeling included and developing social bonds with other members:

> *I don't know many people in London. I would like to get to know some so that I might be able to socialise with them.* (Female respondent, community group)

> *Part of the reason for me of being in a choir is for the contact and connection.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Another explained how the desire to feel included in the group had led them to join the group's management committee:

> *I have an official role in the group which I took because I saw it as a way of getting to know people.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

5.2.2   Factors contributing to perceived inclusion

Further analysis of responses to an open question about their perceptions of inclusion ("What, if anything, helps you to feel part of this group?") was then carried out to explore aspects of perceived inclusion that emerged in the qualitative data (see Table 5.2-6).

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[2] In order to ensure a sufficient cell count > 5 (see Chapter 3, section 3.10.13), the categories for valuing inclusion were grouped into "very" and quite" on the one hand, and "not very" and "not at all" on the other.

Table 5.2-6: Overview of themes related to perceptions of inclusion

Respondents' perceptions of inclusion (*n* = 200)	No.	%
A sense of belonging	88	44.0
community	23	11.5
camaraderie, warmth	11	5.5
like family	8	4.0
Sharing values, interests and experiences	74	37.0
interests	16	8.0
love of music and singing	12	6.0
social or cultural identity	6	3.0
feeling part of team	5	2.0
Feeling accepted and safe	12	6.0
valued/appreciated for who I am	8	4.0
others accept me	4	2.0

A sense of belonging

Reflecting the findings from the analysis of the quantiative data, experiencing a sense of belonging emerged strongly in the analysis of the qualititative data as being related to respondents' experiences of inclusion. Indeed, nearly half of the group members who responded to the open question about their sense of inclusion (44% of *n* = 200) described how they experiencing a sense of belonging and community through participating in group singing. For example, one person wrote:

> *I enjoy the sense of belonging and contributing to the sound – one of many drops of rain.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Others described the "sense of camaraderie and togetherness" (female respondent, auditioning group) and "fellowship" (male respondent, hybrid group) that they experienced.

One person explained that, although membership of their group had changed over time, they felt a sense of being part of a continuous whole:

> *Because it is a group of friends who come and go over the years, and yet there is a core friendly identity which is continuous, and it's good to feel part of this.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

A small number of these respondents (4% of $n = 200$) described how their group felt like a family to them, and this appeared to be particularly important for individuals who were isolated in other areas of their lives. These respondents expressed a sense of being there for each other; one member of a singing group for people who were homeless described how they had "a sense that we are all part of a big family and support each other" (male respondent, specialist group). This was echoed by others in the group, who described the role that the group played in helping them feel less isolated. One person explained:

> *[It's] one of those places you can be yourself. If you're not feeling yourself, you can relax and have a laugh.* (Female respondent, specialist group)

Sharing values, interests and experiences

Over a third of the group members who responded to the open question related to their sense of inclusion (37% of $n = 200$) described how feeling part of the group came about through sharing values, interests and experiences and, in some cases, a sense of social identity, with others. For example, some respondents (8% of $n = 200$) described how being in the group brought them together with like-minded people with similar interests. For example, one person explained how they experienced a sense of communality with others:

> *We have shared values, singing and laughter plus a sense of unity.* (Female respondent, community group)

Other respondents (6% of $n = 200$) felt that their shared love of music and singing united the members of their group:

> *Regardless of age, gender, class, we all share a love of (classical) music.*
>
> (Female respondent, hybrid group)

For several respondents (3% of *n* = 200), being part of the group involved being with others with whom they shared a social or cultural identity:

> *Everyone is like me in terms of sexual orientation, and it helps me feel like I've found my community.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)
>
> *We have a shared native language (Welsh), so are able to converse in and sing Welsh music.* (Female respondent, community group)

Equally, five respondents described how they felt that they were part of a team "working towards a shared goal" (female respondent, auditioning group).

<u>Feeling accepted and safe</u>

A small minority of the respondents who responded to the open question related to their sense of inclusion (6% of *n* = 200) described how their sense of inclusion resulted from the group accepting and valuing them for who they were. For example, one person explained:

> *It is important to me that I am accepted for who I am as a person, irrespective of my sexuality and gender.* (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Being part of the group also helped individuals to feel valued for themselves. For example, one person explained how they felt appreciated by others in the group:

> *From the way people greet me at choir, I feel noticed in a positive and lovely way.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Another person commented on how they had a "sense of being appreciated for myself" (male respondent, community group). Being recognised for their contribution to the group was also important, as this respondent explained:

> *My attendance is always warmly greeted, and my efforts appreciated. I was*
>
> *asked to become secretary two years ago and I took that to mean I was judged to*
>
> *be capable and trustworthy.* (Female respondent, community group)

For one person, feeling part of the group meant they received "understanding without judgement" (female respondent, specialist group), while another explained how, "it is important to be in a group in which you feel comfortable to be yourself" (female respondent, community group). Equally, a respondent with a visual impairment explained how "my blindness doesn't seem to be an issue" (male respondent, specialist group). This sense that others were tolerant and non-judgemental appeared to help individuals feel safe to be themselves in the group, as this respondent described:

> *[I have] a sense of ease, an ability to laugh and joke, feeling like it's OK to make*
>
> *mistakes.* (Female respondent, community group)

Another commented that their group was "probably the only singing group that I feel totally accepts me" (female respondent, auditioning group).

5.2.3   Section summary

Respondents generally reported high levels of perceived inclusion in their groups. Many related their sense of inclusion to sharing values, interests, experiences and, in some cases, a common sense of identity with others in the group. Some also described how their sense of inclusion resulted from the group accepting and valuing them for who they were. A sense that others were tolerant and non-judgemental also appeared to help individuals feel safe to be themselves in the group.

Perceived inclusion did not appear to be related to respondents' diversity characteristics or to the size of group to which respondents belonged, or their singing experience. However, perceptions of inclusion did appear to be related to both group type and repertoire, in that respondents in groups singing music from the western classical canon

were likely to feel less included than respondents in groups singing other kinds of music.

Similarly, respondents in auditioning and hybrid groups appeared to feel less included than

those in other types of group. Finally, a strong connection could be seen between

respondents valuing inclusion and experiencing inclusion, with some respondents describing

how they had sought to increase their sense of inclusion through becoming more involved in

the group.

5.3   Inclusive group practices

Turning next to the ways in which group practices can support perceived inclusion (Shore et

al., 2011), group members were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that their group's

practices were inclusive and to describe in what ways they felt these were inclusive. This

involved asking respondents to state their agreement or disagreement to a series of

statements that had been derived from the literature review (see Chapter 3, section 3.10.4),

as shown in Table 5.3-1.

Table 5.3-1: Measures of inclusive group practices

How do you feel about the way the group is run?	The group encourages friendships between members
	The group supports my learning and development as a singer
	I have enough say in how the group is run
	I have enough information on what is happening in the group
	I feel I am able to fully participate in the group's activities
	I have enough say in the selection of the music we sing
	I am treated fairly, without discrimination or barriers based on my identity

Initial analysis of responses to the individual measures of inclusive group practices revealed

that, as Table 5.3-2 shows, the vast majority of respondents felt that their group treated them

fairly (94% of n = 380) and enabled them to participate fully in the group's activities (89% of

n = 380). The majority also felt that their group provided them with enough information (86% of *n* = 380), supported their development as singers (80% of *n* = 380), and encouraged friendships between members (70% of *n* = 381). However, respondents' views on whether they were given enough say in how their group was run and in the selection of music were more varied (64% and 44% of *n* = 380 agreed, respectively).

Table 5.3-2: Responses to group practices measures (n = 380 - 381)

Measures of group practices	Strongly agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neither agree nor disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)
I am treated fairly and without discrimination	55.8	38.2	3.9	1.3	0.8
I am able to participate fully in the group's activities	37.6	51.1	6.1	3.9	1.3
I have enough information on what is happening in the group	47.1	48.7	1.8	1.8	0.5
The group supports my development as a singer	23.9	56.1	12.4	7.1	0.5
The group encourages friendships	23.4	47.0	21.5	6.6	1.6
I have enough say in how the group is run	13.9	49.7	25.8	9.2	1.3
I have enough say in the selection of the music we sing	8.2	36.1	25.6	24.2	5.8

An aggregated score for group practices was then created for each respondent by converting their response to each measure of inclusive group practices to a number ('strongly agree' to five, 'agree' to four, 'neither agree nor disagree' to three, 'disagree' to two, and 'strongly disagree' to one) and summing the results. In addition, analysis of their responses to an open question ("What do you like most about the way this group is run?") revealed aspects of inclusive group practices that were particularly important to respondents.

This analysis was further supplemented by the interviews with group representatives which explored how they felt that their groups sought to be inclusive.

Initial analysis of responses to the question rating group members' perceptions of their group practices involved a frequency test to summarise respondents' aggregated scores for group practices. This revealed that respondents generally appeared to rate their group practices as highly inclusive, with a mean score of 27 out of 35 ($M = 27.62.00$, $SD = 3.89$, $n = 365$) as shown in Figure 5.3-1.
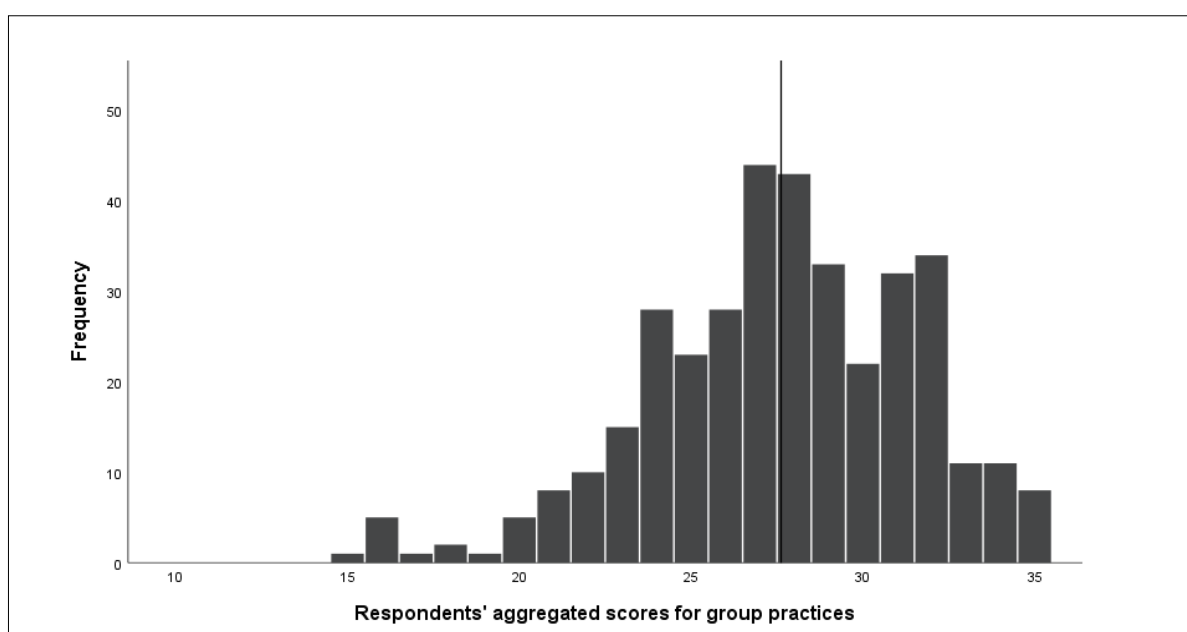
Figure 5.3-1: Histogram of aggregated group practice scores showing the mean

5.3.1   *The relationship between group practices and perceived inclusion*

As Figure 5.3-2 shows, a Spearman's correlation test revealed a positive, moderately strong correlation between respondents' aggregated scores for group practices and their aggregated perceived inclusion scores ($r = .557$, $n = 310$, $p = .001$).
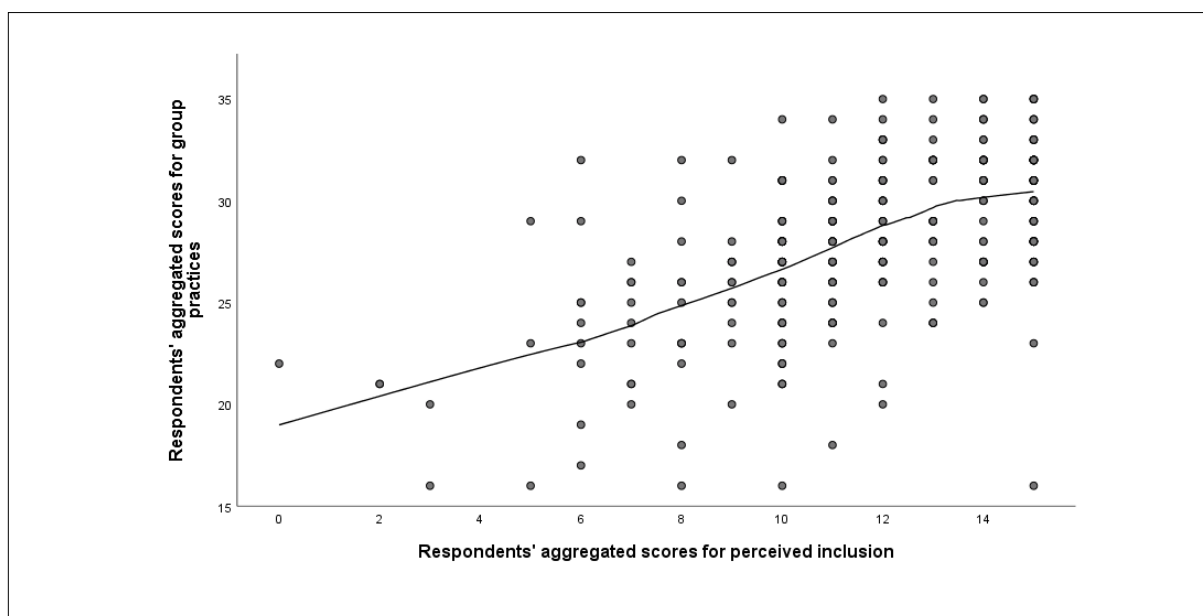
Figure 5.3-2: Scatterplot of respondents' aggregated scores for perceived inclusion and group practices with Loess Smooth Curve

Furthermore, as Table 5.3-3 shows, Spearman's correlation tests also revealed statistically significant, positive correlations between almost all aspects of perceived inclusion and group practices. The correlation between group practices and perceived inclusion appeared to be strongest in terms of respondents feeling that the group encouraged friendships between members and enabled all members to participate fully in the group's activities.

Table 5.3-3: Correlations between perceived inclusion and group practices (n = 310 - 323)

		MEASURES OF PERCEIVED INCLUSION				
		I have a sense of belonging	I feel appreciated	I can be myself	I feel supported musically	Others care about me
MEASURES OF GROUP PRACTICES	I am treated fairly	$r = .359^{**}$	$r = .265^{**}$	$r = .329^{**}$	$r = .323^{**}$	$r = .262^{**}$
	I have enough information	$r = .238^{**}$	$r = .171^{**}$	$r = .153^{**}$	$r = .175^{**}$	$r = .097$
	I feel able to participate fully	$r = .397^{**}$	$r = .308^{**}$	$r = .321^{**}$	$r = .326^{**}$	$r = .298^{**}$
	Group supports my learning	$r = .353^{**}$	$r = .277^{**}$	$r = .272^{**}$	$r = .412^{**}$	$r = .286^{**}$
	Group encourages friendships	$r = .431^{**}$	$r = .373^{**}$	$r = .355^{**}$	$r = .360^{**}$	$r = .424^{**}$
	I have enough say in how group is run	$r = .342^{**}$	$r = .307^{**}$	$r = .317^{**}$	$r = .278^{**}$	$r = .301^{**}$
	I have enough say in music selection	$r = .349^{**}$	$r = .247^{**}$	$r = .253^{**}$	$r = .255^{*}$	$r = .261^{**}$

Note: * indicates the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** indicates the correction is significant at the 0.01 level.

5.3.2   Factors associated with perceptions of group practices

In order assess whether respondents' perceptions of group practices were associated with their diversity characteristics or other factors, respondents' aggregated scores were recoded into five categories (1 – 7; 8 – 14; 15 – 21; 22 – 28; 29 – 35). As Table 5.3-4 shows, Chi-Square tests generally did not reveal any statistically significant associations between respondents' perceptions of their group's practices and their diversity characteristics, other than their age. A further Chi-Square test using the Bonferroni correction suggested that older respondents were less likely to perceive their group's practices as inclusive than younger respondents.

Table 5.3-4: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between respondents'
perceptions of group practices and their diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	$X^2(2, n = 351) = 4.06, p = .131$
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	$X^2(2, n = 347) = 3.16, p = .206$
Age (≤ 44; > 44)	$X^2(2, n = 351) = 8.66, p = .013*$
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + post-grad.)	$X^2(2, n = 338) = 0.49, p = .785$
Health issues / disability (none; ≥ 1)	$X^2(2, n = 313) = 2.30, p = .317$

Similarly, as Table 5.3-5 shows, Chi-Square tests did not indicate any significant

associations between group practices and how long respondents had been members of their

groups, or whether they had previously sung in other groups, or also belonged to other

groups.

Table 5.3-5: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between respondents'
perceptions of group practices and singing experience

Singing experience	Chi-Square test results
Length of membership (≤ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(2, n = 351) = 2.04, p = .361$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(2, n = 352) = 0.79, p = .789$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(2, n = 352) = 2.42, p = .299$

Furthermore, as Table 5.3-6 shows, Chi-Square tests did not indicate any significant

associations between perceptions of group practices and the size of group to which

respondents belonged.

Table 5.3-6: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between respondents'
perceptions of group practices and group characteristics

Group characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	$X^2(2, n = 365) = 1.28, p = .528$
Group type (aud. + hybrid; comm. + spec.)	$X^2(2, n = 365) = 16.75, p = <001^{***}$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	$X^2(4, n = 365) = 13.01, p = .001^{**}$

However, as Table 5.3-6 also shows, a Chi-Square test revealed a significant relationship between perceptions of group practices and group type, with post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealing that respondents in community groups were more likely to rate their groups' practices as highly inclusive than respondents in other types of group, while respondents in hybrid groups were less likely to report highly inclusive practices than respondents in other types of group. Further analysis within the community and hybrid groups did not reveal any statistically significant difference in responses from members in the individual groups, suggesting that this finding reflected the perceptions of individuals across all the community and hybrid groups.

As Table 5.3-6 also shows, a Chi-Square test revealed a significant relationship between perceptions of group practices and repertoire, and post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that respondents in groups singing classical music were less likely to perceive their group's practices as inclusive compared to respondents in groups singing other kinds of music.

5.3.3   Factors contributing to perceptions of inclusive group practices

Qualitative analysis of responses to the open question about group practices ("What do you like most about the way this group is run?") was then carried out to identify which group practices were most important to respondents in promoting inclusion within the group. This was supplemented by analysis of the interviews with group representatives ($n = 31$), in which interviewees were asked to describe ways in which they felt that their groups sought to be

inclusive. An overview of the themes emerging in the qualitative data, which are discussed in the following sections, is shown in Table 5.3-7.

Table 5.3-7: Overview of themes related to perceptions of group practices

Group practices	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions (*n* = 255)		
Involving group members	71	27.8
democratic, transparent, consulting members	38	14.9
inclusive approach	26	10.2
keeping me informed	36	14.1
Providing opportunities for us to socialise	21	8.2
tours, trips	9	2.4
Taking care of individual needs	5	2.0
Welcoming new members	7	2.7
Inclusive approach	26	10.2
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Involving group members	14	45.2
run by consensus	5	16.1
regular consultation with members	9	29.0
Providing opportunities for members to socialise	28	90.3
rehearsal breaks for socialising	20	64.5
tours, retreats	10	32.3
organising social events	17	54.8
social media for members	12	38.7
Taking care of individual needs	31	100.0
allowing singers to sit when needed, use music stands, providing large scores	22	71.0
supporting members with music learning	4	12.9
pro-actively considering members' individual needs	3	9.7
Ensuring accessibility	25	80.6
using accessible venues	21	67.7
pro-actively considering accessibility	7	22.6

Table 5.3-8: Overview of themes related to perceptions of group practices (contd.)

Group practices	No.	%
Reaching out to recruit new members	28	90.3
using social media	16	51.6
promoting specific opportunities	2	6.5
influence of conductor	3	9.7
Actively welcoming new group members	23	74.2
specific roles	16	51.6
warm-up activities	4	12.9
welcome events	2	6.5
Offering financial concessions	20	64.5
subsidising costs of extra-curricular activities	4	12.9
free	3	9.7
Pro-actively inclusive	4	12.9

<u>Involving group members</u>

Many respondents who commented on their group's practices (15% of *n* = 255) highlighted the importance of feeling that their groups were run in a democratic and transparent way. For example, one person described how their group's management committee was "inclusive and democratic, sharing information and consulting" (female respondent, auditioning group), while another valued the "wide variety of committee members [and the] focus on inclusivity and welcoming new members" (female respondent, hybrid group). Similarly, in the interviews with group representatives, five interviewees described how their groups were run by consensus, with members jointly taking decisions on all aspects of the group's operation. For example, one interviewee explained how all members were involved in running the group:

> *We act as collectively as possible. People feel very engaged in it once they've*
> *joined. People are very committed to it.* (Group representative, community
> group)

Respondents also valued being consulted by those running the group. One respondent, for example, described how they felt all group members were involved in decision-making:

> *Decisions are made by consensus and there are opportunities for everyone to have their say.* (Male respondent, hybrid group)

This was reflected by other respondents (10% of *n* = 255) who commented on how their groups were run in an inclusive way. For example, one person said:

> *It's completely inclusive, from the circle we sing in, to the circle we eat cake in.* (Female respondent, community group)

Nine of the group representatives also described undertaking regular consultation with their members. One representative, for example, explained that their group held a twenty-minute discussion every term to involve members in decision-making. Others also appeared to have regular consultation processes, involving discussions at annual general meetings or annual surveys:

> *We do an annual survey where we talk about how people are feeling about the repertoire, how are people feeling about our mission, how are people feeling about how rehearsals are run.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Others used consultation to ask for members' input on music selection:

> *Once or twice a year we send out a questionnaire asking for people's suggestions on what sort of songs they want to do.* (Group representative, community group)

Being kept up to date with their group's activities was also important to many respondents (14% of *n* = 255). One respondent explained:

> *The weekly emails are excellent in keeping members informed about the choir and other singing opportunities.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Providing opportunities for group members to socialise

Respondents (8% of $n = 255$) also described how having opportunities to socialise was particularly important in creating a sense of inclusion. For example, one respondent valued having informal contact with others as a way of becoming part of the group:

> *Going to the pub after rehearsals, trips abroad and social events give us more chance to get to know each other a bit better.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Moreover, respondents emphasised the importance of "conversations with other group members during breaks and post-rehearsal socialising" (female respondent, community group).

Group representatives also identified a number of ways in which their groups sought to create opportunities for their members to socialise. For example, nearly two-thirds of groups (20 of $n = 31$) scheduled breaks in their rehearsals which enabled members to mingle and talk informally. One respondent described how they valued "always have a break with fruit, a chance to socialise and be updated about what's happening" (male respondent, community group).

Nearly a third of the group representatives interviewed (10 of $n = 31$) also highlighted the value of organising tours and retreats in terms of increasing social connections between members:

> *We have these weekends away. These are a good time for people to bond because obviously they're together more.* (Group representative, hybrid group)

This was also reflected in comments made by respondents ($n = 9$) who described how tours could offer an effective way of promoting inclusion within the group:

> *Tours are particularly important as we tend to go out to dinner with whoever is around and meet all sorts of new friends that way.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Over half of the group representatives (17 of *n* = 31) also described how their groups organised specific social activities that were separate from rehearsals and performances, as they recognised the value of bringing their members together socially. One group had developed a wide range of social activities for its members:

> *We have a book club, a reading group for people who might be particularly interested in literature. We have a running club, a swimming club, a cycling club, a fitness club, a vegetarian club, and a climbing club.* (Group representative, community group)

This group representative also stressed the way in which their group sought to ensure their activities were inclusive:

> *There's not really a day in the week where you don't have the opportunity to go for a drink or food or stuff like that. And we always say, "Remember, we're inclusive. Please take extra time and try not to keep invitations to just your friendship group. You can often learn a lot from inviting new people you wouldn't necessarily mix with."* (Group representative, community group)

In some cases, group representatives *(n* = 12) also described how social media were used to support contact between members:

> *We use Facebook a lot. It's a place where the members can socialise online.* (Group representative, community group)

A few respondents (2% of *n* = 255) noted how those running their groups made particular efforts to ensure the social activities were inclusive. For example, one commented:

> *The chair and committee work hard to make sure everything runs smoothly and encourage members to participate in social events.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Supporting group members' individual needs

A small number of respondents (2% of $n = 255$) described how important it was that their group paid attention to their individual needs, while others talked more generally about their group being sensitive to the needs of people with different abilities. For example, a respondent with a visual impairment described how their group helped them to access large-print copies of the music:

> There is always a large print version provided for me whenever music is directly provided …. When this happens, I am given it in advance so that I can file it into my display folder in order to be ready for the first rehearsal. Every attempt is given to provide me with a loan copy or at the very least bibliographical details of the score in advance if I have to arrange to provide my own large print version.
> (Female respondent, hybrid group)

All the group representatives also described how their groups were careful to accommodate members with additional needs, such as by allowing singers to sit rather than stand during rehearsals, to use music stands for holding scores and, in one case, providing larger scores for a singer with visual impairments. Four group representatives also described how their groups made particular efforts to support their members in learning music and becoming more confident singers, such as through organising sectional rehearsals, providing sight-singing sessions, or encouraging singers to take on small solo parts.

Analysis of the interviews with representatives from the community and specialist groups suggested that many of these groups were particularly pro-active in considering the needs of individual members. For example, one representative described how they had adapted their practices to take account of the needs of a member with visual impairment:

> When there's a new venue, we make sure he knows where he is. We make sure that he can read the emails that we send out. We've made the website is

accessible so that he can access the music library. (Group representative,

community group)

Others described how they sought to manage members' needs inclusively:

By integrating the people, for example, in wheelchairs. They're not kind of

tagged on. We don't try and sort of hide them at the side or the back, or

whatever. They are included in what we do and how we do it. (Group

representative, specialist group)

We work with them individually, so it can be different from one performer to the

next. Some [disabilities] are age-related, some are illness related. So their ability

can range depending on day, time and how busy we've been recently. (Group

representative, community group)

Another group representative explained that those running the group had been trained to

respond to members' needs:

Our staff and our central team are all people who have had experience of working

with people... who've been at risk in some way…. It's really important. We're

able to pass that on to volunteers. (Group representative, specialist group)

In addition, most group representatives (21 of $n = 31$) felt that the venues in which they

rehearsed and performed were accessible to people with physical disabilities or mobility

issues. Indeed, seven group representatives described how their groups made considerable

efforts to ensure the accessibility of the venues they used. One explained, for example, how

they considered accessibility as part of their criteria for selecting performance venues:

We do everything we can, really. We have a rehearsal venue which is entirely

physically accessible… In terms of venues for gigs, we always make sure it's on

our checklist of things that we check. (Group representative, auditioning group)

Being pro-active in recruiting new group members

The vast majority of the group representatives (28 of $n = 31$) also described how their groups took active measures to promote their activities and attract new members. This generally involved distributing leaflets and displaying posters in public spaces, attending community events and, in some cases, carrying out pro-active recruitment in specific places such as schools, universities or music colleges. The importance of having attractive promotional materials was highlighted by one interviewee:

> *We make the branding attractive. We make the leaflets bright and colourful and funky and cool.* (Group representative, specialist group)

Another group representative felt that the presentation of their website played a significant role in the recruitment of new members:

> *Our website's got lots of smiling faces because that's what reflects what our rehearsals are like. I would say to attract the right type of singers you design the website in that way.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Over half (16 of $n = 31$) of the group representatives also talked about using social media to promote their group, although three group representatives acknowledged that their groups were slow to engage with social media, despite a sense that this might help to engage younger singers:

> *We keep saying we'd get more younger people if we were on Facebook.* (Group representative, hybrid group)

Two group representatives noted that promoting opportunities to sing specific pieces of music or to sing in a particular type of choir was also effective in recruiting new members:

> *What seems to generate most interest is when we put on a concert that's got music that people want to sing.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Equally, three group representatives highlighted the influence of their conductor on the recruitment of singers:

> *Things have changed a bit with our new music director, who's younger and is very keen. He has his own website… and uses things like MeetUp.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Actively welcoming new group members

Group representatives also identified a range of both formal and informal ways in which new members were welcomed into their groups. Around half of the group representatives (16 of *n* = 31) described how group members were tasked with greeting and looking after new people, and this was reinforced through the creation of specific roles within the group:

> *We have voice reps in each voice [section] who make a huge effort to find new members at the beginning of each term and introduce them to people.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

> *We have choir assistants. Part of their role is to welcome new members into the group and just make them feel welcome and part of it.* (Group representative, community group)

Another group representative highlighted the importance of this for larger groups in helping to make it easier for new members to become integrated into the group:

> *It can be quite daunting coming into a room with two hundred people and be expected to fit in. So it's important to provide someone they know, a familiar face that they can talk to, and then be introduced to other members of the group.* (Group representative, community group)

Two group representatives also described how their groups organised social events to welcome new members, while another described providing a handbook for new members:

> *We have a whole bunch of stuff, like a sort of handbook for how the choir runs, this is what to expect, all that kind of stuff.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

The initial warm-up activities held at the start of rehearsals were also seen by four group representatives as a way of helping new members to feel part of the group:

> *When we've got new members, we do a lot of focus on name games, getting to know each other... The first couple of sessions, we might even spend twenty-five percent of the rehearsal doing that. And we find that, for us, because we're looking for that family feel, that makes a really big difference.* (Group representative, community group)

An active focus on welcoming new members was also appreciated by respondents (3% of $n = 255$), one of whom described the efforts their group made to help new members become part of the group:

> *New member events, giving new members a voice rep contact to help them settle in, induction packs with info on the choir, arranging where new members sit and, where possible, trying to make sure that from the outset they are included in semi-choruses and events are all things we do.* (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Another described, "the huge welcome I received when I first joined and the enormous effort that other choir members made to help me settle in" (female respondent, community group).

<u>Offering concessions for individuals on low incomes</u>

The majority of group representatives (20 of $n = 31$) reported that their groups offered concessionary membership rates for individuals on low incomes, such as students, those who were unemployed, or for those in younger age groups. In three cases (all specialist groups), membership of the group was free. Four interviewees described how their groups

were taking additional steps to encourage individuals on low incomes to participate, such as by subsidising the costs of taking part in tours and other group activities. One group was also reported as offering concessionary tickets to concerts for those on low incomes:

> *We always make sure that the tickets for our concerts have a wide range of prices so that there's a cheap range for people whose friends have less money.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Two respondents emphasised how important it was that their groups were careful to make it possible for those on lower incomes to participate. One explained:

> *Everything is fair and allowances are made for those who don't have as much money. It's all done in a very friendly way.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

<u>Implementing pro-actively inclusive group practices</u>

Finally, four group representatives described pro-active measures that their groups were taking to address issues of diversity and inclusion. For example, recognising the need to accommodate younger individuals with more transient lifestyles, one interviewee explained that their group was planning to provide an option for people to pay their membership fees on a termly basis, rather than requiring them to pay the full annual fee upfront. They also described making a conscious effort to adapt their repertoire in order to be more inclusive of individuals from different faiths:

> *We're trying to broaden what we sing so that it is not purely Christian work… We need to have a wider repertory to increase the attractiveness of the choir to people who are more used to a different mix of cultural influences in terms of what they sing.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Another group representative described how their group had changed their music selection to have wider appeal:

We noticed that a lot of the repertoire was white male, and a lot of the choir

members were white males, and we thought we had change it... It's hard to say

whether some of the changes happened as a result of that, but we have seen a

change. (Group representative, specialist group)

One representative said that their group was planning to offer more social activities as they

perceived a need to do more to enable their members to get to know each other. Another

explained that their group had organised a specific session for members to improve their

understanding of inclusion issues within the LGBTQIA+ community:

We got someone come in and educate the whole group about what it means to

be all these different labels. (Group representative, auditioning group)

One group representative also described plans to conduct research to investigate the

reasons for the lack of BAME singers in their group, while another was considering ways to

reach out more to younger people.

Although respondents did not comment on specific measures that their groups were

taking to be inclusive, a number of respondents (10% of *n* = 255) described the inclusive

approach that they felt those running their groups were taking. For example, one said:

The current committee is inclusive and democratic, sharing information and

consulting. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

5.3.4   Section summary

The vast majority of the group representatives interviewed described a range of practical

ways in which their groups sought to be inclusive to members, such as offering

concessionary membership rates for people on low incomes, rehearsing and performing in

venues that were accessible to people with physical disabilities or mobility issues, and

making particular efforts to take care of singers with additional needs. Moreover, it seemed

that some groups had embraced an inclusive approach, with the community and specialist groups appearing particularly pro-active in responding to the needs of individual members.

These efforts seemed to be reflected in many group members' perceptions of their groups' practices, which were generally rated as highly inclusive by respondents. In particular, it seemed that respondents valued feeling involved in their group and having opportunities to socialise with other group members. Group practices that encouraged friendships between members and enabled all members to participate fully in the group's activities also appeared to be important to respondents.

Furthermore, it seemed that perceptions of group practices were not generally associated with respondents' diversity characteristics, although older respondents appeared to rate their group's practices as less inclusive than young respondents. Similarly, there did not appear to be any significant associations between group practices and the size of group to which respondents belonged or by how long they had belonged to their groups. However, reflecting the findings related to perceived inclusion, perceptions of group practices did appear to be associated with repertoire, in that respondents in groups singing classical music were less likely to perceive their group's practice as inclusive compared to respondents in groups singing other kinds of music. Moreover, it seemed that hybrid groups were perceived as having less inclusive practices than other types of group. Finally, the analysis revealed that respondents' aggregated scores for group practices were significantly correlated with their scores for perceived inclusion, suggesting that inclusive group practices contributed to a sense of inclusion.

5.4   Inclusive group climate

Turning next to the ways in which group climate can affect members' sense of inclusion (Shore et al., 2011), the next section presents the findings from the participant questionnaire and from the interviews with group representatives to explore how the ways in which members of the group behave towards one another can contribute to the sense of inclusion experienced by its members.

Using the measures associated with group climate that had emerged through the literature review (see Chapter 3, section 3.10.4), respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they felt 'all', 'most', 'some', 'a few' or 'no members' displayed inclusive behaviours (see Table 5.4-1).

Table 5.4-1: Measures of inclusive group climate

How do you feel about other people in this group?	People in this group are friendly
	People in this group are tolerant towards each other
	People in this group encourage and support each other musically
	People in this group are welcoming to new members
	People in this group support each other socially

The questionnaire also provided opportunities for respondents to add comments to describe their perceptions of their group climate and to explain how this contributed to their sense of inclusion within the group. This analysis was further supplemented by the interviews with group representatives which explored how they inclusively they felt the members of their groups behaved towards one another.

Initial analysis involved running frequency tests to examine responses to the individual measures of inclusive group climate. As Table 5.4-2 shows, respondents generally reported that all or most other group members were tolerant (82% of $n = 376$), friendly (81% of $n = 377$), welcoming to new members (74% of $n = 377$), and musically supportive (63% of $n = 377$), However, fewer respondents reported that all or most other group members were

socially supportive of each other (39% of $n = 377$), although a large number of respondents

selected the 'don't know' option, suggesting that they felt unable to rate this aspect of group

climate.

Table 5.4-2: Responses to group climate measures (n = 376 – 377)

Measures of group climate	All (%)	Most (%)	Some (%)	A few (%)	None (%)	Don't know (%)
People are tolerant	21.8	61.3	10.9	1.9	0.3	4.0
People are friendly	19.9	61.5	13.8	4.2	0.3	0.3
People are welcoming to new members	19.1	55.4	17.5	6.9	0.5	0.5
People encourage and support each other musically	12.2	51.1	24.7	6.6	1.6	3.7
People support each other socially	4.8	34.0	33.5	9.0	0.8	17.8

Respondents' scores to the five measures of inclusive group climate were then converted to

a number ('all' to four, 'most' to three, 'some' to two, 'a few' to one, and 'none' to zero) and

the results summed to create an aggregated score for group climate for each respondent.

The analysis then involved running a frequency test to summarise respondents'

aggregated scores for group climate. As Figure 5.4-1 shows, this revealed that respondents

reported the climate of their groups as relatively inclusive, with a high mean for aggregated

group climate scores, with a mean score of 18 out of 20 ($M = 18.13$, $SD = 2.44$, $n = 290$).
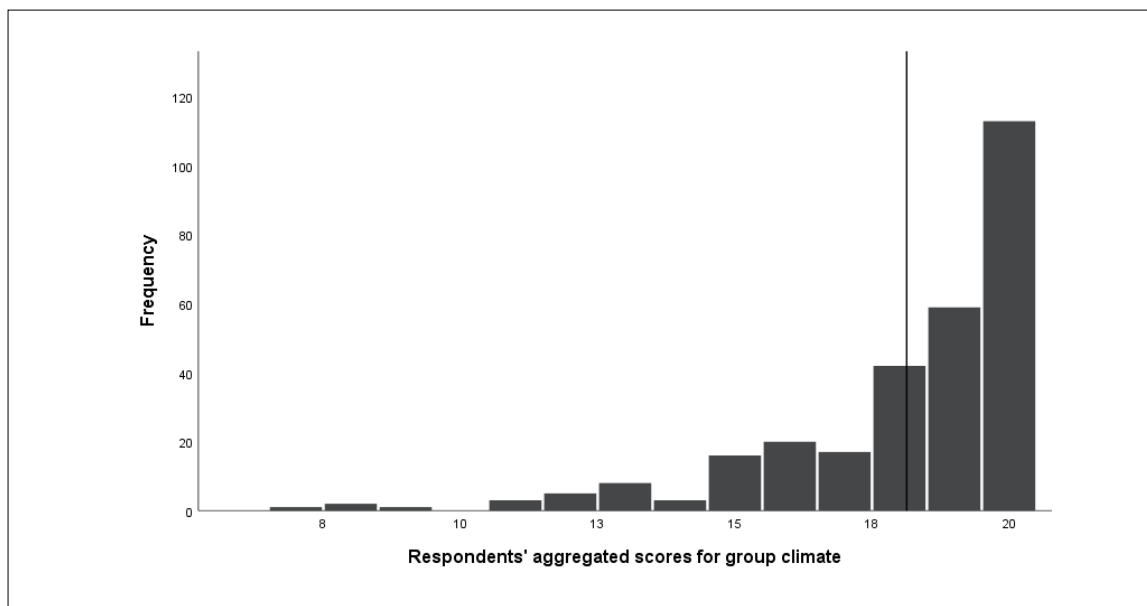
Figure 5.4-1: Histogram of aggregated group climate scores showing the mean

5.4.1 The relationship between group climate and perceived inclusion

As Figure 5.4-2 shows, a Spearman's correlation test revealed a positive, moderately strong correlation between respondents' aggregated group climate scores and their aggregated perceived inclusion scores ($r = .525$, $n = 260$, $p = <.001$).
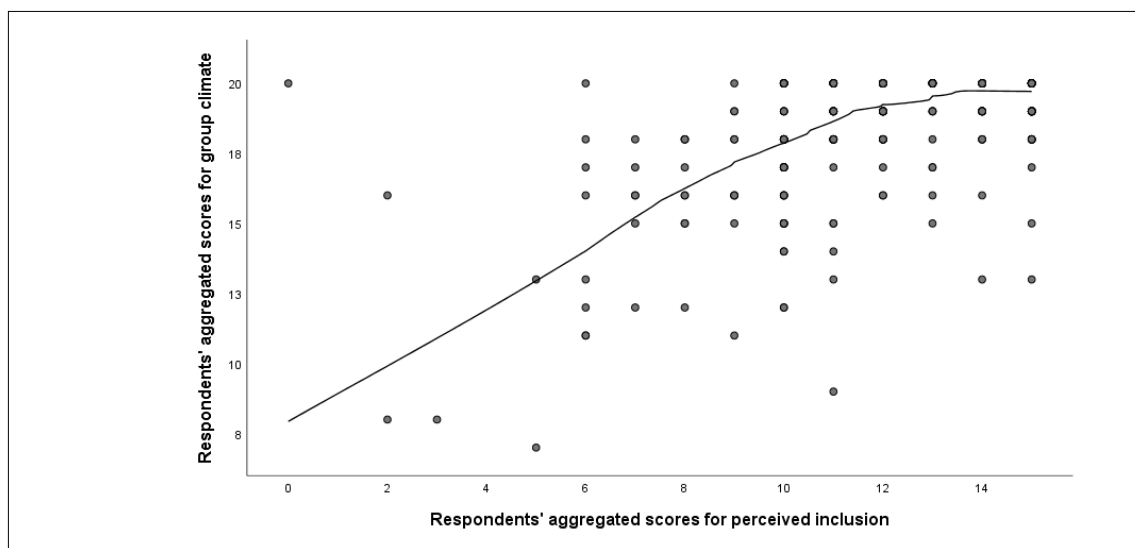
Figure 5.4-2: Scatterplot of respondents' aggregated scores for perceived inclusion and group climate with Loess Smooth Curve

Moreover, as Table 5.4-3 shows, Spearman's correlation tests also revealed statistically significant positive correlations between individual measures of perceived inclusion and those of group climate. In particular, it seemed that inclusion scores were most strongly and consistently correlated with respondents feeling that people in the group supported each other socially.

Table 5.4-3: Correlations between perceived inclusion and group climate (n = 264)

		MEASURES OF PERCEIVED INCLUSION				
		I have a sense of belonging	I feel appreciated	I can be myself	I feel supported musically	Others care about me
GROUP CLIMATE MEASURES	People are friendly	$r = .403$**	$r = .341$**	$r = .313$**	$r = .303$**	$r = .354$**
	People are welcoming to new members	$r = .424$**	$r = .340$**	$r = .290$**	$r = .362$**	$r = .376$**
	People support each other musically	$r = .413$**	$r = .287$**	$r = .343$**	$r = .342$**	$r = .293$**
	People are tolerant	$r = .272$**	$r = .280$**	$r = .196$**	$r = .117$	$r = .250$**
	People support each other socially	$r = .401$**	$r = .399$**	$r = .336$**	$r = .280$**	$r = .448$**

Note: ** indicates the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

5.4.2   *Factors associated with perceptions of group climate*

In order assess whether respondents' perceptions of group climate were associated with their diversity characteristics or other factors, respondents' aggregated scores were recoded into four categories (1 – 5; 6 – 10; 11 – 15; 16 – 20). As Table 5.4-4 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant associations between respondents' perceptions of their group climate and their diversity characteristics.

Table 5.4-4: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group climate and diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	$X^2(2, n = 277) = 1.31, p = .519$
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	$X^2(2, n = 276) = 2.40, p = .301$
Age ($\leq$ 44; > 44)	$X^2(2, n = 279) = 1.19, p = .551$
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + post-grad.)	$X^2(2, n = 269) = .545, p = .762$
Health issues / disability (none; $\geq$ 1)	$X^2(2, n = 249) = 1.82, p = .402$

Neither, as Table 5.4-5 shows, did Chi-Square tests reveal any significant associations between respondents' perceptions of their group climate and their experience of group singing.

Table 5.4-5: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group climate and singing experience

Singing experience	Chi-Square test results
Length of membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(2, n = 277) = 4.64, p = .098$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(2, n = 278) = 5.55, p = .062$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(2, n = 278) = 2.46, p = .292$

Furthermore, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any significant associations between respondents' perceptions of group climate and the size, type or repertoire of group they belonged to (see Table 5.4-6).

Table 5.4-6: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group climate and group characteristics

Group characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Group type (aud. + hybrid; comm. + spec.)	$X^2(2, n = 290) = 3.40, p = .182$
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	$X^2(2, n = 290) = 0.39, p = .823$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	$X^2(2, n = 290) = 3.59, p = .166$

5.4.3 Factors contributing to perceptions of inclusive group climate

Further qualitative analysis of responses to an open question enabling respondents to comment further on their group's climate was then carried out to identify aspects of group climate that were important in promoting a sense of inclusion. This analysis was supplemented with information provided in the interviews with group representatives ($n =$ 31), in which interviewees were asked to describe ways in which they felt that their groups sought to create an inclusive climate. An overview of the themes emerging in the qualitative data, which are discussed in the following sections, is shown in Table 5.4-7

Table 5.4-7: Overview of themes related to perceptions of group climate

Group practices	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions ($n = 48$)		
Welcoming, friendly	9	18.8
warm	4	8.3
Kind, helpful	24	50.0
Outside rehearsals	4	8.3
Musically supportive	18	37.5
laughter, fun	32	66.7
Welcoming, friendly	9	18.8
Group representatives' perceptions ($n = 31$)		
Friendly and welcoming	29	93.5
Sense of community, belonging, identity	8	25.8
Explicitly inclusive ethos	3	9.7
Very different to other groups	2	6.5
Socially supportive, help each other out, mutual support	3	9.7
Includes individuals with different abilities	1	3.2
Sense of family	2	6.5
Musically appreciative	1	3.2
Committed to the group	1	3.2

Group members being welcoming and friendly to each other

Nearly a fifth of respondents who responded to the open question around group climate (19% of *n* = 48) highlighted the welcoming and friendly way in which members of the group behaved towards each other. For example, some people described how other group members "take time to speak to each other" (male respondent, auditioning group) and are "kind to each other" (female respondent, specialist group). Another described the "socially supportive atmosphere" (male respondent, hybrid group), while several (*n* = 4) talked about the "warmth" of everyone in the group.

Similarly, the majority of the group representatives (29 of *n* = 31) highlighted the friendly and welcoming nature of their groups:

> *The group has just got a very friendly and open atmosphere to it. I've found that people assimilate really quickly to the choir and blend in. There's no cliques or anything like that.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

> *We try to promote the sort of culture which makes people feel included and friendly.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Eight group representatives described the generally inclusive climate that they perceived in their groups:

> *There is a real sense of community. We go to the pub and things like that.* (Group representative, community group)

> *You can sense that they feel it as a group quite strongly. I think they have part of an identity with it, I suppose.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

For three representatives, their group's inclusive climate was linked to an explicitly inclusive ethos:

> *We're very much about community ethos and we want everyone to feel like they're part of a small family.* (Group representative, community group)

> *We are all about inclusion. In our charitable objectives, it's what we do.* (Group
> representative, community group)

> *We see it as very much part of our mission. Part of being a choir that's trying to
> promote a positive attitude towards LGBT people is that we all have that inside
> the group as well.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

Two representatives compared the climate they observed in their current group to
experiences in other groups:

> *I have been in three or four choirs and I have to say this is the most sociable,
> friendly choir. It is genuinely open for people to chat. Everybody talks to
> everybody.* (Group representative, auditioning group)

> *It is totally different from formal choirs, where there just isn't the joy.* (Group
> representative, community group)

Group members being socially supportive

Half of the respondents who commented on group members' behaviour (50% of $n = 48$)
described the kind and helpful way in which members behaved towards one another:

> *It's a supportive and encouraging atmosphere. Everyone is kind to each other.*
> (Female respondent, specialist group)

Some of these respondents described how the social support between members extended
beyond the group's activities. For example, one person explained how group members
supported each other outside of the group's activities:

> *A lot of us genuinely care about each other and support each other when we're ill
> or in crisis."* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

This was reflected by another respondent who described how friends she had made in the
group had supported her when she became unwell:

> *When I had open-heart surgery, I realised how much I was valued by friends in the choir, and this has continued ever since.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

The interviews with group representatives also highlighted the socially supportive behaviour that they observed between members of their groups. For example, one interviewee described how members learnt from and shared experiences with each other:

> *You need different notes and you need different timbres. That's why you have different instruments and in here, socially speaking, that's the secret of having a great group, I think.* (Group representative, community group)

Another representative noted how the group climate benefited from including individuals with different abilities:

> *It really knits the group together. For instance, with the person that I've mentioned [with a physical disability], people become very mindful, and that actually affects the whole atmosphere … People have really taken to her and it quite visibly has made a difference to her life, but actually also to the group.* (Group representative, community group)

Some also described how members were encouraged to help each other in other aspects of their lives:

> *There's such a diverse range in there. If ever you need any help on a legal matter, on an accountancy matter, on plumbing, on electricity… normally members are more than happy to offer that service pro-bono to fellow members to help them.* (Group representative, community group)

Representatives from the specialist groups tended to report a particularly inclusive group climate within their groups. For example, one interviewee described how a sense of family had developed within the group:

What people have discovered is that they can be there for each other and they've just got this huge extended family that is really, really rare. (Group representative, specialist group)

Another reflected the sense of mutual support that had emerged in their group:

They don't say, "I feel supported by the group", they're saying that, "I feel like supporting the group." … It's very much a two-way process. I'm supporting the group and they're supporting me. (Group representative, specialist group)

Group members being musically supportive

While fewer respondents commented specifically on members being musically supportive to each other (38% of $n = 48$), one group member expressed a sense of feeling musically supported with the sub-group of people singing the same voice part:

I feel extremely welcomed and really supported by people in my section.
(Female respondent, hybrid group)

Another also reflected this sense of musical support emerging through being part of a smaller group:

[We're] a small group of singers, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses (in terms of singing), and helping each other out, rather than being competitive. (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Others described how they felt they supported each other to learn new music and perform well:

We struggle together to learn new music and enjoy the results in a successful performance. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

One of the group representatives interviewed described how their group members showed their appreciation of individual contributions during rehearsals:

> *There's a great sense of support that comes through. There's a lot of clapping,*
> *people applaud other people's little performances.* (Group representative,
> specialist group)

Group members having fun together

Although this was not measured in the quantitative measures for group climate, two-thirds of
the respondents who commented on group members' behaviour (67% of *n* = 48) suggested
that an inclusive group climate also involved members sharing laughter and having fun
together:

> *There's never a rehearsal when there isn't laughter about something we do or*
> *don't do.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Moreover, it seemed that the laughter and fun served to reinforce respondents' sense of
belonging to the group, which, as one person explained, formed part of the experience of
singing together:

> *Fun, satisfying experience of rehearsals and concerts. [I] feel well in a group that*
> *produces something beautiful together.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

5.4.4   Section summary

The majority of respondents and group representatives highlighted the friendly and
welcoming behaviour of members of their groups, and some described the mutual support,
both social and musical, that they perceived among group members. Furthermore, neither
diversity characteristics, singing-related factors (i.e. length of membership, previous
experience of group singing), nor group-related factors (such as the type and repertoire of
the group) were associated with respondents' perceptions of group climate. However, the
qualitative analysis revealed the importance for respondents of being welcoming, sharing
laughter and having fun together. Feeling that other people in the group were friendly and

that they supported each other musically also appeared to be particularly important to respondents. Analysis of the quantitative data revealed a positive, moderately strong correlation between respondents' aggregated scores for perceived inclusion and their scores for group climate, suggesting that, overall, an inclusive group climate contributed to individuals' sense of inclusion.

5.5   Inclusive group leadership

This next section sets out the findings from the interviews and participant questionnaire relating to group leadership, the final element in Shore, Randel, Chung and Dean's (2011) model of inclusion. Focusing on the conductor as group leader, group representatives and group members and representatives were asked about the extent to which they perceived their conductor's behaviour to be inclusive.

Using measures associated with group leadership that had emerged through the literature review (see Chapter 3, section 3.10.4), respondents were asked to rate a series of statements about perceptions of their conductor's attributes and behaviour (see Table 5.5-1).

Table 5.5-1: Measures of inclusive group leadership

What do you think of your conductor / music director?	He/she is patient
	He/she is enthusiastic
	He/she is encouraging
	He/she is kind
	He/she is inspiring
	He/she is committed to our choir/singing group
How does he/she relate to you and the group?	He/she values the efforts we make to sing well
	He/she responds to requests/feedback from singers
	He/she is available to singers before/after rehearsals
	He/she joins in the group's social activities
	He/she displays a good sense of humour

The questionnaire also included an open question asking respondents what they liked most about their conductor's approach, while the interviews with group representatives explored whether, and how, they felt the conductor of their group sought to be inclusive.

Initial analysis of responses to the individual measures of inclusive group leadership, revealed that, as Table 5.5-2 shows, the vast majority of respondents rated their conductor as extremely committed to their group (90% of $n = 379$), enthusiastic (88% of $n = 379$), encouraging (78% of $n = 379$), patient (74% of $n = 379$), inspiring (73% of $n = 379$), and kind (67% of $n = 379$).

Table 5.5-2: Responses to leader attribute measures (n = 383)

Measures of leader attributes	Extremely (%)	Quite (%)	Not very (%)	Not at all (%)	Don't know (%)
Committed to the group	90.0	7. 7	0.3	0.8	1.3
Enthusiastic	87.9	11.1	1.1	0.0	0.0
Encouraging	78.1	18.5	2.6	0.5	0.3
Patient	73.9	22.7	2.6	0.0	0.8
Inspiring	72.6	22.4	4.0	0.5	0.5
Kind	67.0	29.6	1.3	0.3	1.8

Meanwhile, as Table 5.5-3 shows, conductors were also rated highly for valuing their group members' efforts to sing well (75% of $n = 379$) and displaying a good sense of humour (71% of $n = 379$). However, conductors scored less highly on responding to feedback (41% of $n = 379$), joining in the group's social activities (40% of $n = 379$), and most especially, being available to members outside of rehearsals (29% of $n = 379$).

Table 5.5-3: Responses to leader behaviour measures (n = 379)

Measures of leader behaviour	Almost always (%)	Often (%)	Sometimes (%)	Rarely (%)	Never (%)	Don't know (%)
Values the efforts we make to sing well	74.7	28.5	3.4	1.1	0.3	1.3
Displays a good sense of humour	71.0	18.7	9.0	0.8	0.3	0.3
Responds to requests / feedback	40.9	26.1	13.5	3.4	1.1	15.0
Joins in the group's social activities	39.8	25.1	17.2	3.2	1.1	13.7
Available to members before / after rehearsals	28.5	23.0	24.8	8.4	3.2	12.1

Aggregated scores for group leadership were then created for each respondent by converting each of their responses to a number and summing the results[3] and a frequency test was run to summarise these aggregated scores. This revealed that, overall, respondents rated the leadership of their group as highly inclusive, with a mean score of 33 out of 38 for group leadership ($M = 33.39$, $SD = 4.41$, $n = 258$), as shown in Figure 5.5-1.
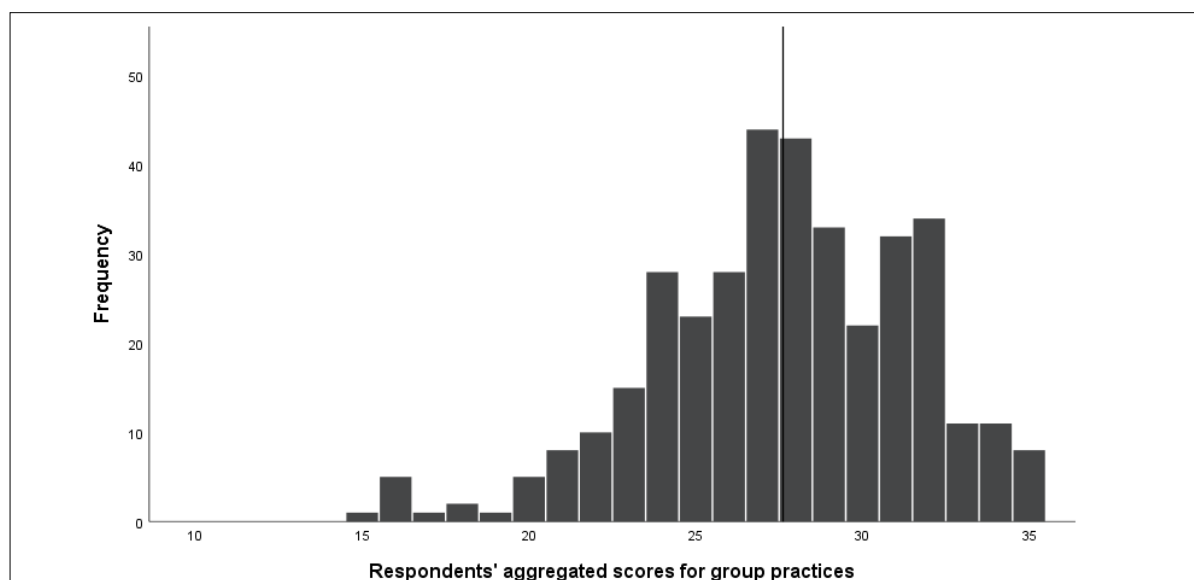
Figure 5.5-1: Histogram of aggregated leadership scores showing the mean

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[3] In the leader attributes question, 'extremely' was converted to three, 'quite' to two, 'not very' to one, and 'not at all' to zero). In the leader behaviour question, 'almost always' was converted to four, 'often' to three, 'sometimes' to two, 'rarely' to one, and 'never' to zero.

5.5.1   The relationship between group leadership and perceived inclusion

As Figure 5.5-2 shows, a Spearman's correlation test revealed that the correlation between

aggregated group leadership scores and aggregated inclusion scores, although positive,

was relatively weak ($r = .327$, $n = 233$, $p = <.001$).
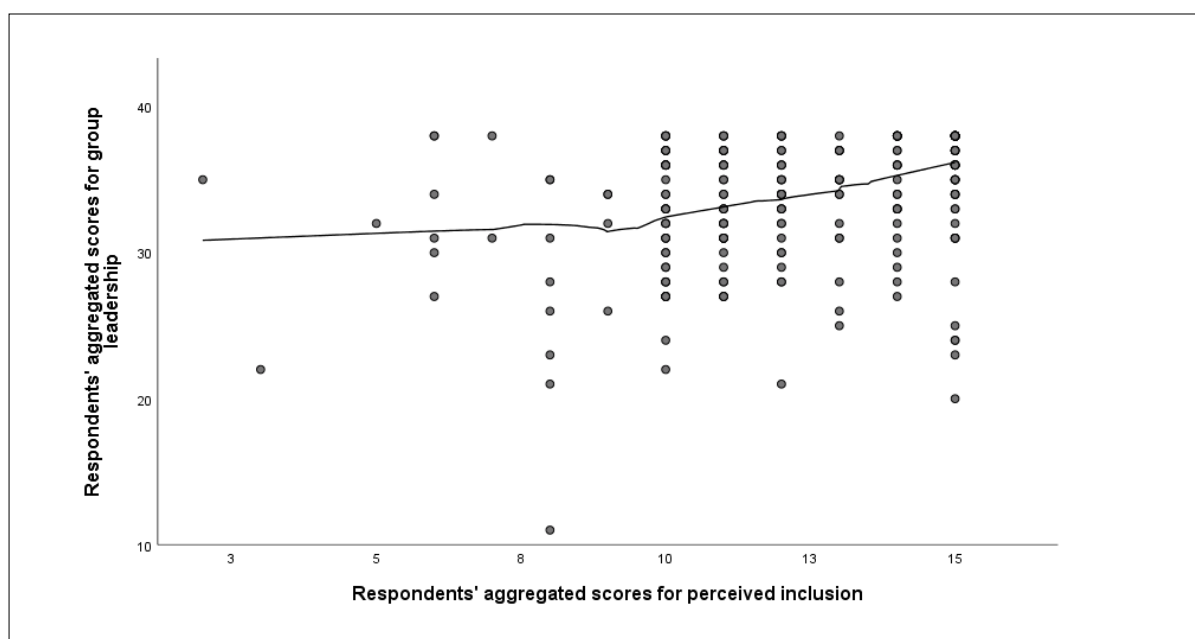
Figure 5.5-2: Scatterplot of respondents' aggregated scores for perceived inclusion and group leadership with Loess Smooth Curve

Furthermore, as Table 5.5-4 shows, there were relatively few significant correlations

between many aspects of perceived inclusion and conductors' attributes (particularly, being

committed and enthusiastic). However, feeling musically supported was positively correlated

with all aspects of inclusive leadership attributes.

Table 5.5-4: Correlations between perceived inclusion and leader attributes (n = 233)

		MEASURES OF PERCEIVED INCLUSION				
		I have a sense of belonging	I feel appreciated	I can be myself	I feel supported musically	Others care about me
LEADER ATTRIBUTES MEASURES	Encouraging	$r = .129*$	$r = .105$	$r = .056$	$r = .192**$	$r = .102$
	Inspiring	$r = .201**$	$r = .166*$	$r = .113$	$r = .252**$	$r = .093$
	Committed	$r = .083$	$r = .014$	$r = .037$	$r = .135*$	$r = .098$
	Enthusiastic	$r = .068$	$r = .098$	$r = .047$	$r = .169*$	$r = .053$
	Kind	$r = .092$	$r = .234**$	$r = .090$	$r = .255**$	$r = .211**$
	Patient	$r = .111$	$r = .190**$	$r = .089$	$r = .205**$	$r = .153**$

Note: ** indicates the correction is significant at the 0.01 level.

On the other hand, as Table 5.5-5 shows, many aspects of perceived inclusion were

positively correlated, albeit weakly, with aspects of conductors' behaviour.

Table 5.5-5: Correlations between perceived inclusion and leader behaviour (n = 233)

		MEASURES OFPERCEIVED INCLUSION				
		I have a sense of belonging	I feel appreciated	I can be myself	I feel supported musically	Others care about me
LEADER BEHAVIOUR MEASURES	Available to singers	$r = .177**$	$r = .230**$	$r = .221**$	$r = .242**$	$r = .253**$
	Responds to requests / feedback	$r = .199*$	$r = .329**$	$r = .188**$	$r = .242**$	$r = .234**$
	Displays a good sense of humour	$r = .203**$	$r = .215**$	$r = .207**$	$r = .265**$	$r = .189**$
	Values their efforts to sing well	$r = .138*$	$r = .123$	$r = .169*$	$r = .164*$	$r = .086$
	Joins in social activities	$r = .153*$	$r = .158*$	$r = .134*$	$r = .115$	$r = .139*$

Note: * indicates the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** indicates the correction is significant at the 0.01 level.

5.5.2 Factors associated with perceptions of group leadership

In order assess whether respondents' perceptions of group leadership were associated with their diversity characteristics or other factors, respondents' aggregated scores were recoded into three categories (1 – 13; 14 – 26; 27 – 38). As Table 5.5-6 shows, further analysis using Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant associations between respondents' perceptions of their group leadership and their gender identity, ethnic origin, educational background, or whether they had health issues or a disability.

Table 5.5-6: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group leadership and diversity characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	$X^2(2, n = 249) = 2.11, p = .349$
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	$X^2(2, n = 244) = 0.31, p = .856$
Age ($\leq$ 44; > 44)	$X^2(2, n = 250) = 2.97, p = .227$
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + post-grad.)	$X^2(2, n = 239) = 4.53, p = .104$
Health issues / disability (none; $\geq$ 1)	$X^2(2, n = 226) = 2.51, p = .286$

Similarly, as Table 5.5-7 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any significant associations between perceptions of group leadership and how long respondents had belonged to their groups, how much experience they had of group singing, or whether they were singing with other groups.

Table 5.5-7: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group leadership and singing experience

Singing experience	Chi-Square test results
Length of membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(2, n = 246) = .852, p = .653$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(2, n = 247) = 5.23, p = .073$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(2, n = 246) = 2.26, p = .323$

Furthermore, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any associations between perceptions of inclusive group leadership and either group type, size or repertoire (see Table 5.5-8).

Table 5.5-8: Results of Chi-Square tests showing relationships between group leadership and group characteristics

Diversity characteristic	Chi-Square test results
Group type (aud. + hybrid; comm. + spec.)	$X^2(2, n = 258) = 4.34, p = .114$
Group size (≤ 100; > 100)	$X^2(2, n = 258) = 0.57, p = .751$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	$X^2(2, n = 258) = 0.57, p = .751$

5.5.3   Factors contributing to perceptions of inclusive group leadership

Drawing from the interviews with group representatives ($n = 31$) and group members' responses to the open question about group leadership ($n = 383$), qualitative analysis was then carried out to explore perceptions of inclusive leadership within the participating groups. An overview of the themes emerging in the qualitative data, which are discussed in the following sections, is shown in Table 5.5-9.

Table 5.5-9: Overview of themes related to perceptions of group leadership

Group leadership	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions ($n = 269$)		
Encouraging, enthusiastic and positive	73	27.1
optimistic, positive, upbeat, energetic	11	4.1
Kind, patient, understanding	43	16.0
relaxed, tolerant, calm	40	14.8
kind, caring	8	3.0
Using humour	48	18
Supportive	30	11.2
Approachable, attentive	24	8.9

Table 5.5-10: Overview of themes related to perceptions of group leadership (contd.)

Committed	16	5.9
Pro-actively inclusive	8	2.9
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Key to members' experience	2	6.5
charismatic	3	9.7
Pro-actively inclusive	3	9.7
Attentive to individuals	1	3.2

<u>Being encouraging, enthusiastic and positive</u>

Reflecting the response to the quantitative measures, in their responses to an open question about perceptions of group leadership, over a quarter of respondents (27% of *n* = 269) described how their conductor had an encouraging, enthusiastic and positive leadership style. For example, one respondent valued the way in which their conductor was "encouraging and manages to correct us without being patronising or critical" (female respondent, auditioning group). Others talked about their conductor's "energy and enthusiasm" (female respondent, hybrid group), and one noted how this was important even when the group was struggling:

> *He maintains enthusiasm when we aren't doing very well!* (Male respondent, hybrid group)

A few (4% of *n* = 269) highlighted the positivity that their conductor demonstrated in their leadership:

> *He is always optimistic about what we can achieve.* (Female respondent, community group)

This emphasis on maintaining a positive approach was also described by a conductor who was interviewed in their role as a group representative:

I always try and keep it positive. I try not to tell people off. (Group

representative, auditioning group)

Showing kindness and patience

Similarly, kindness and patience also emerged strongly as attributes that respondents

valued in their conductor's approach (16% of $n = 269$). One respondent drew a comparison

with a previous conductor they had sung with:

Another musical director I had a few years ago would storm and swear and shout

at singers in rehearsal in front of other people. That guy is the polar opposite of

my current musical director, and that's the way I like it! (Female respondent,

auditioning group)

Others described their conductor as "warm-hearted" (female respondent, auditioning group)

and "very kind and caring" (female respondent, specialist group), while one felt that their

conductor's approach showed "lightness of touch and kindness" (male respondent, hybrid

group).

Patience and tolerance were also qualities in their conductor's behaviour that were

important to many (15% of $n = 269$), suggesting that respondents appreciated having a

sense that their group leader could emotionally contain and support the group:

He is reassuringly confident, tolerant and good humoured. (Female respondent,

hybrid group)

Another respondent described how their conductor's "calm approach works wonders" (male

respondent, auditioning group).

Using humour

Nearly a fifth of the respondents who commented on their conductor's behaviour (18% of $n =$

269) appreciated the humour that their conductor brought to their leadership, which many felt

was a key element in their relationship with the group. One person felt that their conductor

"does a difficult job with patience and humour" (female respondent, specialist group), while

another explained that their conductor had a "good sense of humour and can laugh at

himself" (female respondent, community group).

The humour that conductors brought to rehearsals appeared to increase the

enjoyment that some respondents gained from participating and increased their commitment

to the group:

> *He's great fun, makes coming to rehearsals a joy*. (Male respondent, auditioning
> group)

> *Our choir leader is funny and energetic which enthuses people.* (Female
> respondent, community group)

Being supportive of the group

Respondents (11% of 269) also appeared to appreciate the way in which their conductors

were supportive of their singing abilities; for example, one person described how their

conductor's leadership of the group was inclusive of all members:

> *Firm encouragement without tough expectations which embraces the mixed*
> *ability levels, seemingly keeping everyone relaxed and involved all the time.*
> (Male respondent, hybrid group)

This meant that respondents felt able to do their best without fear of judgement:

> *He's supportive of those without any music training or background without being*
> *patronising.* (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Others appreciated how their conductor seemed to have faith in them as a group and in their

ability to perform well. Their comments reflected a sense that they felt validated by their

conductor's approach:

He has confidence in our ability and drives us forward. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

He pushes us to be the best we can be, makes us try new things so we keep learning. (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Being approachable and attentive

A sense that conductors were approachable and attentive to individual group members was also highlighted by respondents (9% of *n* = 269) as important. For example, respondents described how their conductor paid attention to individuals within the group and sought to make a personal connection with them:

The leader is interested in the individual singers and is very welcoming. (Female respondent, community group)

She builds rapport with everyone which is great, especially for new members. (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Consequently, feeling noticed by their conductor was highlighted as helping respondents to feel part of the group:

Very personal approach and even knows my name. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

During rehearsals, a sense that the choir leaders know who you are and what you're about! (Male respondent, community group)

Another respondent described how their conductor was attentive to the group as a whole:

He is also very good pastorally, showing genuine concern for the welfare of all members of the choir. (Female respondent, specialist group)

Demonstrating commitment to the group

A small number of respondents (6% of *n* = 269) valued the fact that their conductor

demonstrated their commitment to the group. For some, this commitment was apparent

through the conductor joining the group's extra-curricular activities. One respondent

described how their conductor was "part of the group, always at social events … loves the

choir to bits" (female respondent, auditioning group). Another valued the fact that their

conductor was willing to provide additional support to group members:

> *He is willing to do additional sessions to help members with sight singing.*
>
> (Female respondent, hybrid group).

Others simply highlighted their conductor's "huge commitment" (female respondent,

community group) and "obvious commitment to the group" (female respondent, auditioning

group). Similarly, one group representative described how the inclusive behaviour

demonstrated by the group's conductor exceeded their role:

> *I would say he goes well above and beyond what's in his job description, in terms*
>
> *of pastoral care.* (Group representative, community group)

Being pro-actively inclusive

A few respondents (3% of *n* = 269) suggested that their conductor's approach was crucial to

creating an inclusive group:

> *[He's] warm, energetic, funny, skilled, open, very inclusive.* (Female respondent,
>
> specialist group)

> *He makes everyone feel included.* (Male respondent, hybrid group)

Similarly, in the interviews with group representatives, two interviewees perceived the

leadership style of their group's conductor as central to members' experience of the group:

To be honest, he's the chief draw of the choir. He is very charismatic. He's also very, very funny. (Group representative, auditioning group)

People come along and say, "You, know, we come here because we like the music director, because he's very warm and friendly." (Group representative, hybrid group)

A pro-actively inclusive leadership style was also described by three of the seven conductors who were interviewed in their role as group representatives. One explained, for example, how they sought to build up personal connections with the members of their group:

I remember the name of every single member and when they are new. I ask them about their life and why they joined the choir and I keep that in my memory. (Group representative, community group)

Another described how they had changed the lay-out of the rehearsal space to create a more inclusive atmosphere:

We have a sort of semi-circle set-up. It's not just lines of seats. It's like a horseshoe, so it enables everyone to connect. (Group representative, hybrid group)

The third of the three conductors who demonstrated a pro-actively inclusive leadership style explained how this involved being aware of and sensitive to the barriers that group members might experience in participating in the group:

Our tactic is to try and work out what's going on and what we can do to help, and often just sort of switching your own expectations of other people kind of helps to understand why someone's not themselves or why they're not turning up to rehearsals every week. Like I think that the more we go on and the more people trust each other, the more they're happy to say, "Do you know what, I'm struggling with my anxiety at the moment which is why I haven't turned up to the

four last rehearsal"' and that openness, I think we do have to gain people's trust

and it takes a long time, but for us it's worth it. (Group representative, community

group)

Another group representative also reflected this sense of their group's conductor taking time

to interact with group members and being alert to their needs:

He doesn't just come to rehearsals and goes home. He sticks around. He

comes to me with, "I've noticed this person interacting in this way. I'm concerned

about it." He's often the first person to mention or raise issues. (Group

representative, auditioning group)

5.5.4   Section summary

Overall, it seemed that respondents felt that the leadership of their groups was highly

inclusive, and this did not appear to be related to diversity characteristics, nor the type or

size of group respondents belonged to, nor length of membership. Indeed, the vast majority

of respondents across all types of group rated their conductor as enthusiastic, committed to

their group, patient, kind, encouraging, and inspiring. Conductors were also rated highly for

valuing their group members' efforts to sing well and displaying a good sense of humour.

These perceptions were largely reflected in the analysis of the qualitative data which

revealed that respondents particularly valued their conductor being kind, patient,

encouraging, enthusiastic and positive. Equally, respondents appreciated conductors being

sensitive to their needs and understanding of amateur singers, while humour also emerged

as a key element in conductors' relationship with their groups. Some of the group

representatives interviewed also described ways in which conductors were pro-actively

inclusive in their approach, such as through learning the names of individual group

members, being attentive to members' needs, changing the lay-out of the rehearsal space to

create a more inclusive atmosphere, and making sure that people were integrated into the group.

Nonetheless, analysis of the data also revealed that, overall, the correlation between group leadership and perceived inclusion, while significant, was moderately weak, and there were relatively few significant correlations between many aspects of perceived inclusion and conductors' attributes. However, many aspects of conductors' behaviour were positively correlated, although weakly, with perceived inclusion

5.6   Further actions to increase perceived inclusion within the participating groups

As suggested by good practice in communicating and sharing research findings (Creswell, 2014), all the groups who participated in this study were sent a summary of the analysis of the interviews with group representatives (see Appendix G) as well as an individual summary of their members' responses to the participant questionnaire (see Appendix H) for an example summary). Some group representatives responded to these communications to convey their gratitude or to communicate further matters that they felt were of relevance to this research. In addition, a specific email was sent out to all the group representatives six months after the initial data collection had been completed to ask if they felt any changes had occurred in their groups since participating in the research. Five of the responses from groups are cited here as they illustrate ways in which groups had responded to the findings:

> *We gave a verbal summary of the research to the group, and one change we*
> *implemented immediately having got the report was to send out a form asking for*
> *song requests from within the group, to make sure they felt they had a continued*
> *important input into the repertoire. We also emphasised a couple of free/low-cost*
> *social activities that we were planning as we were going on another tour at*
> *Christmas, so wanted to ensure that those who couldn't afford this could still*
> *socialise with everyone.* (Group representative, hybrid group)

We all found your summary very interesting when it was circulated to our choir's committee. We have also made reference to it with the full choir in a couple of rehearsals too… Issues around the choir's purpose have been put on the agenda for our next committee meeting and I will re-table your summary as part of the paperwork for that meeting. (Group representative, auditioning group)

This is so interesting! It is so helpful to have something independent in this way and hopefully will help the Committee to see some of the issues – some of the feedback about the Committee was no doubt sparked by some tricky stuff around our last concert – I am afraid some of my colleagues were not as adaptable or welcoming to offers of assistance as they could have been! But in general, it is hugely validating, and we need to ensure we keep going in the right direction. (Group representative, community group)

Thanks so much...This is really interesting and incredibly useful which I'll share with the London team. (Group representative, specialist group)

I wanted to let you know that we took the research on board and are following it up with a session with the choir to share the feedback and get suggestions for improvement. (Group representative, community group)

Since you last contacted us, we've written a policy about diversity and inclusion which we've shared with our members and appointed one of our committee to take an active role in this area. (Group representative, hybrid group)

5.7 Chapter summary

As summarised in Table 5.7-1, the analysis presented in this chapter revealed that

individuals' perceptions of inclusion were affected by the ways in which groups operate, by

other members' behaviour, and, to a lesser extent, by the way groups were led.

Table 5.7-1: Spearman's correlation matrix for perceived inclusion, group practices, climate, and leadership

	Perceived inclusion	Group practices	Group climate
Group practices	$r = .557^{**}$		
Group climate	$r = .525^{**}$	$r = .429^{**}$	
Group leadership	$r = .327^{**}$	$r = .426^{**}$	$r = .337^{**}$

Note: *n* ranged from 233 – 310. ** indicates the finding is statistically significant (*p* = <.01).

The analysis also revealed that significant associations between respondents' perceptions of

inclusion and group climate with repertoire and group type, as illustrated in

Figure 5.7-1.
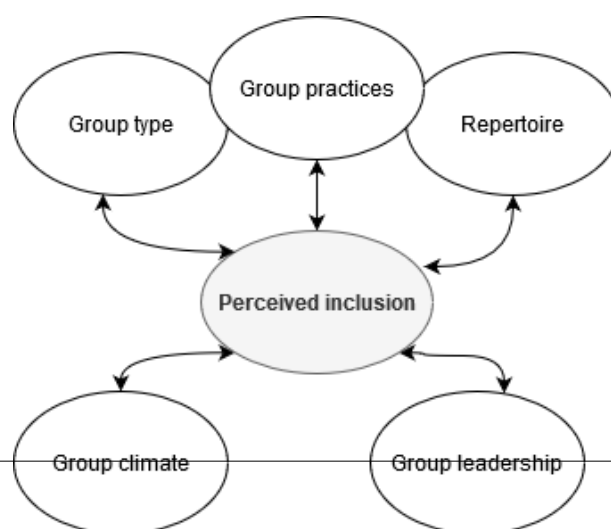
Figure 5.7-1: Significant relationships with perceptions of inclusion

In addition, the findings have shown how inclusion was perceived as important by both individual group members and group representatives. It was suggested that feeling included enhanced the individual experience of singing in a group as well as contributing to personal wellbeing.   Feeling included was also felt to increase commitment to the group and support better group performance as well as leading to improved group cohesion and membership retention.

The analysis also revealed that high levels of perceived inclusion among respondents and this did not appear to be related to how long respondents had belonged to their groups or to the size of group to which respondents belonged, nor by their diversity characteristics. Perceptions of inclusion did, however, appear to be related to both type of group and its repertoire, in that respondents in groups singing classical music were likely to feel less included than respondents in groups singing other kinds of music.

There was evidence of groups enacting a range of inclusive group practices, such as offering concessionary membership rates, rehearsing and performing in accessible venues, and making efforts to take care of singers with additional needs. Respondents also generally perceived the climate of their groups as inclusive, highlighting the friendly and welcoming behaviour of members of their groups, and the mutual support, both social and musical, among group members. Similarly, group leadership was generally perceived as being highly inclusive, and the vast majority of rated their conductor as enthusiastic, committed to their group, patient, kind, encouraging, and inspiring. Nonetheless, while the analysis revealed that both inclusive group practices and an inclusive group climate were strongly correlated with perceived inclusion, it appeared that the correlation between group leadership and perceived inclusion was quite weak, suggesting that inclusive leadership may have less connection than other factors with perceived inclusion.

Finally, the feedback reported from group representatives regarding follow-up actions taken or planned as a result of participating in this study provides some insight into ways in which groups can be supported to consider and, potentially, stimulated to identify and address issues around diversity and inclusion within their membership. However, in the next chapter, the focus shifts to perceived exclusion within the participating groups and the ways in which aspects of groups' practices, climate and leadership can result in some individuals not feeling part of the group.

Chapter 6: Perceptions of exclusion within adult amateur singing groups

In considering diversity and inclusion with the context of adult amateur group singing, there is also a need to investigate factors that may lead individuals to feel excluded within, or from, their groups. As such, the need to explore perceived exclusion as well as perceived inclusion reflects an understanding of inclusion as a sliding scale where "inclusion and exclusion are the extreme poles of a continuum of relations of inclusion/exclusion" (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 85) and where individuals can feel simultaneously both included and excluded to different degrees (Ferdman, 2017).

This chapter, therefore, presents the findings in relation to exclusion within participating adult amateur singing groups in the London borough of Camden in order to shed light on the processes and experiences of group singing that prevent, or undermine, perceptions of inclusion. Again, the findings are drawn from the interviews with 31 group representatives and responses to the participant questionnaire completed by 383 group members. The chapter starts by exploring the factors that contribute to a lack of perceived inclusion before considering the specific ways in which groups' practices, climate and leadership can undermine their members' sense of inclusion. A discussion of the implications of these findings, and the other findings from this research, can be found in Chapter 7.

6.1   Perceptions of exclusion

Analysis of the quantitative data from the participant questionnaire revealed that respondents ($n = 378$) generally reported a strong sense of inclusion in their groups, as shown in Figure 6.1-1 and discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5, section 5.2). However, Figure 6.1-1 also shows that there was a group of respondents (5% of 326) whose aggregated scores for perceived inclusion were less than seven (of a maximum aggregated

score of 15), suggesting that this group of individuals felt considerably less included than most others.
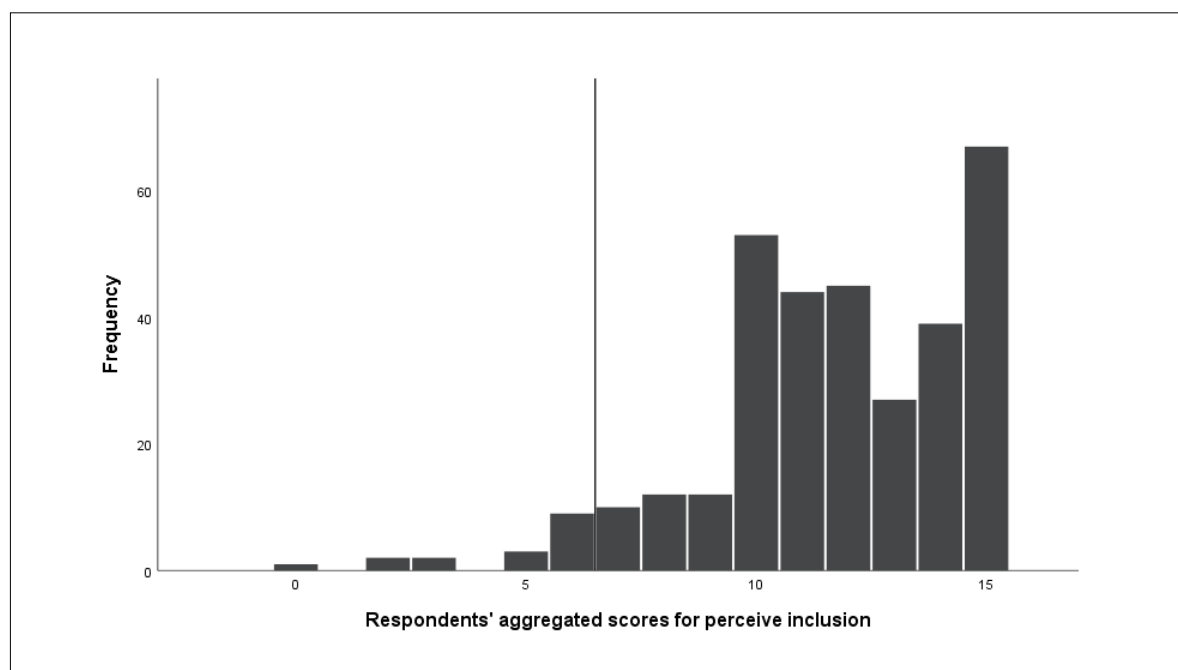
Figure 6.1-1: Histogram of aggregated perceived inclusion scores

6.1.1   Perceptions of exclusion in terms of group characteristics

Further analysis was then carried out to ascertain whether there were particular characteristics common to respondents who felt less included in their groups that might help to explain their lack of perceived inclusion. As Table 6.1-1 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant associations between respondents with low inclusion scores and the length of time they had belonged to their group or to the size of group to which they belonged. However, Chi-Square tests did reveal a significant association between lack of perceived inclusion and both group type and repertoire, and further tests using the Bonferroni correction indicated that respondents in groups singing music from the western classical canon were more likely to report lower levels of perceived inclusion than those in groups singing other kinds of music*.*

Table 6.1-1: Associations between low scores (< 7) for perceived inclusion and group-related
factors using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Group type (aud. + hybrid; comm. + spec.) (n = 325)	$X^2(1) = 4.30$, $p = .038$*
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100) (n = 325)	$X^2(1) = 0.69$, $p = .406$
Repertoire (classical; non-classical) (n = 325)	$X^2(1) = 5.42$, $p = .020$*

Note: * indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.05.

The relationships between exclusion and repertoire were also borne out in the qualitative

data. In their responses to the participant questionnaire, a number of group members (6% of

n = 383) described how the selection of the music sung by the group could be excluding.

For example, one group member described how "songs [are] chosen without checking in

with the choir to see if they're liked first" (female respondent, auditioning group). One

respondent also explained how they had left a previous group because of its repertoire:

> *As a Jew, I became uncomfortable singing the words, 'Jesus Christ' and 'Mary'*
>
> *too often throughout the programme. The new director, who'd come from a*
>
> *church choir, was clueless that this was a secular choral group with multi-religion*
>
> *members.* (Female respondent, community group)

Four group representatives also identified barriers associated with their group's choice of

repertoire. For example, one representative felt that performing music from the western

classical canon forced the group to operate according to prescriptive norms of behaviour:

> *The modes of behaviour of a choir like this are actually quite rigid. You have to*
>
> *sing in your voice part. You have to sing the part that is laid down for you, and it*
>
> *will be forced into you that that's what you have to do.* (Group representative,
>
> hybrid group)

6.1.2   Perceptions of exclusion in terms of diversity

As Table 6.1-2 shows, Chi-Square tests did not reveal any statistically significant

associations between respondents' low scores for perceived inclusion and their diversity

characteristics.

Table 6.1-2: Associations between low scores (< 7) for perceived inclusion and diversity characteristics using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female) (n = 314)	$X^2(1)$ = .106, p = .745
Ethnicity (white; BAME) (n = 307)	$X^2(1)$ = 1.33, p = .249
Age ($\leq$ 44; > 44) (n = 312)	$X^2(1)$ = 1.97, p = .161
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + post-grad.) (n = 301)	$X^2(1)$ = 0.75, p = .387
Health issues/disability (none; $\geq$ 1) (n = 282)	$X^2(1)$ = 1.14, p = .287

In their responses to the open questions, only a minority of respondents (2% of n = 383)

made any comments linking feelings of exclusion to their diversity characteristics. For

example, two respondents described how having a different socio-economic background to

other group members made them feel excluded from the group:

> *I am middle class, but the fact that I am unemployed makes me a bit apart from*
>
> *the others.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

> *I feel less successful and more lonely than the others. I don't know many or any*
>
> *other members.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Another respondent commented on the privileged socio-economic background of others in

the group:

> *Over the tea break, one member I had never talked to before began talking to me*
>
> *about her difficulties in choosing which school to send her son to… should he go*
>
> *to Eton, or Harrow!* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Meanwhile, two individuals felt alienated by their sexual orientation; a member of an auditioning group explained how "as far as I know, there are no other lesbians in the group." Another person noted how their gender identity set them apart from others:

> *Being the only bisexual assigned male at birth, I do sometimes feel under-represented.* (Other gendered respondent, auditioning group)

In addition, three respondents felt excluded due to their age, disability, or political views:

> *I don't [feel part of the group] much as they're much older than me and all been there for years but I love the singing and the trying to learn something you don't know.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

> *I need to have large print scores with the result that I need to occupy a certain seat and take up extra room in rehearsals in order not to get in people's way with the score, but also to be able to see the choir master …. This is not readily understood by some, even though I have sung with the choir for quite a while.* (Female respondent, community group)

> *Much of my ideas are informed by left wing political views, so I am wary how deeply I talk.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

On the other hand, as Table 6.1-3 shows, there did not appear to be any significant associations between respondents' low scores for perceived inclusion and their singing background.

Table 6.1-3: Associations between low scores (< 7) for perceived inclusion and singing background using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Length of group membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	$X^2(1, n = 312) = 0.15, p = .702$
Previous group singing experience (none + school; adult)	$X^2(1, n = 313) = 2.06, p = .151$
Singing in other groups	$X^2(1, n = 313) = 0.33, p = .563$

6.1.3   Perceptions of exclusion within previous singing groups

Responses from individuals who reported that they had previously belonged to other singing groups before joining their current group ($n = 127$) along with the responses from the six individuals who had completed a separate survey for those who had left their group (see Section 3.13.5) also revealed that, while many had left because they had moved to another area or had stopped enjoying singing with the group, a small number of people had left because they had felt excluded in some way ($n = 9$).[4] For example, one respondent described how members of a previous group had behaved towards them in a patronising and homophobic way, while another felt that members "tended to stick to their already-formed relationships and did not think about including new members". They went on to explain further:

> *I was one of the youngest members in the group … and members seemed*
> *generally uninterested in bonding outside of the cliques/friendships they had*
> *already made. Several members also made comments about my height,*
> *loudness (of singing) and Americanness, which made me feel unwelcome*
> *socially in the group.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

One individual, who explained that their main reason for joining a singing group had been to build a social network, had felt "excluded by cliques which took charge of the choir" (male respondent, community group), while another had found the other group members to be "socially snobbish … and quite hard to make friends with" (female respondent, auditioning group) and decided to leave following the death of a close friend in the group. Similarly, another respondent had found the group unwelcoming:

> *The chorus…was not very interested in welcoming newcomers, encouraging*
> *social connectivity, etc. If you were a group officer or had a few friends already,*

---

[4] See Appendix I for more details of the reasons why respondents had left singing groups.

you felt a sense of belonging; otherwise it was cliques and individual strangers.

(Female respondent, auditioning group)

6.1.4 Not wanting to feel included

As discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5, section 5.1), respondents' answers to

a question asking them how important it was to them to feel included in their groups revealed

that feeling included in the group was not important to all respondents; 40 respondents (11%

of n = 373) said that feeling included was 'not very important' to them, and four said that it

was 'not at all important' to them (1% of n = 373).

Respondents were then categorised into two groups: those who rated inclusion as

'very important' or 'important' on the other hand, and those who rated inclusion as 'not very

important' or 'not at all important' on the other. As Table 6.1-4 shows, analysis of these

respondents' engagement in group singing and their diversity characteristics did not reveal

anything that distinguished these respondents from the others

Table 6.1-4: Associations between ratings for valuing inclusion and diversity characteristics using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Gender identity (male; female)	X^2(1, n = 359) = 1.03, p = .311
Ethnicity (white; BAME)	X^2(1, n = 351) = .313, p = .576
Age ($\leq$ 44; > 44)	X^2(1, n = 357) = 2.54, p = .111
Educational background (< uni.; uni. + postgrad.)	X^2(1, n = 344) = 1.83, p = .176
Health issues / disability (none; $\geq$ 1)	X^2(1, n = 322) = 0.00, p = .989

Furthermore, while it seemed that previous experience of group singing might be

significantly associated with low scores for personal agency (see Table 6.1-5), a Chi-Square

test using the Bonferroni correction revealed that they were not significantly associated.

Table 6.1-5: Associations between ratings for valuing inclusion and singing background using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Length of group membership ($\leq$ 1 yr.; > 1 yr.)	X^2(1, n = 358) = .386, p = .534
Previous singing experience (none + school; adult)	X^2(1, n = 359) = 4.00, p = .046*
Singing in other groups	X^2(1, n = 359) = 1.70, p = .193

Note: * indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.05.

Similarly, a Chi-Square test using the Bonferroni correction revealed that an apparently significant association between low scores for personal agency and group size (see Table 6.1-6), was not statistically significant.

Table 6.1-6: Associations between ratings for valuing inclusion and group factors using a Chi-Square test

Factor	Chi-Square test results
Group type (aud. + hybrid; comm. + spec.)	X^2(1, n = 373) = 3.42, p = .064
Group size ($\leq$ 100; > 100)	X^2(1, n = 373) = 5.24, p = .022*
Repertoire (classical; non-classical)	X^2(1, n = 373) = 2.88, p = .089

Note: * indicates that the result is statistically significant to a *p*-value of $\leq$.05.

Analysis of responses to an open question about valuing inclusion given by 29 of the 39 participants who had placed a low value on feeling included revealed that most (86% of *n* = 29) attached importance to the musical aspect of group singing, and often felt that they did not need to gain any social fulfilment from belonging to their group, as illustrated by these responses:

Feeling part of the group is based on the musical rather than the social experience. The music gels us together. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

I go to rehearsals because I enjoy singing, not for socialising. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Even so, six respondents (21% of $n = 29$) still recognised the value of feeling part of an inclusive group. As one person explained:

> *Singing and music is the primary reason for being in the group. However, there would be little pleasure in taking out an evening of your life if the environment wasn't friendly, with a positive approach to what we are doing.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Such comments suggest that there is no clear relationship between wanting to feel included and feeling included/excluded. The next question to consider then, is the extent to which groups' practices, climate and leadership may be perceived as excluding.

6.2   Excluding group practices

Analysis of the questionnaire data provided by members of the participating groups revealed a significant difference in the mean scores given for group practices by those reporting lower inclusion scores ($M = 22.63$, $SD = 4.67$) compared to those reporting higher inclusion scores ($M = 28.26$, $SD = 3.66$; $t(-4.75) = 16.02$, $p = <.001$), with significantly lower scores for group practices among those who felt less included. In the qualitative data, some group members (10% of $n = 383$) and group representatives (11 of $n = 31$) also identified ways in which groups' practices could undermine inclusion, as shown in Table 6.2-1 and discussed in the following sections.

Table 6.2-1: Overview of themes related to perceptions of exclusive group practices

Exclusive group practices	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions (*n* = 383)		
Associated with group practices	24	6.3
lack of consultation	8	2.1
expectations of behaviour	7	1.8
feeling pressurised	4	1.0
financial expectations	8	2.1
lack of opportunities to socialise	7	1.8
unable to participate due to ill health or disability	2	0.5
not feeling like individual needs attended to	15	3.9
because new to the group	7	1.8
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Associated with group practices	11	35.5
repertoire	4	12.9
not offering financial concessions	10	32.3
only offering financial concessions informally, reluctantly	4	12.9
failing to take care of individual needs	4	12.9
inaccessible rehearsal venue	5	16.1
but would try and change it if needed	2	6.5
including transgender singers	1	3.2
lack of attention to new members	1	3.2
not thought about how to be inclusive	4	12.9
due to nature of our group	3	9.7
tension between musical standards and inclusion	8	25.8
perceived negative impact of inclusion on group	1	3.2

6.2.1   Lack of consultation

A small number of group members (2% of $n = 383$) commented on the way in which those who ran the group failed to invite or listen to other members' views. For example, one person described how their group was dominated by a few individuals:

> *The current constitution means a small group can virtually impose their agenda and alternate voices are erased by them or managed into silence.* (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Another commented that "not everyone feels able to express their view as to what music we sing" (female respondent, auditioning group).

6.2.2   Expectations of behaviour

A few respondents (2% of $n = 383$) expressed a sense of alienation caused by the way in which they felt that their groups defined their expectations of members' behaviour. They described how their groups were too tolerant of non-attendance at rehearsals, or of people not volunteering to help with the group's activities and how this undermined their sense of feeling part of the group:

> *Nothing is said to members who don't pull their weight.* (Female respondent, community group)

> *There is no expectation that we all should help e.g. rearranging chairs, cleaning up after concerts etc.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

On the other hand, a similar number of respondents (1% of $n = 383$) described feeling pressurised by demands to help with choir tasks and to actively support the group:

> *I don't like pressure put upon people at rehearsals to help out running the choir. I don't have time and I would help out if I could.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

The main emphasis on being a good member of the group is to make money for it

by selling tickets. (Female respondent, hybrid group)

6.2.3 Financial expectations

Other respondents (2% of *n* = 383) described how the cost of taking part in group activities

could be excluding. One explained:

The term fees are already quite expensive, so I can never afford to attend any of

the away weekends or tours where it seems most of the close friendships are

developed. (Female respondent, community group)

Another felt that the members of their group's management committee came from more

privileged socio-economic backgrounds than other groups members and, therefore, lacked

awareness of members' different financial situations:

The committee all seem to be well-off retired people who don't need to worry

about how much tickets cost for concerts or how much social events are charged

at. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

This apparent lack of understanding of members' financial situations was borne out in the

interviews with group representatives which revealed that nearly a third (*n* = 10) of the 31

groups whose representatives were interviewed did not offer concessionary rates to their

members. It seemed that this was mainly due to lack of consideration:

I'm not sure who we'd offer a cheaper rate to. I suppose people on

benefits. We've never thought of that. Nobody's come and raised it, that I've

heard. (Group representative, hybrid group)

However, in one case, a group representative explained that the lack of concessionary

membership rates was due to a lack of available funds:

We can't afford to, as a group. I would have to pay it out of my own pocket.

(Group representative, community group)

Furthermore, in four cases, it seemed that concessionary rates were only offered on an informal basis and, sometimes, with reluctance. For example, one group representative suggested that their group held back from promoting their concessionary rates:

We have to be careful to make sure we're not run over by people claiming to be impoverished... So we're not rushing around ramming financial concessions down people's throats. (Group representative, hybrid group)

6.2.4   Lack of opportunities to socialise

A few respondents (2% of $n = 383$) felt that a lack of opportunities to socialise with other group members, particularly within larger groups, made it difficult to feel integrated within the group. One person explained:

There would need to be more socialising opportunities and, I suppose, a smaller group to really feel part of it. (Male respondent, auditioning group)

Another highlighted the lack of time within rehearsals for informal conversations with others:

We have too little time to have a cup of tea and chat. I think this is a barrier to people getting to know each other. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

6.2.5   Failing to take care of individual needs

Four group representatives described difficulties that their groups had experienced or might experience in responding to the individual needs of group members. For example, one group representative explained how their group had struggled to integrate an individual with little knowledge of English:

It became very, very difficult, particularly for one individual because she simply did not understand what was being said at rehearsals. (Group representative, auditioning group)

Another described how their group had been challenged by the behaviour of an individual who was on the autistic spectrum:

Our volunteer texts everybody every week [to let them know] what we're doing next … He [the individual on the autistic spectrum] will text her and ring her all kinds of times of the day and night, and we've had to work very hard to stop that happening without preventing him coming. (Group representative, community group)

Furthermore, two group members described how they felt excluded through being unable to participate fully in their group's activities due to their ill health or a disability. For example, one person explained how, "due to health problems I can't always go, so I feel left out" (female respondent, hybrid group). The other respondent described how tinnitus affected their ability to hear announcements made during rehearsals which meant they did not know what was going on. Moreover, three group representatives recognised the inaccessibility of the venue in which they rehearsed:

If someone comes with a wheelchair, we have to put up an old-fashioned ramp, and they can't get to the toilet. (Group representative, community group)

In two other cases, group representatives explained that their group's rehearsal venue was inaccessible to people with disabilities, but suggested that their group would seek to make it accessible should the need to arise:

If anyone ever came to us and had any sort of accessibility needs, we would absolutely go out of our way. But it's hard to reach out when we haven't really got the capacity to take any new people. (Group representative, community group)

On the other hand, one interviewee suggested that it would not be appropriate for their group to make specific arrangements for members with disabilities to use aids or to sit when needed during performances:

> *We wouldn't allow that in a concert. It would make the choir look ridiculous.*
> (Group representative, auditioning group)

They described a situation where the manager of a prestigious concert hall had refused to accommodate the needs of a group member with a disability, which had resulted in the group member feeling unable to perform in the concert.

Including transgendered singers within a single-sex group was also identified as a challenge by another group representative, who explained that this would be difficult if the individual's vocal range did not fit with the rest of the group:

> *If their voice part didn't identify as a male voice part, we may have to have a*
> *conversation around how that would work in the membership.* (Group
> representative, community group)

Comments from some group members (4% of n = 383) also reflected the importance of group practices that took care of the needs of individual group members. For example, some described how being new to the group meant that individuals (n = 7) did not feel themselves included within the group. For example, one person explained that they had not been given any information on who was involved in running the group:

> *As a new member I found it difficult to know who was who, and what role they*
> *played.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

A lack of attention to new members was also reflected by one of the group representatives interviewed who felt that their group generally left it to individual members to be welcoming to newcomers:

On a personal level, we do make quite a lot of effort but there's very little

institutional re-enforcement. (Group representative, hybrid group)

6.2.6 Apathy and resistance

Four group representatives, who all occupied positions of leadership within their groups, revealed that they had not previously given much thought to being inclusive:

I have to say we haven't addressed this directly... It's not anything, I'll be honest,

that we've talked about it. (Group representative, auditioning group)

In another three cases, a lack of focus on diversity and inclusion appeared to be associated with the group's perceived status. For example, one representative explained how their group's selective nature held them back from pro-active recruitment:

Because it's a chamber choir, it's not just a community choir. We need to, or

expect to, have people with ability and experience. So it's not just as easy as

inviting people from a different background to come and sing with us. (Group

representative, auditioning group)

Group representatives ($n = 8$) also described what they perceived as a tension between maintaining their group's musical quality and including people with little previous singing experience:

We struggle with trying to keep new people keen and engaged and trying to

support them but also trying to keep the standard high. (Group representative,

auditioning group)

In addition, another representative suggested that the size of a group could make it difficult to include people with less musical ability:

> *Because of its small size, if people really can't hold a tune, then they can't stay. That's a very awkward, difficult issue which we often talk about… Inclusion can only go up to a certain point.* (Group representative, community group)

Making an active effort to be inclusive and recruit members from diverse backgrounds was perceived by another group representative as having a potentially negative impact on their group:

> *I'm slightly ambivalent about it because it works pretty well as a choir of a hundred people. If we became a choir of a hundred and fifty people, we'd start to have some problems with numbers in terms of staging.* (Group representative, hybrid group)

Another person recognised that they had never thought about inclusion as they felt that their group was open to everyone and that they, therefore, did not need to "go out and look for certain people" (group representative, hybrid group).

6.3   Excluding group climate

Analysis of the questionnaire data provided by members of the participating groups revealed a significant difference in the mean scores given for group climate given by those reporting lower inclusion scores ($M = 13.08$, $SD = 4.11$) compared to those reporting higher inclusion scores ($M = 18.44$, $SD = 12.03$; $t(-4.67) = 12.31$, $p = .001$), with significantly lower scores for group climate among those who felt less included. Analysis of comments from group representatives ($n = 5$) and group members (15% of $n = 383$) also revealed how group members' behaviour could feel excluding for some, and could undermine the sense of the group being inclusive to all (see Table 6.3-1).

Table 6.3-1: Overview of themes related to perceptions of exclusive group climate

Exclusive group climate	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions (*n* = 383)		
Associated with group climate	58	15.1
others leave me out, don't care about me	42	10.9
cliques	11	2.8
unwelcoming, condescending	7	1.8
others don't show commitment to group	19	4.9
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Associated with group climate	5	16.1
excluding behaviour	5	16.1
lack of unity	2	6.5

6.3.1   Excluding behaviour

In their responses to the participant questionnaire, a small number of respondents (11% of

n = 383) described how they felt other members of the group behaved in an excluding way.

Some described how this made them feel isolated from the group:

I am a very sociable, gregarious person, but am not welcomed, or feel socially

connected with this group, so now I don't bother to socialise and don't care if no

one talks to me. (Female respondent, auditioning group)

I believe they meet after in the pub, but no one has ever asked me. (Female

respondent, community group).

I like to be able to talk and swap news with other members, but this does not

happen in this group unless you know them already. (Female respondent,

auditioning group)

People don't care about each other – when out of sight, out of mind. (Male

respondent, auditioning group)

One person explained how they had hoped that joining the group would reduce their loneliness but found a lack of sociability:

> *I joined within a year of my wife's death and was feeling lonely… I feel disappointed that there is very little social extension of the group beyond rehearsal/performance. I had hoped for a good deal more.* (Male respondent, hybrid group)

A small number of respondents (3% of $n = 383$) described how they felt that cliques within their groups made it difficult to feel part of the group:

> *Members of the choir can be very closed and have their own friends who they always sit with … I've been here over seven years and still don't know some people in the section that I sing with.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

> *[There are] lots of well-established friendship groups and [they] don't really include recently joined singers.* (Female respondent, hybrid group)

Others (2% of $n = 383$) suggested that individual members displayed an unwelcoming attitude or were condescending to people who they felt were less musically accomplished than themselves:

> *Some members feel that they are superior to others who maybe don't have anywhere near the experience or talent. This has most definitely put me off many times … and has made me think about leaving.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Some group representatives ($n = 5$) also felt that members' behaviour could be excluding. For example, one described how new members were often ignored by existing group members:

> *When we have a new member, people go out of their way during the tea-break to try and make the person feel welcome. But that only lasts for a couple of weeks*

and then they're back talking to the people they like to talk to, and sometimes

people can be a bit left. (Group representative, auditioning group)

Another respondent, who scored the group climate highly but rated their own sense of

inclusion poorly explained how:

I wasn't welcomed fifteen years ago – now they welcome new members. People

are probably supportive/ friendly etc with each other, not to me. I'm an outsider.

(Female respondent, auditioning group).

In addition, among the respondents who had left singing groups and who gave their reasons

for this (*n* = 160), sixteen respondents identified the group being unfriendly or the behaviour

of individual members as the cause of their departure (see Appendix I). For example, one

respondent described how they had perceived the other group members to be judgemental

and discriminatory:

The majority of members were very middle class in values and social attitude. I

felt patronised and [experienced] homophobia. (Male respondent, hybrid group)

6.3.2   Lack of group ethos

Feeling that other members were unwilling to help out in the group was also seen as

undermining of an inclusive climate, as some members (5% of *n* = 383) suggested that

commitment to the group was demonstrated through helping out with practical tasks, such as

clearing up after concerts. One person explained:

If there were more people willing to help, the choir might feel different and thus all

of us get a greater sense of making the group, 'us'. (Female respondent,

auditioning group)

Others (1% of *n* = 383) appeared to feel let down by members not coming to rehearsals

regularly or not making enough effort to learn their music:

Singing in a choir is a team effort, and if people don't attend regularly and/or don't

learn the music, it holds the whole group back, and makes it more difficult for

those who play a full part. (Female respondent, community group)

Similarly, two of the group representatives described a lack of unity within their groups:

Not everyone's views are aligned in terms of what the choir's for and who it's for

… We're not all one big happy family unfortunately. (Group representative,

auditioning group)

I would say that there are different factions, and sometimes those come to the

surface...there are little squabbles, I'm not going to say it's always a rosy picture.

(Group representative, community group)

6.4   Excluding group leadership

Analysis of the questionnaire data provided by members of the participating groups did not

reveal a significant difference in the mean scores given for group leadership among those

reporting lower inclusion scores ($M = 31.89$, $SD = 5.18$) compared to those reporting higher

inclusion scores ($M = 33.41$, $SD = 4.40$; $t(-.868) = 8.47$, $p = .409$). However, the qualitative

data revealed how some group members (14% of $n = 383$) and group representatives ($n = 3$)

felt the behaviour of their group's conductor could undermine members' sense of inclusion,

as shown in Table 6.4-1.

Table 6.4-1: Overview of themes related to perceptions of exclusive group leadership

Exclusive group leadership	No.	%
Respondents' perceptions (*n* = 383)		
Associated with group leadership	53	13.8
impatient, frustrated, cross	11	2.8
not communicating clearly	15	3.9
unwilling to take suggestions on board	3	0.7
discriminatory	1	0.3
not valuing the group	8	2.1
not engaging with the group, not interested	7	1.8
Group representatives' perceptions (*n* = 31)		
Associated with group leadership	3	9.7
conductor's behaviour	1	3.2
committee	1	3.2
lack of recognition of responsibility for inclusiveness	1	3.2

6.4.1 Negative behaviour towards group members

Some respondents (3% of *n* = 383) described how they felt alienated from the group by their conductor being impatient and showing their frustration:

> *She can be very impatient and negative with people who don't sing well or can't pick things up quickly.* (Female respondent, community group)

> *He can be sarcastic and snide, sometimes bordering on rudeness… Sometimes when he's cross, he can make me nervous – hardly helpful for my singing.* (Female respondent, auditioning group)

Other respondents described how the conductor not communicating clearly (4% of *n* = 383) or being unwilling to listen to members' feedback (1% of *n* = 383) could leave them feeling excluded, while one group member perceived their conductor's behaviour as discriminatory:

He's super patronising / sexist when women ask questions as opposed to the

men! (Female respondent, auditioning group)

One group representative also recognised how the conductor's behaviour could have a

negative impact on their group's membership:

I've seen people leave if they haven't felt heard or included or appreciated by the

musical director. (Group representative, community group)

Another group representative noted how the wider management structure of the group could

have a negative impact on inclusion:

When you have a big choir, you should be conscious not to show favouritism,

especially if there's also a committee, that they don't dominate either. So

ensuring that the committee is not cliquey, and that the power is distributed well.

(Group representative, community group)

Among the respondents who had left singing groups and who gave their reasons for this ($n =$

160), some revealed that the conductor's behaviour had been the cause of their departure

from the group ($n = 25$).[5] For example, one person described how the conductor of a

previous group had singled them out for criticism in front of the whole group, while another

had left a group where they had been made to feel inadequate by the conductor:

He was rude and patronising. I never felt that I achieved anything and therefore

never progressed. (Female respondent, hybrid group)

6.4.2   Not valuing the group

Other group members (2% of $n = 383$) felt that their conductor failed to provide enough

encouragement to the group as a whole:

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[5] See Appendix I for a summary of the data related to respondents' reasons for leaving groups.

I think he needs to be more positive about our efforts and give more praise.

(Female respondent, hybrid group)

Similarly, a few group members (2% of *n* = 383) felt that that their conductor did not engage enough with the group, which gave the impression that they were not interested in the group:

I think he feels uncomfortable socially and a lot of long-standing members left because of this and because they said they felt bored. (Female respondent, community group)

Similarly, one of the conductors interviewed questioned whether they should feel any responsibility for creating an inclusive group:

I suspect that if people complained about cliquey-ness, they probably wouldn't see that as my problem. And I'm not sure that I could do anything to change it. (Group representative, hybrid group)

6.5   Chapter summary

Overall, the findings related to exclusion with the participating singing groups revealed that a sense of exclusion appeared to be directly affected by group practices, group climate and group leadership. However, the analysis of the quantitative data revealed that feeling excluded did not appear to be related to individuals' diversity characteristics, nor to the length of time that they had belonged to their group, or to the leadership, type, size or repertoire of the group in which they sang. Moreover, analysis of the qualitative data also suggested that feeling included was not important to some respondents who tended to value the musical aspect of group singing over the social aspect.

Group members and representatives identified a number of ways in which group practices, group climate and group leadership could undermine individuals' sense of inclusion. For example, group practices such as the selection of the music sung by the

group, a lack of consultation and expectations around the ways in which members were supposed to contribute to the group could leave some individuals feeling excluded. Equally, a sense of exclusion could be fostered by a lack of attention to individual needs within the group, particularly in taking care of members who were new to the group and those who had specific needs related to their health, disability or financial circumstances. Additionally, it appeared that some groups were reluctant to engage in inclusive practices, perceiving a tension between the effective functioning of their group and being inclusive.

Certain aspects of a group's climate, such as the existence of cliques within the group or a sense that others were not contributing to the group, could also undermine individuals' sense of inclusion within the group. Similarly, perceptions of otherness could also contribute to a sense of the group climate not being inclusive, when, for example, it seemed that the majority of group members shared a common socio-economic background or sexual orientation. Finally, the way in which conductors behaved towards individual members, or towards the group as a whole, could also affect members' sense of inclusion, particularly when conductors behaved in a negative manner or failed to demonstrate a sense of valuing the group.

These findings, and others reported in the previous two chapters, will be discussed in greater depth in the following chapter which explores how the findings from this study relate to previous research into diversity, inclusion and exclusion, and offers new insights into these issues within the context of adult amateur group singing.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 and considers how these relate to existing research in the field, as well as how they shed new light on aspects of diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing. Drawing on interviews with group representatives from 31 adult amateur singing groups and a survey completed by 383 members of these groups, the findings have helped to show how diversity and inclusion manifest in these groups and the ways in which this both reflects and, in some instances, contradicts existing knowledge of participation in adult amateur group singing.

7.1   Diversity in adult amateur group singing

Previous research has tended either to present adult group singing as a "monolithic, unitary construct" (Daugherty, 2002, p. 12), drawing its samples from the traditional choral society model (e.g. Clift et al., 2008; Kreutz & Brünger, 2012) or focusing on specific types of singing groups, such as prison-based groups (Cohen, 2012; Silber, 2005), groups for the homeless (Coyne, 2018; Dingle, Pennings, & Brander, 2010), groups for older people (e.g. Skingley, Martin, & Clift, 2015; Teater & Baldwin, 2014), or groups for people with health conditions (e.g. Buetow, Talmage, Mccann, Fogg, & Purdy, 2014; Gale, Enright, Reagon, Lewis, & Van Deursen, 2012). The interviews with group representations and the questionnaire to group members enabled the study to investigate the diversity of the groups themselves and of the individuals who participate in these groups.

7.1.1   A rich array of singing activity

This study, on the other hand, has provided a more holistic overview of adult amateur group singing by focusing on groups across a single area, akin to Russell's study of choral singing in the American city of Decatur (2006), and to Finnegan's study of music-making in the English town of Milton Keynes (1989). By studying singing groups operating in the London

borough of Camden, this study has highlighted, as did the studies by Russell and Finnegan, both the extent and the richness of activity taking place, with a multitude of singing groups in existence, ranging in size and composition. Far from being a "monolithic, unitary construct" (Daugherty, 2002, p. 12), adult amateur group singing has emerged in this study as a medley of different forms of group singing, from the traditional choral societies singing music from the classical canon to groups singing Jewish music, Bulgarian folk music, gospel, rock, pop and political songs, and bringing together individuals with a wide range of life experiences and backgrounds. This richness of musical activity has not been widely discussed in the academic literature, although a report produced by Voices Now in 2017 highlighted an increasing diversity of singing provision in the UK:

> *"More and more people from all walks of life have joined an ever-growing body of choirs in every corner of the UK. Many of the groups were long-established, but many others have been created by imaginative, socially-minded and entrepreneurial individuals to respond to a specific need in their community, or through a drive to push the choral art form to its limits.* (Voices Now, 2017)

These findings are encouraging as they contradict previous research conducted in the USA which suggested that amateur singing groups were becoming more exclusive, with restrictive practices such as auditions being imposed by the vast majority of groups (Bell, 2008). This had led Bell to conclude that "community choirs available to the general public of singers…are disappearing from our communities" (p. 237). However, the evidence emerging through this study points to a wide range of singing groups, most of whom did not audition new members, thereby making it easier for individuals from different backgrounds and experiences to find and join singing groups that appeal to them.

7.1.2   Greater diversity within some types of group

This study also revealed considerable differences in the composition and membership of different groups. While the evidence from this study as a whole confirmed previously reported trends (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1), in that the membership of the participating groups was reported to be mainly female, white, aged over 45 and from well-educated backgrounds (see Chapter 4, section 4.2), it appears that by categorising the groups as auditioning, hybrid, community and specialist (see Chapter 3, section 3.9.3), other trends could be distinguished that were associated with group type.

Firstly, the study revealed that, among the participating groups, the auditioning groups tended to be larger than other types of group, while the specialist groups tended to be smaller. The auditioning and hybrid groups were also more likely to be performing music from the western classical canon, while the community and specialist groups were generally singing music from a mix of styles or from non-classical traditions.

Secondly, and potentially linked to this, the study revealed evidence of greater diversity in the membership of some types of group. In particular, the specialist groups were more likely than the other types of group to have members who were from BAME backgrounds as well as members without university or postgraduate qualifications. In addition, the specialist groups tended to have more male than female members and more members who reported physical health issues and disabilities.

7.1.3   Changing diversity

There were also some indications that diversity in the membership of the participating singing groups may be changing, with some evidence that individuals from BAME backgrounds were more likely to have joined their groups within the previous year, as were younger singers. While the finding related to younger singers may be explained by individuals transitioning from youth groups to adult groups, it may also be the result of the increased media attention given to amateur group singing, which may have begun to change

perceptions of amateur group singing as an activity that is not relevant or appealing to younger people (Davis, 2016). Similarly, the media focus on amateur group singing that attracts individuals from diverse backgrounds – exemplified in a recent article in the Guardian newspaper entitled, "Black, white, avant-garde, atheist – how did choirs become so cool?" (Allan, 2020) – may also have increased public awareness of group singing as an accessible and appealing activity for people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

7.1.4   Other aspects of diversity

The study allowed other aspects of diversity within the groups to surface. For example, some individuals reported differences in terms of socio-economic background, nationality, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political views. A greater awareness of these different aspects of diversity is important as it provides further evidence of the richness of adult amateur group singing, echoing the findings of Finnegan's study (1989), in which she concluded:

> *One of the characteristics of musical activities is the great diversity not just in the music itself but in the kind of people who take part – from both sexes, all ages, and just about every kind of occupational and educational background.*

(Finnegan, 1989, p.330)

A greater awareness of different aspects of diversity is also important as it suggests that diversity in adult amateur singing groups is more complex, nuanced and fluid than has been generally appreciated, and challenges perceptions of group singing as "White spaces" with systems that "privilege the White, educated middle classes" (Garnett, 2005, p. 268). While such groups do exist, the evidence from this study suggests that these groups are in a minority in the area studied. Seeing all singing groups as White/non-White spaces comprises a white normative perspective that sees non-whiteness as 'other' and ignores other aspects of diversity (Yerichuk, 2015).

While other research carried out within singing groups has suggested that there may be greater diversity within individual groups (see, for example, Eastis, 1998; Hillman, 2002; Vaag, Saksvik, Theorell, Skillingstad, & Bjerkeset, 2012; Yerichuk, 2015), there has been little evidence of diversity emerging in larger-scale studies of group singing (e.g. Chorus America, 2003; Clift et al., 2008; Parkinson, 2016). By including a wide range of singing groups in this study, the findings have, therefore, revealed evidence of greater, more complex, and potentially increasing, diversity in adult amateur group singing.

7.1.5   A virtuous cycle of diversity

it is possible, therefore, that a virtuous circle will emerge between increased diversity in the composition and range of singing groups and a correlated increase in the diversity in their membership. However, this study also highlights the role that inclusion plays in supporting diversity within singing groups (see Section 7.3); the virtuous circle between diversity in the range of singing groups and diversity in their membership is, therefore, unlikely to be sustained unless the groups themselves are inclusive, as shown in Figure 7.1-1.
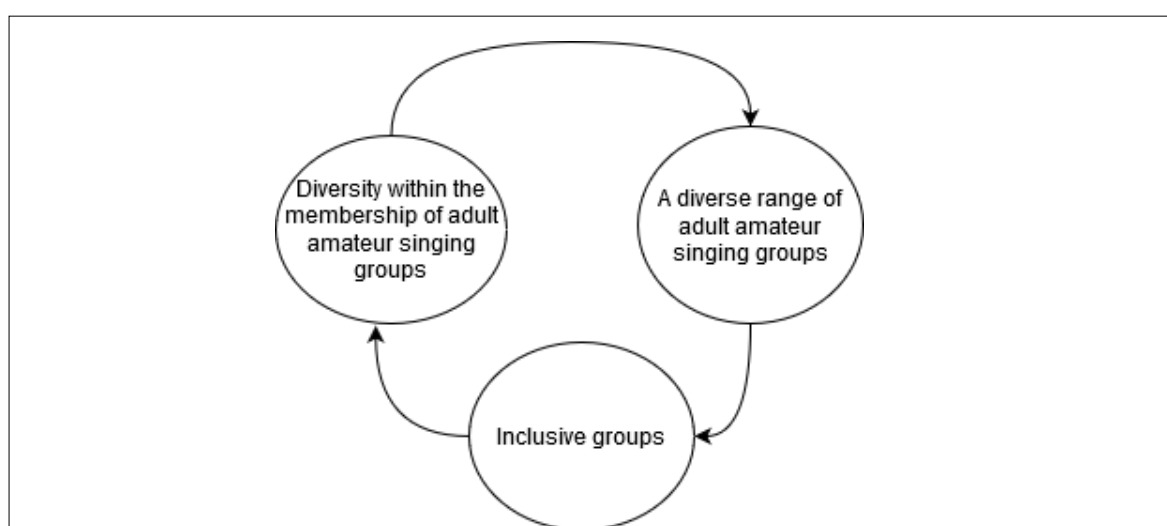

Figure 7.1-1: The virtuous cycle between diversity and inclusion

The virtuous cycle between diversity and inclusion has previously been discussed in a study of education programmes and information institutions which explored issues of diversity,

inclusion, rights, justice, and equity (Jaeger et al., 2015). The authors found that diversity and inclusion could be fostered by individual and simultaneous changes in different areas, such as the way in which diversity and inclusion were reflected in the curriculum, informed recruitment practices, and were implemented in services provided by the libraries and other cultural heritage institutions. While it may still be too early to see evidence of this in the context of adult amateur group singing, this model posits that, in the future, increased diversity in the membership of adult amateur singing groups could result from increased diversity in singing provision, supported by inclusive practices in the groups themselves.

7.1.6   *Relationships between diversity with repertoire and group size*

At the same time, the findings related to group type and diversity highlight the relationships between group size, repertoire and diversity in the membership of singing groups. On the one hand, previous research has shown that enjoyment of the repertoire is one of the key factors motivating participation in group singing (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.2). On the other hand, the western classical repertoire has been shown to promote white dominance in its cultural values (Griffiths, 2020) and, consequently, to alienate and exclude individuals from other ethnic backgrounds (de Quadros, 2015; O'Toole, 2005). These effects were apparent in the findings from this study; although only a minority of the participating groups focused on singing music from the western classical canon, these groups were significantly less diverse than groups singing other types of repertoire.

      Equally, the size of the group may have an influence on the membership of singing groups. In her study of singers' experiences within a community group in the USA, Kennedy (2009) describes how some singers had left their groups because they had become dissatisfied singing in a larger group and "mourned the loss of the small intimate group the choir used to be" (p. 195). Other individuals may prefer to sing in a larger group where they feel less visible and, therefore, safer (Jacob et al., 2009). Both group size and repertoire, therefore, are likely to play a role in determining which individuals join and remain part of a

group. Furthermore, as Kennedy's research suggests, group size and repertoire may also influence group members' sense of inclusion, a topic to which we will, therefore, turn later (see Section 7.3).

7.2   Inclusion and exclusion in adult amateur group singing

Diversity and inclusion are closely intertwined, although distinct, concepts (Ferdman, 2014); while diversity focuses on the demographic composition of organisations, inclusion focuses on the meaningful participation of all individuals within organisations (Roberson, 2006; Stevens, Plaut, & Sanchez-Burks, 2008) and their sense of being part of an organisation (Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, & Kossek, 2008).   By focusing on both diversity and inclusion, this study sought to move beyond asking simply *who* participates in adult amateur group singing (as discussed in the previous section) to asking *how* different individuals experience their inclusion in adult amateur group singing and what factors support or hinder this. Using the framework of inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011), the research, therefore, investigated individuals' perceptions of inclusion as well as the ways in which this was affected by group practices, climate and leadership. It should, nonetheless, be recognised that, in using a bespoke questionnaire which was developed for this study and which, therefore, has not been previously tested and validated, some caution should be exercised in drawing firm conclusions from the quantitative findings presented here. At the same time, these findings were supported by those emerging from the qualitative data which, therefore, serves to enhance and strengthen the overall findings.

7.2.1   *The potential benefits of inclusion*

The findings from this study revealed that feeling included was important to the majority of respondents from the participating groups, and suggested a number of ways in which feeling included was important to individuals and groups. As previous research has shown, belonging to a singing group can fulfil a key role in enhancing a sense of self-identity and

purpose, improving social interaction, and enabling people to make new friends (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.3).

In this study, a range of benefits of inclusion to individuals were suggested in terms of enhancing individuals' experience of singing, reducing their isolation, and improving their self-confidence and self-esteem. While these benefits have already been discussed in the literature (again, see Chapter 2, section 2.3.3), viewing group singing through the lens of inclusion offers a new perspective through which to view these findings and suggests that perceived inclusion may be an enabling factor that allows these wellbeing effects to be experienced. Indeed, it might be argued that, unless an individual feels part of the group, they are unlikely to experience many of the benefits associated with group singing. Inclusion, then, can be considered as a key intermediary between participation in group singing and positive effects of group singing, and particularly those associated with wider social inclusion (Bailey & Davidson, 2005).

Benefits to the group were also suggested by both group members and representatives, such as improved group cohesion and better performance as a result of closer teamwork and increased trust between group members. This resonates with research conducted in the workplace where researchers have shown the benefits of inclusion in terms of increasing members' commitment to the organisation and improving organisational performance (Cho & Mor Barak, 2008; Chung et al., 2020; Findler, Wind &, Mor Barak, 2007). In the context of singing groups, there has been some recognition of the value of teamwork (see, for example, Kirrane et al., 2016), however there has been little explicit discussion of the value of inclusion to singing groups. The fact that the majority of respondents in this study appeared to value feeling included suggests that wanting to feel part of the group is a motivating factor for many of those who participate in group singing. Groups that fail to nurture their members' sense of inclusion may, therefore, find that they lose members if the experience of being part of the group does not live up to their

expectations. Another benefit, then, of promoting a sense of inclusion may be, then, that groups can retain their members and, thus, become more sustainable.

Moreover, the experience of inclusion may also help individuals to become more inclusive of others, particularly when the groups bring together members from diverse backgrounds, as demonstrated in research by Silber (2005) and Dingle et al. (2012). Indeed, in Chorus America's latest study (Chorus America, 2019), which comprised over 5,000 respondents, nearly two-thirds reported that choral participation had made them more open to and accepting of people who were different from them or who held different views. Similarly, in this research, there were examples of respondents appreciating each other's differences and the opportunity to come together with others from different walks of life.

In summary, Figure 7.2-1 proposes a model that shows how promoting a sense of inclusion within singing groups may help to increase individuals' social inclusion and personal wellbeing as well as improving the sustainability of the groups themselves.
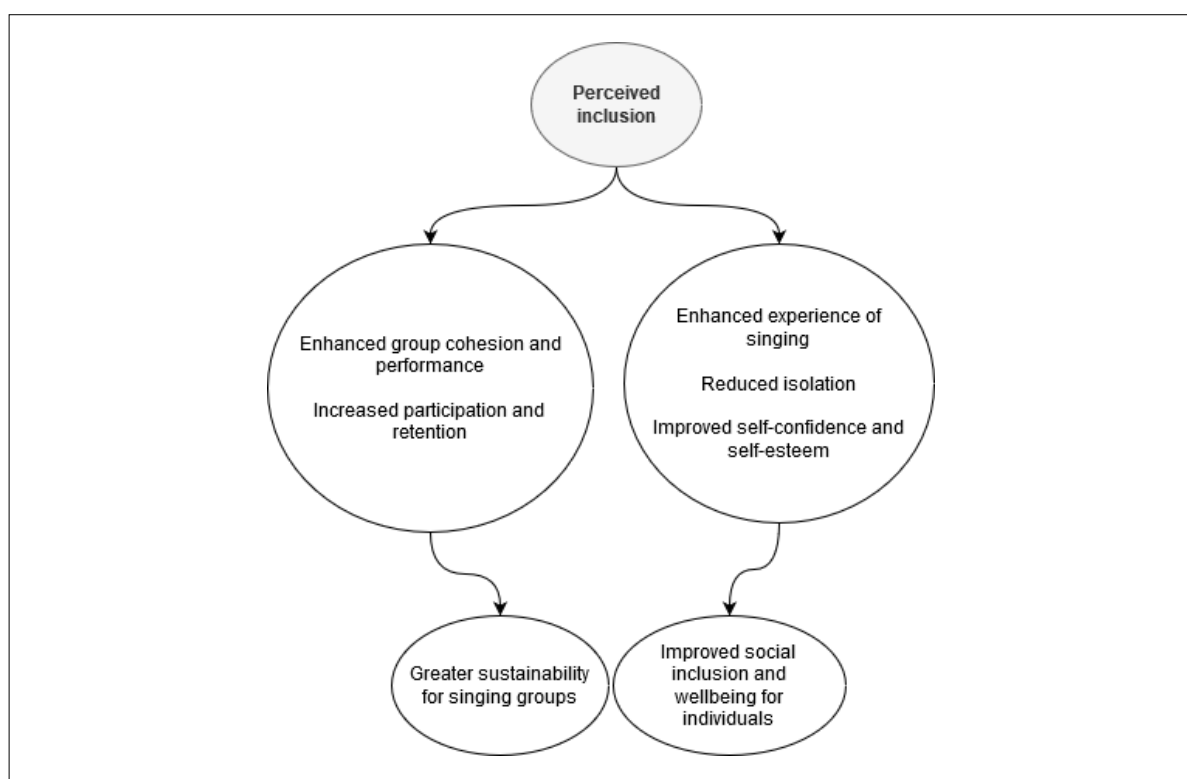

Figure 7.2-1: Proposed model of inclusion outcomes for adult amateur group singing

These outcomes emerged in the qualitative data, and would, therefore, require greater refinement and testing before it would be possible to make any definitive statements about the value of inclusion to individuals and groups in the context of adult amateur group singing. Nonetheless, these findings suggest that inclusion may play a key role in enhancing the sustainability of singing groups and in enabling the individuals who participate in these groups to experience the benefits that are associated with participation.

7.2.2   *Defining inclusion within adult amateur group singing*

This study has also provided a preliminary conceptualisation of what inclusion means in the context of adult amateur group singing. This has been evolved from broader organisational definitions of inclusion (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2) and refined through reviewing existing research related to adult amateur group singing (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.2). The measures of inclusion that emerged through this process were then assessed in the participant questionnaire, which also provided opportunities for respondents to describe their experiences of inclusion within their singing groups. Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data revealed some communalities between respondents' perceptions of inclusion and broader organisational definitions of inclusion, as well as some differences.

<u>A sense of belonging</u>

Reflecting the findings from previous research (e.g. Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Livesey, Morrison, Clift, & Camic, 2012; Pearce et al., 2016), many respondents highlighted the sense of belonging which they experienced from participating in adult group singing. For some, this was described as providing a sense of camaraderie and fellowship while, for others, the experience was likened to being part of a family. While these themes have emerged in other research (Joseph & Southcottt, 2015; Krallmann, 2016; Leske, 2016; Schuff, 2014; Stollak, Stollak, & Wasner, 1991, 1994; Strayhorn, 2011), the evidence from

this study suggests that a sense of belonging is a key aspect of perceived inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

<u>Authenticity</u>

The concept of authenticity, which has also been associated with inclusion in organisational contexts (e.g. Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, & Jans, 2014), implies that members feel safe to be themselves in the group. In this research, group members identified strongly with the statement, "I feel I can be myself in the group", with some describing how they felt accepted by the group without judgement or criticism. This sense of safety within the group, which has been noted in other research (e.g. Durrant, 2005; van der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Yerichuk, 2010; Willingham, 2005) appears to contribute to a sense of inclusion as individuals feel they can "bring their whole selves" (Vohra et al., 2015, p. 361) to the group.

Moreover, feeling that you can be yourself in the group is also important in supporting diversity, so that those who are different from others around them are not made to feel "deviant and strange" (Ferdman, 2007, p.29). Thus, the more diverse a group becomes in its membership, the more important it is that individuals within the group feel safe to be themselves. Nonetheless, in writing about inclusion and authenticity, Ferdman cautions against associating a sense of authenticity with an expectation of feeling fully comfortable in the group, arguing instead that inclusion requires that everyone should feel equally uncomfortable. In understanding authenticity in the context of adult group singing, this is helpful in suggesting that we should not expect all group members to report high levels of perceived authenticity. However, it appears, nonetheless, that authenticity is a relevant measure in assessing inclusion within singing groups.

<u>Musical inclusion</u>

Sharing musical experiences with others in the group was another important element in contributing to individuals' perceptions of inclusion. It seemed that the experience of singing

with others established a "common chorus experience" as described by Parker (2010) where group members came to "own their experiences and differentiate themselves from others through their choral membership" (pp. 346 – 347). Parker goes on to suggest that this results in an 'in-group' (Tajfel, 1981) in which singers feel they "understand one another and the world with clearer eyes than their non- singing peers" (p. 347) and which, in turn, strengthens their sense of belonging. Given the vulnerability implicit in the experience of group singing, which requires individuals to share their sound with the group and reveal their voice to those around them, feeling accepted as a singer is likely to be important in enabling members to feel part of the singing group. This sense that respondents felt bound together by their communal musical experiences emerged particularly strongly in the qualitative data, with one respondent, for example, describing how being part of a singing group felt like being "one of many drops of rain".

Social inclusion

Feeling socially included by others in the group was the measure that attracted the highest levels of disagreement. While many respondents felt that others in the group cared about them, and some described how this sense of social inclusion was manifest through friendships and mutual support, others described feeling excluded, particularly by the presence of cliques within the group.

However, the study also revealed that wanting to feel socially included was not important to everyone; a small minority of individuals appeared to take part in group singing for purely musical reasons and did not place any value of feeling part of the social group. One explanation for this is offered by social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981) which proposes the concept that group membership can be seen as a way of reducing uncertainty through grounding one's self-concept in group membership (Abrams & Hogg, 2008). Those who feel relatively certain in themselves may feel less motivated to experience a sense of being part of a social group. Within the context of adult group singing, where motivations to join a

group can be both musical (Bell, 2004; Wilson, 2011) and social (Jacob et al., 2009;

Redman, 2016), it may be that those who feel more certain in themselves, may care less

about feeling part of the social group.

Feeling valued

Similarly, feeling valued appears to have been less relevant for some individuals. In the

workplace context, a sense of being appreciated and valued involves "being treated as an

appreciated and esteemed member of the group and organisation" (Shore et al., 2017,

p. 17). In the context of singing groups, this sense of being valued as an individual may be

more difficult for individuals to experience, particularly if groups are focused on producing

high-quality performances. In these instances, the conductor's attention tends to be focused

on the sound produced by the group, and the individual singer becomes a single cog in a

machine. Such a situation is described by Hess (2012), who describes how singing in a

choir had given her a "magical" experience of feeling part of something bigger than herself

(p. 40), while simultaneously erasing her sense of being an individual within the group. She

argues for a new, democratic approach to choral pedagogy which "values singers as

creative beings" (p. 46). Thus, a sense of being valued as an individual within the group,

while this may be particularly challenging within the traditional, classical model of adult

amateur singing groups, emerges as an important aspect of inclusion.

Feeling 'other'

While the quantitative analysis revealed that respondents' sense of inclusion did not appear

to be affected by their age, gender identity, ethnic origin, educational background, health or

disability, the qualitative analysis revealed that a small number of individuals felt less

included within their groups due to their age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation,

health issues or disability. Perceiving oneself as different to others in the group is more

likely to result in a reduced sense of inclusion (Otten, Schaafsma, & Jansen, 2016), and the

feelings of 'otherness' expressed by some respondents in this study reflect the sense of inclusion as a sliding scale where "inclusion and exclusion are the extreme poles of a continuum of relations of inclusion/exclusion" (O'Reilly, 2005, p. 85) and where individuals can feel simultaneously included and excluded to different degrees (Ferdman, 2017).

7.2.3   Creating inclusion within adult amateur singing groups

Drawing on the framework developed by Shore et al. (2011), this study aimed to explore how group practices, group climate and group leadership contributed, or undermined, their members' sense of inclusion.

<u>Implementing inclusive group practices</u>

Turning first to group practices – the ways in which groups admit and look after their members – the literature review had revealed that these have generally received little attention in previous research (se Chapter 2, section 2.5.2). However, some aspects of group practices, such as decisions around repertoire, the process of auditioning new members, and expectations around musical literacy, diction and group behaviour have been shown to create boundaries that exclude people from joining and feeling part of singing groups (Bell, 2008; de Quadros, 2015; Garnett, 2005; O'Toole, 2005). The way in which groups include new members and look after their existing members has also been shown to affect whether people choose to stay in a group (Coffin, 2004).

Investing in organisational socialisation

This study provided some insight into the practices that those responsible for organising singing groups consider as promoting inclusion within their groups. For example, interviews with group representatives revealed that many groups were attempting to be inclusive of new members through a specific and organised welcoming process. This involved giving existing group members responsibility for looking after new members, as well as organising

events to welcome new members into the group. While other researchers have mentioned the welcome that members receive when they join a group (Clements-Cortés, 2014; Laird, 2016; Schuff, 2014), only Kramer (2011) likens this to the process of assimilation when an individual joins an organisation as a volunteer, and highlights the importance of communication from the director and peers in enabling new members to accept the organisation's values and practices. In the workplace context, Antonacopoulou and Güttel (2010) describe this process as a form of organisational socialisation that enables new members of a group to become functional members (Anderson-Gough, Grey, & Robson, 2000), and which also enables organisations to retain their identity over time (Birnholtz, Cohen, & Hoch, 2007). Thus, the process of induction enables new members to become accepted into the group by introducing them to the group's norms around behaviour and membership and transforms them from an outsider to an insider.

The fact that many of the singing groups in this study appeared to have consciously invested in this process suggests that, as in the workplace, groups have become aware of the value of the process both for the organisation and for individual members. With some singing groups in this study having over two hundred members, the 'welcoming' process, therefore, has an important role to play in supporting the effective integration of new members and the functioning of the group as a whole. Nonetheless, the interviews with group representations also revealed that some groups did not pay much attention to this process, leaving it to their members to integrate newcomers into the group. It was, consequently, not surprising that in their responses to the survey, some respondents described feeling excluded due to being left out or ignored by others in the group. Although groups cannot completely control how members behave towards one another, the findings from this study suggest that an active focus on organisational socialisation through an organised 'welcoming' process supports the development of an inclusive group climate and increases perceptions of inclusion among group members.

Supporting individual socialisation

Some group representatives also described how their groups facilitated opportunities for their members to socialise through organising social activities and creating informal social opportunities, such as breaks in the rehearsal and post-rehearsal trips to the pub. While other researchers have highlighted the importance of extra-curricular activities in establishing a sense of community (Sharlow, 2006) and by giving group members "time for being – rather than singing" (Kelly, 2015, p. 3), research in the workplace suggests that such activities play a crucial role in enhancing the group's performance. For example, in their review of workplace team bonding, Henttonen, Johanson, and Janhonen (2014) show how a sense of team identity is created through individuals developing 'bonding' relationships with others in their team and 'bridging' relationships with those outside their team.

Applying these concepts to group singing, where members are typically organised into smaller sections within the group determined by their vocal range (e.g. soprano, alto, tenor and bass), we can see how social activities are important in enabling the members of singing groups to develop stronger social networks with others inside and outside of their 'teams'. This also suggests that a better understanding of how the members of singing groups develop social networks, and how group practices can support this, would help to increase our understanding of the processes that enable groups to function effectively both socially and musically.

Removing individual barriers to participation

Taking care of members' individual needs also emerged as a group practice that was important to inclusion. Some group representatives, for example, described how their groups encouraged singers to sit rather than stand during rehearsals and performances, or to use music stands for holding scores if this made participation easier for those with physical difficulties. Many groups also offered concessionary rates for people on low

incomes and took care to ensure the accessibility of their rehearsal and performance venues.

Nonetheless, the findings also revealed how a lack of attention to inclusive group practices could undermine group members' sense of inclusion. For example, failing to consider the financial costs of participation could exclude individuals on lower incomes. Equally, failing to organise social activities for members, or to pay attention to members' individual needs, could leave individuals feeling unwelcome and unsupported. Yinger (2014) suggests that ensuring rehearsal venues are well lit, giving singers the option to sit or stand, and using nonverbal cues and clear speech helps individuals suffering from sight and hearing loss. Similarly, Avery (2004)) suggests that groups should make sure that the venues they use are accessible and located in safe areas. More broadly, Yerichuk (2011) highlights the importance of inclusive group practices in "remov[ing] barriers to participation and address[ing] inequities related to class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or other differences" (pp. 3 – 4). An active, ongoing commitment to identifying and addressing the barriers that may affect individuals' ability to participate in group singing is, therefore, an important aspect of developing inclusive group practices.

Sharing power and information

Ensuring that group members were consulted and involved in group decisions also emerged as a group practice that contributed to respondents' sense of inclusion. Bonshor (2016) and Hess (2012) suggest that consultation contributes to an inclusive climate by enabling singers to share power, responsibility and knowledge. However, while many groups had formal management structures in place, such as committees and trustee boards, it seemed that consultation with the wider membership was often informal and focused on practicalities associated with performances.

Only a minority of groups appeared to do more to support wider participation in decision-making through regular, structured consultation processes and this lack of

consultation was particularly noticeable in relation to repertoire selection. As de Quadros (2015) and O'Toole (2005) have shown, the choice of music can be a source of alienation to those who do not identify with the culturally narrow repertoire of many singing groups. Involving members more closely in repertoire selection and other decisions relating to the group's management may, therefore, serve to increase the extent to which members feel themselves to be part of their group. This is also highlighted in a study of teamwork within a chamber choir (Kirrane et al., 2016) where the researchers suggest that closed-loop communication restricted information to a select few and reinforced the hierarchy found in some groups. Ensuring that information is shared with group members and giving them opportunities to influence repertoire selection and other decisions about the group are, therefore, another means to promoting a sense of inclusion within the group.

Actively supporting inclusion

It was also apparent that many groups were not promoting their inclusive practices, such as financial concessions, on their websites, and, in some cases, seemed reluctant to do so. Such practices are likely to perpetuate perceptions of adult singing groups as exclusive organisations (de Quadros, 2015; Garnett, 2005; Joyce, 2003, 2005) where issues of diversity and inclusion are not seen to be relevant and where diversity is a white normative construct reduced to skin colour and audible accents (Yerichuk, 2015). This was reflected in the language used by some group representatives who talked about "other people" and "certain people", suggesting that some groups operated as "White spaces", with systems based upon hierarchies and relations of power (Joyce, 2003), where the choices that these groups were making around their musical repertoire and modes of operation were enacting practices "which privilege the White, educated middle classes" (Garnett, 2005, p. 268).

Some group representatives also highlighted the challenges that they associated with promoting inclusion within their groups, such as its effect on the quality of the group's performance or efficiency of its operation. Such conflicts reflect those reported within

voluntary organisations in the UK non-profit sector (Tomlinson & Schwabenland, 2010),

where interviewees described tensions associated with employee diversity and the quality of

the services provided by their organisation and with the costs that diversity initiatives

imposed on organisations.

On the other hand, some groups in this study appeared to have evolved a 'business

case' for promoting inclusion, which focused on an active pursuit of social justice and which

allowed them to justify the demands on their resources and performance. However,

developing a 'business case' for inclusion appears to be more challenging for some groups

than others. In this research, the singing groups that appeared to be most closely aligned

with a social mission, such as the groups for people affected by homelessness or health

issues, appeared to be more sensitive to individual members' needs and more pro-active in

their support of inclusion than the groups whose mission was more explicitly musical. In her

discussion of community choirs, Bell (2008) places this division within the context of

philosophical and social viewpoints of community music, describing how community singing

as a movement developed dual values, one that was focused on the "natural love and

command of music which everyone possesses", and the other on music-making that

necessitates "serious choral study" (p. 237). The challenge, then, for groups with a highly

artistic mission is to find ways to develop a business case for inclusion that are relevant and

appropriate to their groups.

Tomlinson and Schwabenland (2010) suggest that the reconciliation between

promoting inclusion and an organisation's mission can be most easily achieved "where there

is a clear overlap between the identities of those the organization serves and those it

employs" (p. 117). Singing groups which require members to pass an audition and whose

practices are focused on the production of high-quality music are far more likely to struggle

with an active focus on promoting inclusion. In her discussion of community choirs, Bell

(2008) asks whether auditioning choirs can ever be truly representative of their local

community and argues that, by introducing an auditions policy, many community-based

choirs have evolved into "mini musical cultures that are exclusive, and far removed from the original twentieth century vision of community music organizations" (p. 237). However, in this study, auditioning groups formed a minority of those participating, and it may be that Bell's assertion holds greater relevance for adult amateur singing groups in the USA, where her research is located, than for such groups in the UK.

Returning to Tomlinson and Schwabenland's (2010) study of voluntary groups also raises another issue in relation to inclusion that is relevant to the groups in this study. In their research, Tomlinson and Schwabenland noted how "black and ethnic minority" was the socio-demographic category most frequently used to measure organisational diversity (p. 114). Many of the group representatives interviewed in this study also appeared to equate diversity with the inclusion of individuals from BAME backgrounds. This simplistic and white-centred perception of diversity further supports Yerichuk's (2015) argument that perceptions of group singing tend to be informed by a white normative perspective that sees non-whiteness as 'other' and ignores other forms of diversity. A more nuanced and complex understanding of inclusion and diversity within singing groups is, therefore, required, where, rather than trying to smooth out or resolve the tensions and contradictions inherent in embracing diversity, "it may be more valuable to engage with 'rougher-edged' versions that can accommodate complexity and contradiction" (Tomlinson and Schwabenland, 2010, p. 119). Indeed, in their introduction to the Oxford Handbook of Diversity in Organizations, Knights and Omanović (2016) suggest that, rather than seeing diversity as a problem to be addressed, we should focus on recognising and celebrating the differences that constitute diversity and the intersectionality between different aspects of diversity. In the context of adult amateur group singing, then, this means that groups should recognise and embrace the challenges associated with becoming more diverse and inclusive, and accept that this is a complex journey that has no real end point.

Nurturing an inclusive group climate

We turn next to group climate, which, in the workplace literature, is established through the perceptions that employees hold of an organisation's practices, how employees interact among themselves, and the objective characteristics of the work setting (Nishii & Rich, 2014). In this study, drawing from previous research into group singing (see Appendix C), the characteristics of an inclusive climate were defined in terms of perceptions of the group as tolerant, friendly, welcoming,(Hallam et al., 2012) socially supportive, and musically supportive.

The analysis of the data gathered in this study revealed that group members tended to rate their group climate as highly inclusive, and this was reflected in both the quantitative and the qualitative data. However, the data also revealed tensions associated with members' behaviours which affected respondents' perceptions of inclusion.

Tolerance and hospitality

A perception that others were tolerant, accepting and non-judgemental was evident in the way in which many group members in this study described the climate of their group. Many respondents also described their groups as friendly and welcoming, and, as described earlier, emphasised the sense of belonging they experienced. This reflects other research which describes the effect of participating in group singing on friendships (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Durrant & Himonides, 1998; Higgins, 2007a), and on individuals' sense of belonging (e.g. Davidson & Faulkner, 2006; Judd & Pooley, 2014). The data also revealed how an inclusive group climate was further established through members supporting each other both musically and socially. These findings reflect the notion of hospitality within the group (Balsnes, 2016; (Higgins, 2007a) where "people meet, exchange experiences, share feelings, and also help each other with practical things" (Balsnes, 2016, p. 178), which Willingham (2005) suggests embodies the very essence of community. Equally, the experience of camaraderie and mutual support may be a nurturing one (Bonshor, 2014;

Einarsdottir, 2014, 2014; van der Vat-Chromy, 2010) as group members benefit from each other's encouragement and support, both musically and socially.

However, echoing previous research (e.g. Leske, 2016; Parker, 2014), respondents also identified situations which could result in a sense of exclusion, describing how new members could find it difficult to feel part of the group or how existing members could feel excluded by social cliques within the groups. Joyce (2003) also challenges the perception that group singing is necessarily a communal experience, explaining how individuals who feel marginalised from the group may feel "an increased feeling of danger and tension" (p. 133) that can undermine their ability to relax and have fun in the group. As such, a sense of the group being a positive place to be highlights the tension between feeling included and excluded, as it is bound up with a sense of safety in the group (Tonneijck, Kinébanian, & Josephsson, 2008; van der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Yerichuk, 2010) and mutual trust (Bonshor, 2014; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Langston & Barrett, 2008; von Lob et al., 2010). Leske (2016) describes this paradoxical experience:

> *Choir is for some a site of safety, asylum, inclusion, activism, wellbeing, and*
>
> *healing, where musical and social identities are forged and performed. Yet for*
>
> *others it is a site of judgment and exclusion.* (Leske, 2017, p. 1)

While forming smaller groups ('cliques') within a larger group may be a natural aspect of intragroup behaviour (Gibson & Vermeulen, 2003; Lau & Murninghan, 2005), the findings from this study suggest that this is often experienced as excluding by other individuals within the wider group. Other studies have also reported this effect within singing groups (Clift, Page, Daykin, & Peasgood, 2016; Kreutz & Brünger, 2012) and have noted the way in which cliques undermine group cohesion. Striving to maintain an atmosphere of tolerance and hospitality is, therefore, an important aspect of maintaining an inclusive group climate. This is likely to need active attention by those running groups in order to counteract clique-forming and other excluding behaviours by group members.

Commitment and accountability

The findings from this study also revealed how a perception that others were not contributing to the group could threaten the inclusive climate of the group. Some respondents appeared to feel that their peers demonstrated their commitment to the group by performing practical tasks to assist with the functioning of the group as well as by making active efforts to learn the music. When others did not demonstrate these behaviours, this appeared to jeopardise the sense of community that was established through individuals actively showing their commitment to the group. In his exploration of conductors' perceptions of community within singing groups, Sharlow (2006) combines the concept of commitment with that of accountability. He found that conductors viewed commitment and accountability as important aspects of choral community, and these included expectations around attendance and actively contributing to the running of the group. Similarly, Kempton (2002) describes feelings of acceptance, obligation, and association between choir members. The findings here also resonate with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958; Thibault & Kelley, 1959) where interactions between the members of a group generate a sense of obligation (Emerson, 1976). The findings from this study suggest that nurturing an inclusive group climate involves encouraging group members to fulfil their obligations to the group – learning the music, turning up for rehearsals, or helping out at concerts, for example. By doing this, group members are likely to feel more committed to and part of the group.

Fun and laughter

The qualitative data also revealed how respondents valued having fun together, echoing the description in Balsnes' and Jansson's study of choral rehearsals "where smiles and laughter, fun, humour and happiness are in play" (Balsnes & Jansson, 2015 p. 167). While other studies have touched on the experience of fun and laughter in group singing (e.g. Clements-Cortés, 2014; Heywood & Beynon, 2007), Stebbins (1992) suggests that "pure fun" (p. 7) is one of the benefits that characterises serious leisure, although he suggests that this is more

evanescent than other benefits associated with serious leisure, such as self-fulfilment, self-expression and renewed energy and interest in life. Nonetheless, the emphasis placed by respondents in this study on having fun together suggests that this may be an aspect of group singing that contributes to perceptions of inclusion, and may, therefore, be something which groups actively seek to support. This might, for example, involve allowing time for group members to chat among themselves during rehearsals, as well as creating an atmosphere that does not stifle fun and laughter in the group. Group leaders, particularly conductors, are likely to have a strong influence on this, and can set the tone for the way in which group members interact with each other. This is the final topic to which we turn in reviewing the ways in which adult amateur singing groups can create inclusion.

Creating inclusive group leadership

Turning then to the subject of inclusive group leadership within the context of adult amateur group singing, it would seem that most studies of leadership within singing groups have focused on the musical aspects of the role (Jansson, 2013, 2015; Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011). This study, which explored perceptions of group leadership as enacted by the conductors of adult amateur singing groups, builds on the findings of Yerichuk and Krar's scoping review of community music scholarship (2019), by considering the ways in which groups' leadership affects their members' perceived inclusion.

The findings revealed that respondents generally felt that their conductors had an inclusive leadership style, and there was evidence in the qualitative data to suggest that the conductor's behaviour was a key factor in attracting and retaining group members. Other research has also demonstrated the strong influence of the conductor on motivation and engagement (e.g. Brown, 2012; Durrant, 2005; Jansson, 2013; Rowold & Rohmann, 2009). Indeed, in his study of collegiate choral ensembles, Brown (2012) suggests that the behaviour and attitude of the conductor is a stronger influence on participation than either musical or social factors.

Other research has also shown the damage that a conductor's behaviour can have on members' experiences of group singing (Bonshor, 2017; Kreutz & Brünger, 2012; Sweet, 2014), and Bonshor (2017) cites the experiences of several singers who left their group after having been singled out for criticism by the conductor. Evidence of the negative impact that the conductor's behaviour could have on group members was, to some extent, borne out in the experiences described by respondents who had left previous singing groups, some of whom cited the conductor's behaviour as their reason for leaving a group. Nonetheless, the analysis of the quantitative data suggested that group leadership had less of an effect on group members' sense of inclusion than the group's practices and climate. This should not be taken to mean that considering how group leadership can be inclusive is futile, rather it serves to highlight specific aspects of conductors' behaviour that appear to most effect group members' sense of inclusion.

Nurturing the group

In this study, group members appeared to value their conductors demonstrating enthusiasm, patience and kindness, which suggested that they appreciated the way in which the conductor supported and nurtured the group as a whole. Many respondents felt that a sense of inclusion resulted from the conductor's general approach, such as having an encouraging, positive and non-judgemental style, being charismatic, appreciative and gaining singers' trust. Some also valued their conductor using humour as a counterbalance to the hard work involved in rehearsing, echoing the findings from a study of community choirs in which some conductors were observed to use humour as a way of uniting their group (F. Kelly, 2015). Some also described how they valued their conductor being sensitive to their needs, both socially and musically. These findings emphasise the importance of the "nurturing qualities" of the conductor (Judd & Pooley, 2014, p. 281), who can facilitate a supportive environment through fostering rapport and establishing communication that is based on mutual respect (Bonshor, 2017).

This sense of the conductor's nurturing role also reflects research carried out Durrant (2003, 2005) who describes the holistic nature of choral conducting which, alongside musical leadership, involves providing singers with encouragement, motivation and enthusiasm (Durrant, 2003). However, it seemed that the aspects of behaviour that respondents valued in their conductor – such as enthusiasm, patience and kindness – were also the aspects of behaviour which, when lacking, were most likely to result in singers' disengagement.

Demonstrating commitment to the group

It also appeared that the social aspects of the conductor's role, such as being available to talk to singers before and after rehearsals, responding to requests and feedback, and joining in the group's social activities were important to group members as they demonstrated the conductor's commitment to the group. At the same time, this highlights an underlying tension between the expectations of group members, who are participating voluntarily in an activity of their choice, and those of the conductor whose role is a professional and, consequently, more boundaried one; fulfilling the social aspects of their role may, therefore, require them to commit time outside of rehearsals for which they may not be paid. In her study of amateur music-making groups, Finnegan (1989) also describes this "hidden struggle between conductor and choir" (p. 242), although for Finnegan, this involves balancing choir members' need to socialise with the conductors' need to focus on rehearsing the music. The findings from this study suggest that groups should consider including the social aspects of the conductor's role within the conductor's job description and should, therefore, remunerate them for this accordingly.

Being pro-actively inclusive

Finally, the study revealed that some conductors appeared to be particularly pro-active in seeking to create an inclusive group, by making efforts to learn the names of their group members or by arranging the rehearsal space in an inclusive way. Although some previous

studies have highlighted the importance of such behaviour in terms of including individuals with disabilities within singing groups (e.g. Lind, 2015; van Weelden, 2001), it has not previously been discussed in relation to conductors' practice more generally. However, such behaviour may be unusual in many adult amateur singing groups, particularly among those operating within the traditional classical model, where the conductor's role and behaviour tends to be defined by conventions of choral pedagogy (O'Toole, 2005). It may be, then, that adopting a more inclusive model of leadership enables conductors to break free from the conventional dictatorship model of choral conducting, which de Quadros (2015) describes as embodying absolute power:

> *Power in a choir, as in an orchestra, band, and other conducted ensembles, is constituted by a quality of authority that is almost unrivalled in any other aspect of civic life, resembling the absolute authority in the armed forces and other areas of uniformed life.* (de Quadros, 2015, p. 2)

In her doctoral thesis, O'Toole (1994) describes this as a process of 'de-centering', where the conductor hands over power to the singers by promoting group members' involvement in decision-making and changing the ways in which rehearsals take place. O'Toole describes how these changes can result in a more fulfilling experience for both conductors and singers, but also highlights the challenges of subverting the dominant discourses surrounding the production of choral music, noting how the "traditional discourses and desires are very seductive and work hard for primacy" (p. 398). Similarly, in this study, there was evidence of some singers questioning their conductor's style of leadership while others demonstrated an unquestioning reverence towards their conductor. While some conductors may struggle to identify ways in which they can adopt a more inclusive leadership style, and may even question the value of this, the findings from this study suggest that reflecting on their relationship to the group and being aware of how their behaviour affects group members will may facilitate a more inclusive leadership style.

7.3   Relationships between diversity and inclusion

In considering diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing, the discussion thus far has largely focused on how each of these concepts is individually manifest within the groups studied. This final section considers what the findings from this research have revealed in terms of the relationship between diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

As Figure 7.3-1 shows, the most striking finding was the lack of any direct relationship between respondents' diversity characteristics and their perceptions of inclusion, with no statistically significant relationships found between the two; most respondents felt highly included in their groups and their perceptions of inclusion did not appear to be related to their gender identity, ethnicity, age, health/disability or educational background. However, perceptions of inclusion did appear to be associated with group type, group size and repertoire, in that respondents in groups singing classical music, those in the auditioning and hybrid groups, and those in larger groups were likely to feel less included than respondents in community and specialist groups, singing other kinds of music, and in smaller groups. On the other hand, as Figure 7.3-1 also shows, aspects of inclusion were inter-related, and while individual aspects of diversity did not appear to be directly associated with perceived inclusion, they were associated with repertoire, group type and group size which, in turn, were associated with perceived inclusion.
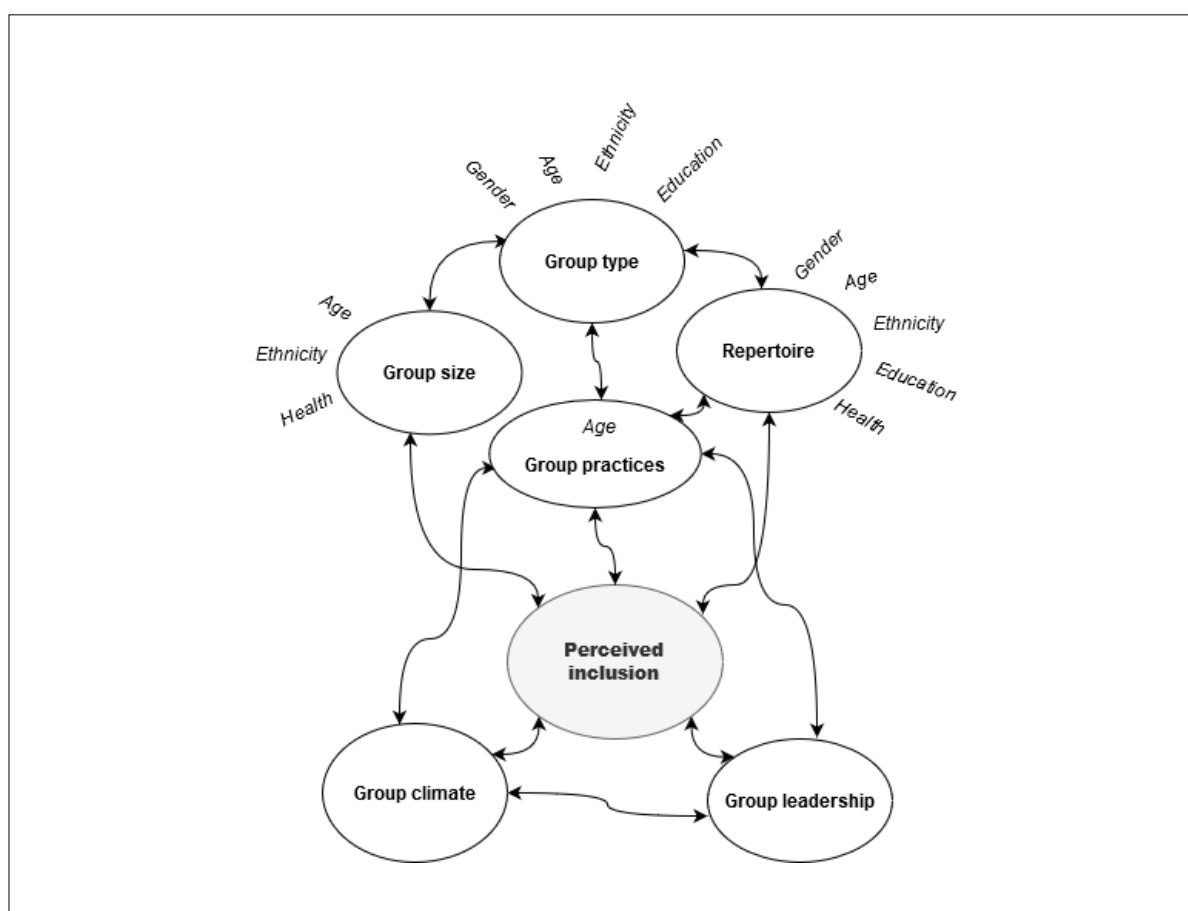
Figure 7.3-1: Statistically significant relationships in the data

7.3.1 Relationships between perceived inclusion and group type, size and repertoire

This study suggests that while the type and size of group and its repertoire are all closely bound together, groups' repertoire emerged particularly strongly in relation to both the diversity of their membership and the perceived inclusion of their members. The findings have shown how respondents from BAME backgrounds, those who did not enter further education, and those who had health issues or a disability were less likely to sing in groups performing music from the western classical canon. Equally, it appeared that younger respondents and male respondents were more attracted to groups singing varied or non-classical repertoire. Furthermore, it revealed that members of groups singing music from the western classical canon reported less inclusive group practices and lower levels of perceived

inclusion.

The relationship between repertoire, diversity and inclusion/exclusion has previously been highlighted in qualitative studies (see, for example, de Quadros, 2015; O'Toole, 2005), where researchers have described how the western classical music canon, with its associated norms and values, speaks to a practice of exclusion. Furthermore, it seems that this practice of exclusion permeates the musical education of many young people. In a study of inclusion among female and BAME young people in elite-level classical music in England, Griffiths (2020) showed how the British classical music field promotes white and male dominance in its cultural values and suggests that inclusion for female and BAME musicians is limited. Moreover, he notes that, while diversity is increasing within the membership of elite youth orchestras, there is little reflection of diversity in the repertoire performed by such groups.

Similarly, in the USA, Koza (2008) has described how school music systematically excludes many young people, which in turn, leads to exclusion from both professional and amateur music-making in adulthood. Further support, if it were needed, for the hypothesis that the western classical music canon speaks to a practice of exclusion can be found in Garnett's discussion of choral singing (2005), where she describes how the norms associated with performing classical music, such as expectations of musical literacy, an emphasis on a 'pure' sound, and the way in which individuals are expected to behave in the group, all serve to "privilege the white, educated middle classes" (p. 268). This study, then, has provided further evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, of the effect of the classical music repertoire on inclusion/exclusion within adult amateur group singing.

However, while repertoire is clearly an excluding factor in adult amateur group singing, simply adopting a more diverse repertoire may not be enough to overcome the systemic barriers that education and culture have created. In a study of community children's choirs in Canada, Bradley (2017) found that focusing primarily on repertoire to create a more ethnically and racially diverse membership proved ineffective, and could also be considered

"naïve…trivializing, and from certain perspectives, colonizing" (p. 1). Indeed, she concludes

that, for choirs which represent "White space" in their climate and ethos, "repertoire alone

cannot serve as the panacea for the inclusion conundrum" (p. 15).

7.4   A framework for inclusion within adult amateur group singing

Having explored the ways in which the participating groups' practices, climate and

leadership all appeared to affect the ways in which their members experienced inclusion, this

study has also helped to create a framework for understanding inclusion within adult

amateur group singing. Firstly, this study has shown that the framework of inclusion

developed in a workplace context by Shore et al. (2011) appears to be highly relevant to the

context of adult amateur group singing, with strong correlations established in the data

between perceived inclusion and inclusive group practices, group climate and, to a lesser
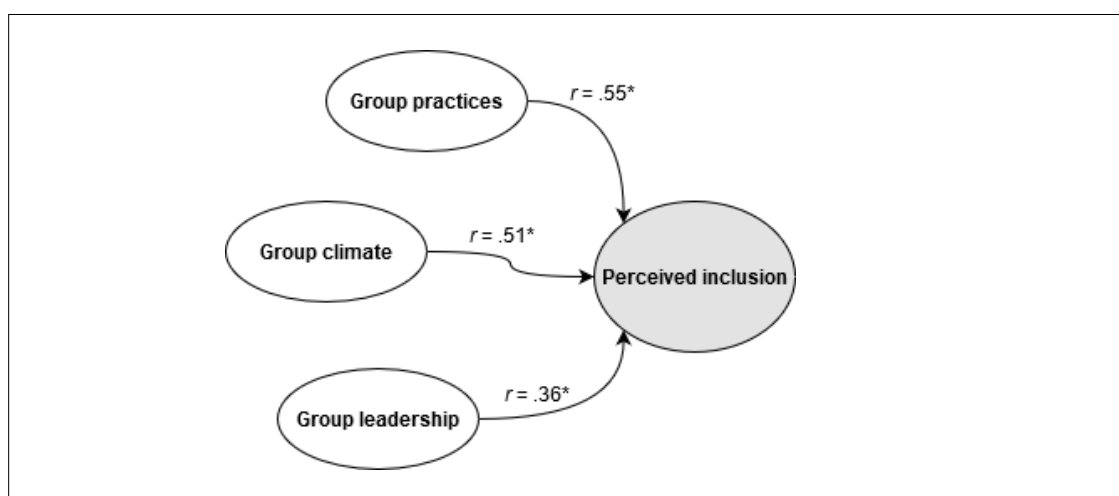
extent, group leadership, as shown in Figure 7.4-1.

Figure 7.4-1: Significant correlations between group practices, climate and leadership with perceived inclusion

Nonetheless, the weaker relationship between perceived inclusion and group leadership

would appear to suggest that the ways in which groups operate and in which their members

behave towards each other may be more important in enabling individuals to feel included

than the leadership style and behaviour of the group's conductor. Further research would,

therefore, be valuable in assessing the extent and ways in which group practices, climate

and leadership each contribute to group members' sense of inclusion within adult amateur

group singing.

Setting aside questions about the relative contributions made by groups' practices,

climate and leadership to perceived inclusion, analysis of the quantitative and qualitative

data also revealed key components of inclusive group practices, climate and leadership that

appear to be particularly relevant in the context of adult amateur group singing. By bringing

together these components, it is, therefore, possible to propose a framework for inclusion

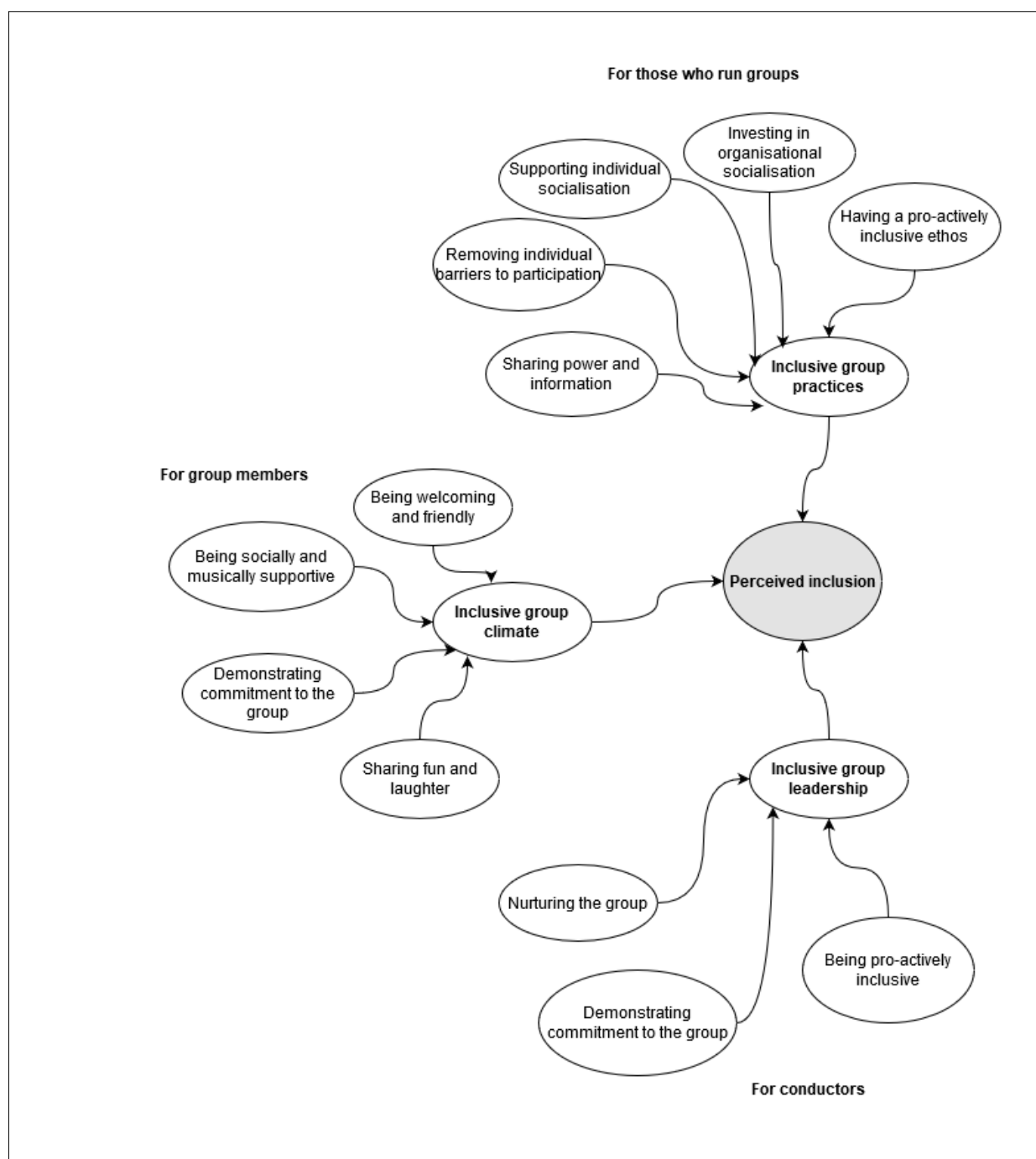within adult amateur group singing, as shown in Figure 7.4-2.

Figure 7.4-2: A proposed framework of inclusion for adult amateur group singing

As this framework indicates, inclusive group practices appear to centre on groups promoting

socialisation, removing individual barriers to participation, sharing power and information,

and having a pro-actively inclusive ethos. Meanwhile, an inclusive group climate appears to

be associated with members behaving in a welcoming and friendly manner, especially to

newcomers, as well as being both socially and musically supportive of each other. An

inclusive climate also appears to be supported by members demonstrating their commitment

to the group as well as by simply having fun together. Finally, inclusive group leadership is

associated with conductors nurturing the group through behaving in a supportive,

encouraging and positive manner, while also demonstrating their commitment to the group

through social engagement with group members. Being pro-actively inclusive, such as by

learning the names of group members or by disrupting the traditional, formal arrangements

associated with choral practice, may also increase the inclusiveness of the conductor's

leadership style.

Nonetheless, it should be recognised that, while this framework is underpinned by the

one developed by Shore et al. (2011), it has been drawn from the research findings and,

therefore, reflects the views and experiences of the individuals who took part in this

research. As such, it would be valuable to test this framework within other adult amateur

group singing contexts in order to strengthen its relevance and applicability. For example,

the framework could be tested in groups in other geographical locations as well as across

different types of singing group. With further testing and refinement, such a framework could

then be useful in helping adult amateur singing groups to assess and, potentially, to improve

the ways in which they support the inclusion of their members, and of those joining their

groups.

7.5   Chapter summary

This chapter has examined the extent to which diversity and inclusion are manifest within

adult amateur singing groups. It has revealed that, in the area studied, some groups were

far more diverse in their nature than is often understood and, furthermore, that the diversity

of their membership is more complex than it might seem. Alongside this, the study has

demonstrated how a sense of inclusion is experienced by many members of the participating

groups, and has revealed how group practices, climate and leadership can contribute to, but also, undermine this. In particular, the findings have highlighted the crucial part that repertoire plays in influencing both the diversity of groups performing music from the western classical music canon and the extent to which group members feel included within these groups.

The findings have also enabled a framework to be proposed that, with further testing and refinement, could be used to assess and improve inclusion within adult amateur group singing. This would be valuable in increasing understanding of how adult amateur singing groups can support the inclusion of their members, which, in turn, can enable groups themselves to flourish.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The aims of this study were to understand more about diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing, and how these might be related to, and affected by, groups' practices, climate and leadership. These topics have been explored through interviews with representatives from 31 singing groups within a London borough and through a questionnaire completed by 383 members of singing groups in the area. The findings from the interviews and questionnaire responses have been analysed, presented and discussed in detail in the previous four chapters. This concluding chapter reviews the overall findings in the light of the original research questions and considers the value of the study as a whole and the questions that it surfaces for future research.

8.1   Key findings

This study set out to answer three main questions:

1.   How diverse are adult amateur singing groups and in what ways are they diverse?

2.   Do individuals feel included within adults amateur singing groups? If they do, to what extent is this related to their diversity characteristics or other factors?

3.   Do adult amateur singing groups' practices, climate and leadership affect (a) the diversity of their membership and (b) their members' perceptions of inclusion? If they do, in what ways are diversity in groups' membership and group members' perceptions of inclusion affected by group practices, climate and leadership?

The following section summarises and discusses how the research has addressed these questions.

8.1.1   Diversity in adult amateur singing groups

Initially, it appeared that the findings reflected previous research in the field concerning diversity in the membership of the singing groups participating in this study. The participating groups' members were predominantly female, white, aged 45 and over, and from well-educated backgrounds, as has been reported in previous research into adult group singing in the UK (Bartel & Cooper, 2015; Chorus America, 2003, 2009; Clift, Hancox, Morrison, et al., 2008; Parkinson, 2016; National Endowment for the Arts, 2015; Rensink-Hoff, 2011; von Lob, Camic, & Clift, 2010). However, by focusing on adult amateur singing groups across a single area, the study has provided a more holistic overview of adult amateur group singing and has uncovered a rich array of singing activity. The groups identified in this study consisted of a medley of different forms of group singing, from the traditional choral societies to groups singing folk, gospel, rock, pop and political songs. The groups ranged in size, from around twenty members to nearly two hundred, and served different sections of the population. Furthermore, the majority of the groups did not audition new members, thereby making group singing accessible for those who lacked formal musical training or confidence in their singing ability. As such, the study provided evidence of an increasing diversity of singing provision, contracting previous research in the US which had suggested adult amateur group singing was becoming increasingly exclusive in nature (Bell, 2008).

Furthermore, by categorising the groups into different types, the study revealed that the membership of some types of group was more diverse than others and that the membership of these groups did not reflect common perceptions of group singing as 'White spaces' for well-educated, older and larger female singers. Instead, the study found that many of the specialist groups (i.e. groups serving a specific sub-section of the population) had a higher proportion of members from BAME backgrounds and from a range of educational backgrounds, who were male, and who had health issues or disabilities.

There was also some evidence that the diversity in the membership of the participating groups may be changing, with reports of greater numbers of younger singers and individuals from BAME backgrounds joining their groups recently. This may be associated with an increase in media attention given to group singing (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.4), which may have changed perceptions of amateur group singing as an activity that is not relevant or appealing to many people.

Furthermore, the existing literature relating to diversity within adult group singing has tended to focus exclusively on diversity characteristics such as gender, age and ethnic background (*cf* Clift et al., 2008; National Endowment for the Arts, 2015; Parkinson, 2016; Rensink-Hoff, 2011). The findings from this study reinforce the argument put forward by Yerichuk (2015) that we need to develop a more complex and nuanced understanding of diversity in singing groups. She contends that diversity should be considered not only in terms of ethnicity and gender but should also take account of the many other ways in which individuals differ from one another (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.1). Thus, while many of the groups in this study emerged as largely homogenous in terms of the gender and ethnicity of their members, this homogeneity masks a far greater diversity in terms of members' cultural backgrounds, health, ability/disability, socio-economic background, nationality, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, and political views (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.2).

An awareness of these other aspects of diversity further challenges a white normative perspective that sees non-whiteness as 'other' and ignores other aspects of diversity and should lead to a reframing of perceptions of adult group singing; singing groups should no longer be considered as diverse, or not diverse, in terms of their members' ethnic backgrounds. Instead, their diversity should be considered in terms of many different diversity characteristics which take account of intersectionality, where individuals' different diversity characteristics create overlapping and multiple experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

In adopting this lens, the findings from this study suggest that adult amateur singing groups are far more diverse in their membership than has been previously understood, with members from a range of ages and different cultural backgrounds, abilities/disabilities, sexual orientations, and religions. Reflecting Finnegan's portrayal of music-making in Milton Keynes (1998), this study has also shown how adult amateur group singing presents an opportunity for collective music making, which everyone can participate in and enjoy. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the limited scope of this study, located as it is within a multicultural urban area, and, therefore, the extent to which these findings can be generalised. There cannot be any doubt that the experience of joining and participating in an adult amateur singing group in Camden is likely to be very different from that of joining and participating in a group in, say, Cornwall. While acknowledging this, this study has, nonetheless, found evidence of a changing and complex diversity in the membership of some adult amateur singing groups and a greater richness in the provision of adult amateur group singing than has generally been discussed.

Having a diverse range of singing groups available is also likely to be important in supporting a concomitant diversity in participation in adult amateur group singing. Indeed, it is suggested that there may be a virtuous circle between diversity in the membership of adult amateur singing groups and diversity in the nature of the groups themselves; as groups become more diverse in their repertoire, membership base and size, so individuals from different backgrounds are more likely to find singing groups that appeal to them; these groups will, in turn, become more diverse in their membership, thereby supporting further diversity by becoming more appealing to other individuals from different backgrounds. However, this virtuous circle is unlikely to exist unless groups are inclusive in their practices, climate and leadership; thus, for singing groups to successfully embrace diversity within their membership, increased diversity must be nurtured by the inclusiveness of the groups themselves.

8.1.2   Perceived inclusion and exclusion within adult amateur singing groups

The next question that this research sought to answer was how included members of singing groups felt within their groups, and to what extent this was affected by their diversity characteristics or other factors.

The study revealed high levels of perceived inclusion among the members of the participating singing groups who completed the questionnaire. Many of these individuals reported experiencing a strong sense of belonging through group singing, such that, for some, the experience was likened to being part of a family (Chapter 5, section 5.2). Authenticity – a feeling of being safe and accepted by their singing group – was also highlighted by individuals as something that contributed to their sense of inclusion (Chapter 5, section 5.2). Equally, a sense of musical inclusion which involved sharing musical experiences and being accepted as a singer within the group was another important element in contributing to individuals' perceptions of inclusion. Feeling a sense of social inclusion was also important to some; many respondents felt that others in the group cared about them, and some described how this sense of social inclusion was manifest through friendships and mutual support. However, the study also revealed that feeling socially included was not important to everyone; a small minority of individuals appeared to take part in group singing for purely musical reasons and did not place any value of feeling part of the social group. Similarly, while feeling valued was a concept derived from research into inclusion in the workplace (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2), this appears to have been less commonly identified within the context of adult amateur group singing.

Moreover, the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire indicated that group members' sense of inclusion did not appear to be affected by their diversity characteristics. However, perceptions of inclusion did appear to be affected by both group type and repertoire, in that respondents in groups singing music from the western classical canon (i.e. the majority of the auditioning and hybrid groups) were likely to feel less included than respondents in groups singing other kinds of music (see Chapter 5, section 5.2.1). There was also evidence

in the qualitative data that a small number of individuals felt less included in their groups and attributed this to being in a minority due to their age, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, or having health issues or a disability (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.2). This would suggest that the bonding aspects of group singing cannot completely mitigate the effects of perceiving oneself to be different from others in the group, but they may serve to reduce the negative effects.

The majority of respondents in this study appeared to place a high value on feeling included. Given the communal nature of group singing, this is, perhaps, to be expected as previous research has shown that, beyond simply wanting to sing together, individuals who participate in adult amateur group singing are seeking a sense of social connection with others (see, for example, Jacob et al., 2009; Redman, 2016). In turn, this finding reinforces the need for singing groups to actively nurture their members' sense of inclusion through their practices, climate and leadership, which are the next topics to which we turn next in reviewing the key findings from this research.

8.1.3   Group practices, climate and leadership

The practices, climate and leadership of adult amateur singing groups have generally received little specific attention in previous research, although aspects of these topics have been researched, such as repertoire choice, musical leadership, or the social bonds developed by members (see Chapter 2, section 2.4.2). The current study has drawn on Shore et al.'s framework of inclusion (2011) to focus on the practices, climate and leadership of adult amateur singing groups and has shown how these can contribute to their members' perceptions of inclusion, but can also result in perceptions of exclusion and even disengagement (see Chapter 6).

The study showed that respondents rated their group's practices as highly inclusive, and this was reflected in both the quantitative and the qualitative data. Group practices which were perceived to support organisational and individual socialisation, and which

sought to remove individual barriers to participation, appeared to be particularly important to inclusion (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Beyond the more obvious ways of supporting inclusion through offering concessionary membership rates, many of the participating groups appeared to have evolved practices which resemble those enacted in the workplace, where formalised induction processes have been created to support new employees in becoming part of an organisation. In the context of adult amateur group singing, many groups have created specific roles for existing members who are charged with looking after new members, and who organise activities which focus on helping new members to meet existing ones (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Many groups were also facilitating formal and informal opportunities for social bonding between members, which appeared to be important in enabling the members of singing groups to develop stronger social networks with others inside and outside of their 'teams' (voice parts).

The participating groups also generally appeared to be paying attention to reducing barriers to participation through ensuring the accessibility of their rehearsal and performance venues, offering financial concessions for membership, and giving consideration to the individual needs of members with physical difficulties or disabilities (see Chapter 5, section 5.3). Many groups were also keeping members informed of their activities and plans, although fewer were doing much to support wider participation in decision-making through regular, structured consultation processes and this lack of consultation was particularly noticeable in relation to repertoire selection.

The research also showed how group practices could undermine individuals' sense of inclusion. For example, failing to offer financial concessions, or providing opportunities for members to socialise, or paying attention to individuals' needs within the group could leave members feeling excluded and could sometimes lead them to cease participation altogether (see Chapter 6, section 6.2). Moreover, it was also apparent that not all groups were promoting inclusive practices, thereby perpetuating perceptions of adult singing groups as exclusive organisations where issues of diversity and inclusion are not seen to be relevant.

Some also highlighted challenges that they associated with promoting inclusion within their groups, such as on the quality of the group's performance or effectiveness of its operation. On the other hand, some groups had adopted a 'business case' for promoting inclusion, which, by focussing on an active pursuit of social justice was allowing groups to justify the impact on their resources and performance (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.2). With repertoire emerging as a key factor affecting perceived inclusion, this study also suggested that groups performing music from the western classical canon should pay particular attention to ways in which their practices can become more inclusive, such as through promoting socialisation, sharing information and power, and being sensitive to individual members' needs.

Meanwhile, respondents tended to rate their group's climate as inclusive, and this was reflected in both the quantitative and the qualitative data. Many reported other members as tolerant, friendly, welcoming, and both socially and musically supportive, and emphasised the importance of simply having fun together (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2). However, respondents also identified situations and behaviours which could result in a sense of exclusion, describing how new members could find it difficult to feel part of the group, or how existing members could feel excluded by social cliques within the groups (see Chapter 6, section 6.3).

Similarly, members demonstrated their commitment and accountability towards the group by performing practical tasks to assist with the functioning of the group, as well as by making active efforts to learn the music, which appeared to create a sense of acceptance and association between group members. However, a perception that others were not contributing to the group could also threaten members' perceptions of an inclusive climate within the group (see Chapter 6, section 6.3). Feeling included within a group appeared, therefore, to be bound up with experiencing a sense of safety and belonging which could be created, or undermined, by other members' behaviours and attitudes.

Exploring perceptions of the leadership of the participating singing groups revealed other ways in which group members' sense of inclusion could be affected. Many group

members felt that their conductors had an inclusive leadership style, and there was evidence in the qualitative data to suggest that the conductor's behaviour was a key factor in attracting and retaining group members. Respondents appeared to value a nurturing style of leadership, where conductors demonstrated qualities of patience, kindness and enthusiasm, used humour, and paid attention to individual needs within the group. Social aspects of the conductor's role were also valued, such as when conductors made themselves available to speak with singers before and after rehearsals, responded to requests and feedback, and joined in social activities (see Chapter 5, section 5.5).

Specific behaviours, such as knowing singers' names, or using a semi-circle formation while rehearsing, were also associated with promoting a sense of inclusion. Although studies have previously highlighted the importance of such behaviours in terms of including individuals with disabilities within singing groups (Salvador, 2013), the importance of these leadership behaviours has not been widely recognised in relation to conductors' practice within adult amateur singing groups more generally.

Nonetheless, an inclusive leadership style may not necessarily sit comfortably with the ways in which many adult amateur singing groups are organised, particularly when this requires conductors to allocate additional time to taking part in the group's social activities which may not be reflected in their job descriptions or pay (see Chapter 6, section 6.4). This tension highlights a potential conflict between the expectations and needs of group members who are taking part in a voluntary, leisure activity, and those of the conductor who operates as a paid professional within the group. Furthermore, while such tensions often centre around differences in the ways in which amateurs and professionals view their relationship with the group, they may be further exacerbated by the context in which the group is situated. For singing groups operating within the western classical model, where the conductor's role and behaviour tends to be defined by conventions of choral pedagogy, adopting an inclusive leadership style may involve disrupting dominant discourses surrounding the production of choral music. This may require the conductor to break free

from the hierarchical model of choral conducting (Hess, 2012) and to find ways to engage with group members more as co-creators and equals, showing respect and sensitivity to their needs (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.5).

8.1.4 The benefits of inclusion

While the study did not set out to investigate the benefits of inclusion to adult amateur singing groups, it did, nonetheless, indicate some of the potential benefits for singing groups of promoting inclusion. For example, it was suggested that when members experienced a sense of inclusion within the group, this could result in improved group performance as a result of better teamwork and increased trust between group members, as well as increased participation and retention through members feeling more committed to the group (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.1). Furthermore, the research also indicated possible benefits of inclusion for individuals, such as an enhanced experience of singing, reduced isolation, and improved self-confidence and self-esteem. Inclusion, then, may be considered as a key intermediary between participation in group singing and the positive effects of group singing, particularly those associated with wider social inclusion. Thus, understanding and promoting inclusion may play a key role both in enhancing the sustainability of singing groups and in enabling the individuals who participate in these groups to experience the benefits that are often associated with participation.

8.2   The contribution of this study

Research into diversity and inclusion within organisations is a still evolving field (Ferdman, 2014; Nair & Vohra, 2015) and much of the research to date has focused on workplace settings and has been carried out in the USA (e.g., Nishii & Mayer, 2009; Roberson, 2006; Sabharwal, 2014). In particular, there has been very little research into how inclusion is

operationalised in community music settings, such as adult amateur group singing, in the UK.

This study builds on the learning generated by previous studies which have explored different aspects of diversity and inclusion within adult group singing, as discussed in the literature review chapter (see Chapter 2). However, with its specific focus on the nature and extent to which diversity and inclusion are manifest within the participating singing groups, this study has provided an insight into the ways in which diversity and inclusion are manifest within participating adult amateur singing groups, a topic which has not been explored in any other research to date. On the one hand, it has shown how little bearing respondents' diversity characteristics appear to have on their perceptions of inclusion. Yet, on the other, it has shown how aspects of diversity appear to be related to both repertoire and group type, which, in turn, are associated with perceptions of inclusion. As a result, this study has provided further evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, of the effect of the western classical music repertoire on diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing.

8.2.1   For singing groups

Overall, the study identified a range of ways in which adult amateur singing groups can be inclusive in their practices, climate and leadership. These are summarised below.

Inclusive group practices

- Promoting the group widely, in public spaces and online;

- Providing support for new members, for example, by offering buddies or organising welcome events;

- Ensuring members can participate fully, for example, by taking account of health issues and disability, providing concessions, and using accessible venues for rehearsals and performances;

- Organising support with music learning;

- Encouraging social interaction and friendships within the group by providing opportunities for members to socialise through rehearsal breaks, social activities and social media;

- Providing information on the group's activities so that members feel involved and informed;

- Giving members input into music selection and involving them in wider group decision-making;

- Setting clear standards of behaviour, in terms of how members behave towards one another, and around how they are expected to contribute to the group;

- Valuing, and being pro-active around issues of diversity and inclusion, by considering the specific needs of members of different ages, genders, ethnic or cultural backgrounds, religions, educational backgrounds or with different health issues or disabilities; and

- Developing a 'business case' for promoting inclusion, which focuses on how the group's activities can support an active pursuit of social justice.

Inclusive group climate

- Members are friendly and welcoming to others;

- Members support each other, both musically and socially;

- Members are respectful and tolerant of others;

- Members are alert to the needs of those who may be feeling less included within the group;

- Members value each other's contributions and efforts; and

- Members help with practical tasks and commit to music learning.

Inclusive group leadership

- Conductors are positive, encouraging and patient;

- Conductors use humour;

- Conductors know the names of group members and make efforts to get to know them;

- Conductors join in some of the group's social activities;

- Conductors are sensitive to singers' needs for support and challenge;

- Conductors are responsive to suggestions and feedback from group members; and

- Conductors recognise their own role in creating an inclusive group.

Drawing these different aspects of inclusive group practices, climate and leadership together, this study has proposed a framework for understanding inclusion within adult amateur group singing (see Chapter 7, section 7.3). With further testing and refinement, this framework could help adult amateur singing groups to assess and, potentially, to improve the ways in which they support the inclusion of their members, and of those joining their groups, which, in turn, may enable groups themselves to flourish.

Furthermore, by revealing how the relationship between inclusion and diversity appears to be most directly affected by repertoire, this study suggests that the clearest route to greater diversity in groups' membership lies in the selection of repertoire outside the western classical canon. Groups that choose to perform music from the western classical canon may, therefore, have to accept that there is little that they can do to directly increase diversity in their membership and may find it helpful instead to concentrate on ensuring that their practices, climate and leadership are as inclusive as possible.

8.2.2   For other kinds of organisations

While the findings have shed light on ways in which diversity and inclusion are enacted within the participating adult amateur singing groups, they may also offer learning that is of relevance to other kinds of organisations. Amateur orchestra and bands, for example, are likely to be similar in many ways to amateur singing groups, and may want to review their own practices, climate and leadership in the light of these findings. Professional music-making groups may also benefit from considering the ways in which diversity and inclusion can be supported within their organisations, as ensuring the effective functioning of the group is as likely to be important in these contexts as in the amateur world.

Furthermore, although this study was designed within the context of adult amateur singing, where individuals come together regularly as a group under the leadership of one individual, it is possible that the findings may also be of benefit to other types of leisure group or voluntary associations, such as group-based physical activity programmes for older

people and group-based arts-focused activities, such as community drama groups. Indeed, the findings from this study imply that reviewing and enhancing the inclusiveness of group practices, climate and leadership should be a regular aspect of organisational management.

8.2.3 For society

The findings from this study have provided a better understanding of the mechanisms that enable individuals to engage in and positively experience adult amateur group singing. By highlighting these factors, this study also lends support to the body of research that is investigating the benefits of adult group singing for individuals and communities. Without understanding the factors that affect participation, there is a risk that individuals may be excluded from participation and, consequently, from experiencing the reported benefits of group singing (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.3). Understanding the factors that support or hinder inclusion is, therefore, important in ensuring that individuals are able to achieve the maximum benefit from participating in adult amateur group singing. This is particularly important for individuals from marginalised groups, as the benefits of group singing have been shown to be especially important for those who are excluded in other aspects of their lives. Ultimately, understanding more about diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing should enable us to understand how we can address barriers to social inclusion and build social capital.

8.2.4 For future research

Finally, this study has generated new learning by applying a conceptual framework which was originally developed to understand inclusion in the workplace to the context of adult amateur group singing (see Chapter 3, section 3.3). This approach has enabled group singing to be viewed in a new light, placing the spotlight on singing groups as organisations that bring together groups of people for a common purpose. Using this framework has provided a structured way of exploring diversity and inclusion within such organisations. At

the same time, the findings from this study have revealed some of the complexities and challenges associated with understanding diversity and inclusion within adult amateur singing groups and, as a result, may offer learning that is relevant to the wider field of research into diversity and inclusion. For example, the proposed model of the outcomes of inclusion within adult amateur group singing (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.1) builds on the workplace-specific model proposed by Chung et al. (2020). So, while the model proposed by Chung at al. identifies outcomes of inclusion around employee behaviour, creativity and job performance, the one developed through this study identifies outcomes for individuals around enhanced experience of singing, reduced isolation and improved self-esteem, as well as outcomes for groups around improved cohesion and performance, as well as increased participation and retention.

Furthermore, the framework of inclusion proposed in this study supports future research by demonstrating the relevance and value of the framework for inclusion developed by Shore et al. (2011) to non-workplace contexts such as adult amateur group singing, showing how it can lead to a better understanding of the complex mechanisms that underpin diversity and inclusion within organisations.

8.3   Future research

This was an exploratory study which involved multiple outcome measures and consequently multiple statistical tests. Although corrections for multiple comparisons were made within each test, future research could extend and confirm the findings here through replication with larger sample sizes. In addition, the findings from this study highlight the need for further research in a number of areas.

8.3.1   Diversity and inclusion in adult amateur singing groups

Key questions that have emerged through this study and that would be usefully investigated through further research centre on the way in which diversity and inclusion are defined within

the context of adult amateur group singing. We have seen how diversity needs to have a broader definition than is often applied which should include aspects such as individuals' religion, cultural background, health and ability/disability. It would also be useful to consider the extent to which previous musical training is an aspect of diversity within the membership of adult amateur singing groups and may be a factor that leads members to feel different from one another. Indeed, it may well be that musical training, or the lack of it, is a greater distinguishing factor in singing groups than some other aspects of diversity.

Moreover, the key antecedents of inclusion as set out in Shore et al.'s framework of inclusion appear to provide useful framework for enhancing understanding of the process of creating inclusion within adult amateur group singing (see Section 7.4). Nonetheless, the core components that have been used to define inclusion within adult amateur singing groups may need further refinement. While a sense of belongingness appeared to resonate strongly with the individuals who took part in this study, it was harder to distinguish a sense of being valued emerging from the findings. One explanation for this may be that the role of the conductor within adult amateur singing groups is generally focused on enabling the group as a whole to rehearse and perform. The individual is often lost from sight as the conductor's attention is on the sound produced by the group. Further research could, therefore, be valuable in developing a better understanding of how inclusion is experienced and can be defined within non-workplace contexts such as adult amateur singing groups.

Research would also be helpful in further testing the application of the proposed framework of inclusion within adult amateur group singing (see Chapter 7, section 7.4). While the core components of this framework suggested by Shore et al. (2011) – group practices, group climate and group leadership – provide a useful structure for exploring diversity and inclusion, translating these components to the context of adult amateur group singing presented some challenges. For example, deciding how to translate the concept of inclusive group leadership was particularly difficult given the manner in which singing groups generally operate, with a conductor controlling and directing the group. As such, leadership

factors that are generally understood to be supportive of inclusion, such as valuing

uniqueness by encouraging diverse contributions (Randel et al., 2018) were not ones that

could be easily reconciled with the operation of many singing groups, particularly those

operating according to the western classical model.

Similarly, an inclusive group climate where individuals' diverse perspectives are

actively sought and integrated (Nishii, 2013) does not easily translate to the context of adult

amateur group singing, where decisions are largely taken by the conductor and a small

number of individuals involved in running the group. Nonetheless, in their study of singers'

experiences, Kreutz and Brünger (2012) found three influential sources of negative emotions

within amateur choirs: conflicts with the choir leader (*group leadership*), with other choir

members (*group climate*), and disagreement over the type of singing (*group practices*).

While this may provide some independent validation that the core components of the

framework used in this study are, indeed, of relevance to adult amateur group singing,

further testing of the framework would be valuable in validating its applicability.

Furthermore, the different components of inclusive group practices, climate and

leadership as suggested in the proposed framework highlight a number of ways in which

adult amateur singing groups can be inclusive in their practices, climate and leadership.

However, further research would be helpful in testing how relevant and applicable these

components are to other adult amateur singing groups. This research should involve

different types of singing groups located in different geographical and cultural settings as this

would help to reveal aspects of group practices, climate and leadership that are important in

developing more diverse and inclusive groups.

Further research investigating specific aspects of diversity and inclusion within adult

amateur group singing would also be useful. This could focus, for example, on the

motivations and experiences of individuals from different genders and ethnic origins to

increase understanding of the ways in which these influence inclusion and how singing

groups can take account of this. More in-depth research exploring the extent of physical and

mental health issues within the membership of singing groups would also be valuable in helping groups to better understand their effects on group members' sense of inclusion. Meanwhile, a better understanding of how the members of singing groups develop social networks, and how group's practices can support this, would help to increase our understanding of the processes that enable groups to function effectively both socially and musically.

In addition, the questionnaire which was developed to assess group members' perceptions of inclusion, group practices, climate and leadership would benefit from further testing and refinement with a view to developing a validated questionnaire which could be widely used to assess inclusion within adult amateur singing groups.

Finally, future research might usefully explore the barriers that prevent or limit participation in adult amateur group singing. While this study has focused on the factors that can support or inhibit diversity and inclusion among existing members of adult amateur singing groups, it has not sought to address the wider systems and structures that lead many individuals to feel that adult amateur group singing is not for them (see Chapter 2, section 2.5.1). As Dobusch (2014) says in her discussion of inclusive organisations:

> *"If the sole focus is on the including and excluding experiences of those*
> *employees who have already succeeded in entering the organisation, the bigger*
> *picture of social exclusion (and inclusion) is disguised."* (Dobusch, 2014, p. 229)

8.3.2   *The outcomes of diversity and inclusion within singing groups*

This study has postulated some of the benefits that may result from groups being inclusive, such as improved group cohesion and performance, and benefits for individual group members, such as an enhanced experience of singing, reduced isolation and improved self-esteem. These outcomes emerged in the qualitative data and, therefore, require greater refinement and testing before it would be possible to make any definitive statements about the value of inclusion to individuals and singing groups. Further research could explore the

effects of groups becoming more diverse in their membership and inclusive in their practices, climate and leadership and might help to create a 'business case' that could be used to support and drive efforts towards greater diversity and inclusion. At the same time, such research should also explore any negative outcomes associated with greater diversity and inclusion, as it is important these aspects are also understood if we are to develop a true understanding of how diversity and inclusion are enacted within adult amateur group singing.

8.3.3   The relationship between music-making and inclusion

This study has not attempted to address the extent to which the act of music-making itself plays a part in creating a sense of inclusion. As we have seen, Shore et al. (2011) contend that a sense of inclusion comes about through individuals feeling that they are an accepted member of a group and that the group values them as an individual. However, within the context of adult amateur group singing, it may be that the process of making music, and specifically of singing together, may also contribute to individuals' sense of inclusion. In their study measuring the physical effects of singing, Vickhoff et al. (2013) suggest that group singing has a synchronising effect on respiration and heart rate which leads singers to feel closer to each other. Clarke, DeNora, and Vuoskoski (2015) highlight the value of the "socio-musical" space that is created through collective musical activity. Others have shown how communal music activity can play a neurobiological role in fostering integration (Freeman, 2000) and may offer a fast track to community cohesion (Weinstein et al., 2016). Further research to explore the different factors that contribute to a sense of inclusion within adult amateur singing groups would, therefore, be valuable in identifying the different mechanisms that affect perceived inclusion.

Additionally, when Pearce, Launay, and Dunbar (2015) compared the bonding effects of group singing to those of non-singing activities such as crafts and creative writing, they found that singers experienced much faster bonding than the members of other groups. A similar study, comparing the extent to which individuals in singing groups felt included within

their groups compared to those in non-singing activity groups would help to elucidate whether the effects of group singing on perceived inclusion are stronger than the effects of other types of group activity.

8.4   Final thoughts

As the Covid-19 pandemic sweeps across the world and isolates individuals in their homes, the powerful role that group singing plays in community life has been highlighted. In Italy, we have seen spontaneous outbreaks of communal singing as neighbours join together in song from their balconies (Kearney, 2020). In the UK and elsewhere, we have seen the transformation of many adult amateur singing groups into virtual communities which connect their members through social media in order to replicate the experience of singing together (Strick, 2020; Sublet, 2020). These actions reveal a fundamental human need that making music collectively, including singing with others, fulfils. It is my hope that this research has shown how a better understanding of diversity and inclusion can enable adult amateur group singing to continue to fulfil that need.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Literature review tags

acceptance	case studies	conceptual frameworks
accessibility	challenges of inclusion	concurrent design
accountability	childhood experiences	conductor
action research	children	confidence
action teams	choir demographics	conflict
activity theory	choir management	conflict transformation
adult education	choir structure	conforming
adults	choir types	connectedness
affect	choral education	context
affinity	choral festival	continued participation
ageing	choral research	credibility
Alzheimer's	civic involvement	critical realism
amateur	civic model	critical research
ambiance	class	cult
analysis	climate	cultural diversity
arts engagement	clique	cultural identity
assimilation	cliques	cultural understanding
assumptions	co-cultural theory	culture
audiences	co-occupation	deep-level diversity
auditions	co-operation	definition
aural singing	cohesion	definition - choir
authentic leadership	coding	democracy
authenticity	collaboration	demographics
autonomy	collaborative learning	disability
BAME	collective identity	discomfort
barbershop	collective responsibility	discourse
barriers	commitment	disengagement
belonging	common goals	diversity
benefits	communication	diversity - benefits
birthplace diversity	community	diversity - definition
bonding	community - definition	diversity - negative impact
Bonferroni	community choirs	diversity - risks
boundaries	community development	diversity and inclusion
boys	community engagement	diversity characteristics
buddy system	community music	dress code
call and response songs	community of practice	economic barriers
Camden	companionship	EDI
camaraderie	competence	education
cancer	competition	elitism
care theory	complexity science	emotional benefits

museums	perceived group inclusion scale	repertoire
music	performance	representation
music benefits	phenomenology	research design
music education	philosophy	research gaps
music ethnography	physical health	research methods
music research	pitch	research questions
music sociology	placement of singers	resilience
music therapy	political protest	respect
musical ability	poverty	retention
musical community	power	risk-taking
musical identity	power of music	role of music
musical inclusion	practical application	roles
musical pathways	practice	Ruud model
musicology	practices	safety
names	pragmatism	sampling
negative experiences	principal component analysis	satisfaction
neurology	principles	school
newcomers' experiences	prison	self confidence
non-auditioned	process	self-categorization theory
non-participation	psychological needs	self-determination theory
non-singers	qualitative	self-esteem
Non-profit	qualitative description	sense of belonging instrument
norms	qualitative study	sense of community
older people	quality of life	serious leisure
online surveys	quality of performance	servant leadership
ontology	quantitative	sexuality
optimal distinctiveness theory	quantitative description	shared experience
organisation	questionnaire	significance
organisational culture	questionnaire design	singing
organisational value frame	quotations	size of group
organism	racism	social benefits
out-groups	RCT	social bonding
outreach	reading music	social capital
overview	Re-categorisation	social catalyst
overview of diversity and inclusion	reciprocity	social climate
oxytocin	recruitment	social cohesion
paradox	reflexivity	social comparison theory
participation	refugees	social connectedness
pedagogy	rehearsal process	social context
peer learning	relatedness	social exchange theory
peer support	relationship between conductor and singers	social identity approach

social identity theory	university	
social inclusion	urban context	
social integration	validity	
social interaction	value commitment	
social isolation	valued	
social justice	virtual choir	
social media	virtuous circle	
social model of disability	vision impairment	
social networks	vocal technique	
social support	voice	
social unity	voluntary association	
social well-being	voluntary sector organisation	
socialisation	vulnerability	
socio-musical experience	website	
socioeconomic	website design	
special needs	welcoming	
sport	wellbeing	
statistics	welsh	
status	western music	
stress	whiteness	
subgroups	women	
success	women's choirs	
survey design	workplace	
sustainability	world café approach	
sustained engagement	worldwide	
symphonic choirs	young people	
synchrony	youth choir	
systematic review		
talent		
team leaders		
teambuilding		
teamwork		
tensions		
theoretical framework		
thesis		
tolerance		
tours/retreats		
transformative research		
transgender		
transition		
triangulation		
trust		
UK		
uniqueness		
unity		

Appendix B: Information sheet for interviewees

Who is conducting the research?
My name is Diana Parkinson and I am carrying out research into diversity, accessibility and inclusion within adult, amateur singing groups in the London borough of Camden. I am a PhD student at the Institute of Education (which is part of the University of London). I am also a keen singer and member of two local singing groups. I have previously carried out research into the effect of gender on the benefits described by members of singing groups as part of an MSc in Professional Practice in Research Methods. I am now based at the UCL Institute of Education, which is the world's leading centre for education and related social science.

I very much hope that you would like to take part in my research. This information sheet will try and answer any questions you might have about the project, but please don't hesitate to contact me if there is anything else you would like to know.

Why am I doing this research?
The aim of my research is to provide a better understanding of adult, amateur singing groups and how these groups respond to issues of diversity, accessibility and inclusion. I am trying to find out:

- How diverse are amateur adult singing groups within Camden?
- What efforts do groups make to be accessible and inclusive?
- To what extent do participants in these groups report a sense of inclusion / belonging?
- What factors appear to facilitate or impede individuals' experiences of inclusion?

This will help us to understand the factors that promote or hinder inclusion which can inform the training of those involved in leading and running adult singing groups, and which in turn will contribute to a more inclusive society in which individuals, whatever their background, can participate in group singing.

Why are you being invited to take part?
I am inviting all representatives of adult amateur singing groups in Camden to take part in this research as I am keen to hear lots of different views and perspectives.

What will happen if you choose to take part?
I will arrange to interview you by telephone or face-to-face at a time and location that is convenient for you. The interview will last about half an hour. The interview will be audio-recorded, and I will be responsible for transcribing the notes from the interview. As such, the interview will be confidential, and your participation will be anonymous. You will be free to decide withdraw from the interview at any point should you so wish.

What will happen to the results of the research?
The findings from my research will be written up as part of my thesis which may eventually be published, or on which articles may be based that will be published. While I am conducting the research, all data will be held securely in encrypted documents and will only be accessed by myself. All information provided to me will be anonymised so that no individuals can be identified. I will also share a summary of early findings with the groups that participate in my research.

Do you have to take part?
It is entirely up to you whether or not you choose to take part. I hope that if you do choose to be involved then you will find it a valuable experience.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this information sheet.

If you have any further questions before you decide whether to take part, you can reach me by email at d.parkinson.16@ucl.ac.uk or by telephone on 07905 755665.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the UCL IOE Research Ethics Committee on 27th February 2017.

Appendix C: Interview schedule for interviews with group representatives

Introduce myself
Introduce the research
Outline the interview, confidentiality
Check consent to audio-recording.
Confirm which group(s) in Camden they are involved with.

1. First of all, can I ask a bit about you and your role with this group?
   o So you are the…. (music director/chair/committee member…)
   o How long have you had that role?
   o What does it involve in terms of your input into how the group is run?

2. I'm also interested to learn a bit about the history of your group.
   o So when was it set up?
   o How was it set up?
   o And has it changed then?

3. I'd now like you to ask you about the size and membership of your/ group…
   o Roughly how many active members are in the group at the moment?
      ▪ Is that typical of the group?
      ▪ How many do you gain/lose per year?
   o How is the membership of the group composed in terms of…
      ▪ gender?
      ▪ age?
      ▪ ethnicity/culture/socio-economic?
      ▪ disability?
      ▪ established v. new members
      ▪ where members live

4. How does your group recruit new members?

5. Does your group audition new members or have any other membership criteria?
   [*If yes*] What does the audition involve? What are the membership criteria?

6. What kind of music does your group generally sing?

7. How often does your group rehearse? For how long?

8. How often does your group perform?

9. How is your group run? (i.e. who takes decisions re choice of music, future direction, issues that arise)

10. Does the group make any particular efforts to be accessible to people who might face barriers in taking part (e.g. economic or physical)?
    [*If yes*] What does it/they do?
    [*If no*] Why is that?

11. And does it make any particular efforts to recruit a diverse membership?
    [*If yes*] What does it/they do?
    [*If no*] Why is that?

12. As music director/group leader, do you see any particular benefits to having an accessible and diverse group? And what do you see as the challenges?

13. And does your group make any particular efforts to make its members feel part of the group?
[*If yes*] What does it/they do?
[*If no*] Why is that?

14. [*If applicable*] As music director do you / does your music director make any particular efforts to help people feel part of the group?
[*If yes*] What do you/they do?
[*If no*] Why is that?

15. Finally, do you think (any of) your group(s) would be interested in being part of further research in this area? I'm planning to select a small number of groups to work with in greater depth and it would be good to know if you think your group might be interested in being involved.

16. Are you aware of any other groups in Camden?

Thank you.

Appendix D: The coding of the qualitative data

Perceptions of diversity in the group	301	
Group is not diverse / others are the same as me	167	55.5
mainly white	65	21.6
similar age	44	14.6
mainly educated	67	22.3
private school	2	0.7
university	12	4.0
same gender	8	2.7
similar socio-economic background	87	28.9
similar values	21	7.0
common life experiences	2	0.7
Group is diverse / others are not like me	107	35.5
due to age	49	16.3
due to ethnicity	25	8.3
different genders	2	0.7
different socio-economic backgrounds	27	9.0
mainly educated unlike me	9	3.0
due to nationality	20	6.6
due to religion	12	4.0
due to sexual orientation	4	1.3
due to personal values	3	1.0
due to disability	2	0.7
Everyone is unique / diverse	8	2.7
Lack of diversity	9	3.0
Regrets lack of diversity	5	1.7
Diversity is changing	4	1.3
due to gender	2	0.7
Inclusion is important – respondents' perceptions	156	
Enhances quality of group performance	70	44.9
improves harmony, ensemble	11	7.1
stronger teamwork	27	17.3
Increases enjoyment from singing	23	14.7
creates trust, feel less inhibited	10	6.4
Contributes to personal wellbeing	47	30.1
helps combat isolation	34	21.8
improves self-confidence / self-esteem	12	7.7
Strengthens my commitment to the group	14	9.0
Inclusion is important – group representatives' perceptions	31	
Gives group a social purpose	3	9.9
Helps overcome barriers to participation	6	19.4
Brings people from different cultures together	11	35.5
Musical benefits	2	6.5
Share our music with others	2	6.5
Sharing skills	1	3.2
More varied experience	1	3.2
A sense of inclusion	200	
A sense of belonging	88	44.0
community	23	11.5
camaraderie, warmth	11	5.5

like family	8	4.0
Shared values, interests and experiences	74	37.0
interests	16	8.0
love of music and singing	12	6.0
social or cultural identity	6	3.0
team	5	2.0
Feeling accepted and safe	12	6.0
valued/appreciated for who I am	8	4.0
others accept me	4	2.0
Group practices – respondents' perceptions	**255**	
Involving group members	71	27.8
democratic, transparent, consulting members	38	14.9
inclusive	26	10.2
keeping me informed	36	14.1
Providing opportunities for us to socialise	21	8.2
tours, trips	9	2.4
Taking care of individual needs	5	2.0
Welcoming new members	7	2.7
Inclusive approach	26	10.2
Group practices – group representatives' perceptions	**31**	
Involving group members	14	45.2
run by consensus	5	16.1
regular consultation with members	9	29.0
Providing opportunities for members to socialise	28	90.3
rehearsal breaks for socialising	20	64.5
tours, retreats	10	32.3
organising social events	17	54.8
social media for members	12	38.7
Taking care of individual needs	31	100.0
allowing singers to sit when needed, use music stands, providing large scores	22	71.0
supporting members with music learning	4	12.9
pro-actively considering members' individual needs	3	9.7
Ensuring accessibility	25	80.6
using accessible venues	21	67.7
pro-actively considering accessibility	7	22.6
Reaching out to recruit new members	28	90.3
using social media	16	51.6
promoting specific opportunities	2	6.5
influence of conductor	3	9.7
Actively welcoming new group members	23	74.2
specific roles	16	51.6
warm-up activities	4	12.9
welcome events	2	6.5
Offering financial concessions	20	64.5
subsidising costs of extra-curricular activities	4	12.9
free	3	9.7
Pro-actively inclusive	4	12.9
training staff	1	3.2
Other	8	25.8
activities with other choirs	1	3.2
changing practice, responding to issues	1	3.2
encouraging people to do solos	3	9.7
info in advance of joining	1	3.2

rehearsal lay-out	1	3.2
no scores	1	3.2
promotion	2	6.5
Group climate – respondents' perceptions	**48**	
Welcoming, friendly	9	18.8
warm	4	8.3
Kind, helpful	24	50.0
Outside rehearsals	4	8.3
Musically supportive	18	37.5
Laughter, fun	32	66.7
Group climate – group representatives' perceptions	**31**	
Friendly and welcoming	29	93.5
Sense of community, belonging, identity	8	25.8
Explicitly inclusive ethos	3	9.7
Very different to other groups	2	6.5
Socially supportive, help each other out, mutual support	3	9.7
Includes individuals with different abilities	1	3.2
Sense of family	2	6.5
Musically appreciative	1	3.2
Committed to the group	1	3.2
Group leadership – respondents' perceptions	**269**	
Encouraging, enthusiastic and positive	73	27.1
optimistic, positive, upbeat, energetic	11	4.1
Kind, patient, understanding	43	16.0
relaxed, tolerant, calm	40	14.8
kind, caring	8	3.0
Using humour	48	18
Supportive	30	11.2
Approachable, attentive, warm	24	8.9
Committed	16	5.9
Pro-actively inclusive	8	2.9
Appreciative	2	0.7
Balanced approach	1	0.4
Clear	8	3.0
Confident, good at managing the group	5	1.9
Consistent, reliable, fair	5	1.9
Constructive feedback	6	2.2
Democratic	6	2.2
Knows who you are	3	1.1
Perfect	5	1.9
Professional, well-organised	28	10.4
Respectful	3	1.1
Sets high standards, wants us to improve, ambitious for us	34	12.6
Wants to get the best out of us	15	5.6
Musical skills, knowledge, passion	77	28.6
Group leadership – group representatives' perceptions	**31**	
Key to members' experience	2	6.5
charismatic	3	
Pro-actively inclusive	3	9.7
Attentive to individuals	1	3.2

Exclusion – respondents' perceptions	383	
Associated with repertoire	23	6.0
Associated with diversity characteristics	7	1.8
socio-economic background	3	0.7
sexual orientation	2	0.5
gender identity	1	0.3
age	1	0.3
disability	1	0.3
political views	1	0.3
Associated with group practices	38	9.9
lack of consultation	8	2.1
expectations of behaviour	7	1.8
feeling pressurised	4	1.0
financial expectations	8	2.1
lack of opportunities to socialise	7	1.8
unable to participate due to ill health or disability	2	0.5
Not feeling like individual needs attended to	15	3.9
because new to the group	7	1.8
Associated with group climate	58	15.1
others leave me out, don't care about me	42	10.9
cliques	11	2.8
unwelcoming, condescending	7	1.8
others don't show commitment to group	19	4.9
not learning music, attending rehearsals	4	1.0
Associated with group leadership	53	13.8
impatient, frustrated, cross	11	2.8
not communicating clearly	15	3.9
unwilling to take suggestions on board	3	0.7
discriminatory	1	0.3
not valuing the group	8	2.1
not engaging with the group, not interested	7	1.8
unconstructive feedback	1	0.3
should be stricter about behaviour, standards	1	0.3
issues with their musical direction	55	14.4
Exclusion – group representatives' perceptions	**31**	
Associated with repertoire	4	12.9
Associated with group practices	11	35.5
not offering financial concessions	10	32.3
only offering financial concessions informally, reluctantly	4	12.9
failing to take care of individual needs	4	12.9
inaccessible rehearsal venue	5	16.1
but would try and change it if needed	2	6.5
including transgender singers	1	3.2
lack of attention to new members	1	3.2
not thought about how to be inclusive	4	12.9
due to nature of our group	3	9.7
tension between musical standards and inclusion	8	25.8
perceived negative impact of inclusion on group	1	3.2
Associated with group climate	5	16.1
excluding behaviour	5	16.1
lack of unity	2	6.5
Associated with group leadership	3	9.7
conductor's behaviour	1	3.2
committee	1	3.2
lack of recognition of responsibility for inclusiveness	1	3.2

Appendix E: Literature review to support questionnaire design

Workplace/inclusion literature related to research methods

In their review of the literature relating to diversity and inclusion in the workplace, Shore, Cleveland, & Sanchez (2017) found that researchers had often used quantitative methods in their studies. Accordingly, a number of quantitative scales for measuring diversity and inclusion could be identified. These included:

- a 'Perception of Inclusion-Exclusion Scale' (Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998);

- a 'Perceived Insider Status Scale' (Stamper & Masterson, 2002);

- a diversity and inclusion survey (Roberson, 2006);

- an 'Inclusive Behavior Scale' (Ferdman et al., 2009 in Hirshberg, 2009);

- a 'Climate for inclusion Scale' (Nishii, 2013); and

- a 'Perceived Group Inclusion Scale' (Jansen et al., 2014).

The authors of these studies indicated that these scales had largely been developed through a process of extracting relevant themes through literature review and testing for reliability and validity. Given that there are recognised benefits to using a pre-designed survey instrument which has been developed through a process of extensive testing and verification (Hyman, Lamb, & Bulmer, 2006), it would have been desirable, therefore, to select one of these scales for use in this study. Furthermore, using a pre-designed survey instrument would allow the findings from this study to be compared with those reported in other studies using the same instrument (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004). However, on reviewing each scale in detail, it became clear that none would be appropriate to adopt in its entirety as the contextual differences between research carried out in the workplace and research carried out in the context of adult amateur singing groups were simply too great.

Moreover, even within the better researched context of the workplace, Baron (2014) concluded that a lack of fully-tested and comprehensive measures meant that the

exploration of inclusion required "additional scale building, validating, and confirming through studies conducted in a mixed methods conversational mode with a conversational survey instrument." (p. 328).

Literature related to research methods used within musical contexts

Taking account of the key antecedents of inclusion identified by Shore, Randel, Chung and Dean (2011), it was clear that the questionnaire should include thematic areas relating to group practices, climate and leadership. A number of studies were identified within the research literature relating to group singing and similar musical groups which directly focused on these topics and which had used questionnaires as their main research instrument:

1. Stollak, Stollak, & Wasner (1991) used a specific questionnaire based on the validated 'Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale IV' developed by Olson, Portner and Lavee (D. H. Olson, 1986) in their study investigating the relationship between group processes and successful choir performance.

2. Bell (2000) developed a questionnaire that collected socio-demographic and information related to singers' personal musical experiences and asked singers w to rate 43 different statements relating to behaviour of choral conductors on a Likert scale (Likert, 1932). Bell explained that the questions were identified through her literature review, and that the questionnaire was piloted and subsequently re-designed as the pilot test did not yield enough variation in the responses.

3. In his doctoral study, Sharlow (2006) developed an online questionnaire to explore conductors' views and approaches to achieving community within a choral ensemble. While Sharlow provides detailed information on the dissemination of the questionnaire, he does not provide any information relating to its design, development, strengths or weaknesses.

4. In another study relating to the role of conductors in choral groups, Rowold & Rohmann (2009) modified a previously-validated questionnaire (the 'Multifactor

Leadership Questionnaire'). However, although they provide considerable detail on the analysis that they subsequently undertook, they offer little critique, either positive or negative, of the questionnaire itself.

5. Meanwhile, in another piece of doctoral research, this time investigating perceptions of choral culture among university music students singing in choirs, van der Vat-Chromy (2010) developed a questionnaire which asked students about their experiences of participating in a choral ensemble. The questionnaire was informed by previous research carried in school settings and was developed through extensive piloting and detailed analysis of the data gathered in the pilot study.

6. Sichivitsa (2003) and Brown (2012) also sought to explore university students' experiences of singing in a choir using a questionnaire developed by Sichivitsa and subsequently modified by Brown. Brown notes that respondents to his questionnaire were not necessarily representative of the overall membership in choral ensembles and that the results represented a snapshot of participants' perspectives at a particular moment in time.

7. Tamplin et al. (2013) made use of a "Sense of Belonging Instrument" (SOBI) developed by (Hagerty & Patusky, 1995) to assess social participation in a community choir for people living with aphasia following a stroke. The use of this instrument involved pre/post testing but only revealed minimal change over time in the subjective experience of sense of belonging.

8. In a series of studies investigating social connectedness, researchers have made use of a pictorial measure, the Inclusion of Other in Self (IOS) scale developed by Mashek, Cannady, and Tangney (2007) (e.g. Pearce, Launay, MacCarron, & Dunbar, 2017; Pearce, Launay, Machin, & Dunbar, 2016; Pearce, Launay, & Dunbar, 2015; Weinstein, Launay, Pearce, Dunbar, & Stewart, 2016). A similar measure, the Inclusion of Community in Self Scale (ICS), was used by Bullack, Gass, Nater, and Kreutz (2018) in their investigation of the psychobiological effects of choral singing on

social connectedness.

9. Dingle, Pennings, and Brander (2010) used the 'Group Identity Fusion' developed by Swann, Gómez, Seyle, Morales, and Huici (2009) to measure social connectedness within the choir, along with a four-item 'Social Identification scale' (Doosje, Spears, & Ellemers, 2002) to measure connectedness with the local community.

10. Finally, in seeking to compare the effects of group singing to other activities, Maury and Rickard (2018) adapted 'the Measures of Psychological Climate, Cohesion sub-scale' developed by Koys and DeCotiis (1991).

Literature to support questionnaire items

Question	Response options	Sources
How long have you been a member of this group?	• less than 6 months • 7 – 12 months • 1 – 5 years • more than 5 years	Literature review suggests that length of membership affects experiences (Carucci, 2011; Hirshberg, 2009)
Before joining this group, how much group singing had you done?	• none until now • only at school • have previously sung in another group as an adult	Literature review suggests that it is useful to consider prior experience (Carucci, 2011)
Are you currently singing in any other groups?	• Yes • No	Literature review suggests that multiple membership affects experiences (Iyer, Jetten, Tsivrikos, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009)
Do you have an official role in the group?	Yes No	People involved in running the group may feel more included due to being more directly involved.
[If yes] What is this?	Open text	To understand what role they have
How do you feel about being part of this group?	I feel a sense of belonging with the group	Sense of inclusion/belonging (Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Davidson & Faulkner, 2006; Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, Jans, & Lisev, 2014; Livesey, Morrison,

Question	Response options	Sources
		Clift & Camic, 2012; Pearce et al, 2016; Pitts, Robinson, & Goh 2015; Stamper & Masterson, 2002)
	I feel I can be myself in the group	Authenticity (Ferdman, 2014; Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, Jans, & Lisev, 2014)
	People in the group care about me	Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, Jans, & Lisev, 2014; Feeling safe in the group (Durrant, 2005; Van Der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Willingham, 2001, 2005)
	I feel supported (musically) by people around me	Feeling safe in the group (Durrant, 2005; Lamont et al., 2017; Van Der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Willingham, 2001, 2005)
	I feel appreciated by people in the group	Sense of being valued/appreciated (Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, Jans, & Lisev, 2014)
How do you feel about other people in this group?	People in this group are friendly	Carucci, 2012; Higgins, 2007a; Luhrs, 2015; Yerichuk & Krar, 2019
	People in this group are tolerant towards each other	Blandford & Duarte, 2004; Chorus America, 2019; Schuff, 2014 Feeling safe in the group (Durrant, 2005; Van Der Vat-Chromy, 2010; Yerichuk, 2010; Willingham, 2001, 2005)
	People in this group encourage and support each other musically	Leske, 2016; Rensink-Hoff, 2009. Nurturing (Bonshor, 2014; Einarsdottir, 2014; Van Der Vat-Chromy, 2010. Lamont et al 2017 Positive feedback from peers (Bonshor, 2016; Krallmann, 2016)
	People in this group are welcoming to new members	Hallam, Creech, Varvarigou, & McQueen, 2012; Schuff, 2014; Warran, Fancourt, & Wiseman, 2019.

Question	Response options	Sources
	People in this group support each other socially	Balsnes, 2016; Carucci, 2012; Dingle, Brander, Ballantyne, & Baker, 2012; Linnemann, Schnersch, & Nater, 2017.
How do you feel about the way the group is run?	The group encourages friendships between members	Offers potential for friendships (Clift & Hancox, 2001; Luhrs, 2015; (Pettigrew, 1998)
	The group supports my learning and development as a singer	Nurturing (Van Der Vat-Chromy, 2010)
	I have enough say in how the group is run	Influence in decision-making (Bonshor, 2016; Hess, 2012; Mor Barak & Cherin, 1998)
	I have enough information on what is happening in the group	Involvement and engagement in the group (Bonshor, 2016; Ferdman, 2014; Hess, 2012)
	I feel I am able to fully participate in the group's activities	
	I am treated fairly, without discrimination or barriers based on my identity	Ferdman 2014

What do you think of your conductor / music director?	is patient	Conductor's approach (Bell, 2000)
	is enthusiastic	Conductor's approach (Apfelstadt, 1997); Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996; Bell, 2000; Durrant, 2003)
	is encouraging	Conductor's approach (Armstrong & Armstrong,1996; Bell, 2000; Durrant, 2003, 2005)
	is kind	Sense of safety (Durrant, 2005; Einarsdóttir & Sigurjónsson, 2010; Hirshberg, 2009)
	is inspiring	Conductor's approach (Apfelstadt, 1997; Armstrong & Armstrong, 1996; 1996; Boerner & von Streit, 2005)
	is committed to our choir/singing group	Shared commitment to organizational goals (Baressi, 2000; Durrant, 2005)
How does he/she relate to you and the group?	He/she responds to requests/feedback from singers	Bell, 2000; Sharlow, 2006
	He/she is available to singers before/after rehearsals	Conductor's approach (Bell, 2000)
	He/she joins in the group's social activities	Suggested by initial research as important
	He/she displays a good sense of humour	Conductor's approach (Bell, 2000; Durrant, 2005; Kelly, 2015)

Appendix F: Final version of participant questionnaire

Your experiences of group singing

This questionnaire is being sent out to people who sing in choirs and other singing groups to find out about their experiences of group singing. We are particularly interested in finding out what helps people to feel part of the group they sing with and whether anything gets in the way of this. The questionnaire takes about 10 – 20 minutes to complete and is anonymous. A summary of the findings will be sent out to those who indicate they would like to receive this.

Thank you for taking the time to help.

Diana Parkinson, Institute of Education, University College London.
Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education, University College London.

Please answer the following questions about the choir / singing group who gave you this questionnaire.

Roughly how many singers are there in your group?

☐ less than 20   ☐ 21 - 50   ☐ 51 - 100   ☐ 101 - 200   ☐ over 200   ☐ don't know

What kind of music does your group sing?

☐ mainly classical   ☐ jazz   ☐ rock/pop   ☐ opera   ☐ musical theatre

☐ world   ☐ folk   ☐ gospel   ☐ other

How long have you been a member of this group?

☐ less than 6 months   ☐ 7 – 12 months   ☐ 1 – 5 years   ☐ more than 5 years

Before joining this group, how much group singing had you done?

☐ none until now   ☐ only at school   ☐ have previously sung in another group as an adult

Are you currently singing regularly in any other groups?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Do you have an official role in the group?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If yes, what is this? _____

How do you feel about being part of this group?

	Not at all	Not much	Quite a bit	Very much	Don't know
I feel appreciated by people in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel a sense of belonging within the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel supported (musically) by people around me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel I can be myself in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People in this group care about me	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What, if anything, helps you to feel part of this group?

How important is it to you to feel part of this group?

☐ Extremely important   ☐ Quite important   ☐ Not very important   ☐ Not at all important

Why is that?

How do you feel about other people in this group?

	None	A few	Some	Most	All	Don't know
People in this group are friendly	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People in this group are welcoming to new members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People in this group encourage and support each other musically	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People in this group are tolerant of each other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
People in this group support each other socially	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please use this space to explain further if you wish:

How do you feel about the way this group is run?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree
The group encourages friendships between members	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The group supports my learning and development as a singer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough say in how the group is run	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough information on what is happening in the group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel I am able to fully participate in the group's activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough say in the selection of the music we sing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am treated fairly, without discrimination or barriers based on my identity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What do you like most about the way this group is run?

What do you like least about the way this group is run?

Your conductor

What do you think of your conductor / music director?

	Not at all	Not very	Quite	Extremely	Don't know
He/she is encouraging	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she is inspiring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she is committed to our singing group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she is enthusiastic	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she is kind	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she is patient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How does he/she relate to you and the group?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost always	Don't know
He/she is available to singers before/after rehearsals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she responds to requests/feedback from singers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she displays a good sense of humour	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she joins in the group's social activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
He/she values the efforts we make to sing well	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What do you like most about your conductor's/music director's approach?

What do you like least about your conductor's/music director's approach?

Finally, I am interested in finding out whether people's experiences of group singing are affected by factors such as age, gender etc. I would be really grateful if you would provide the following information.

What gender are you?

☐ male   ☐ female   ☐ transgender   ☐ other   ☐ do not wish to say

What is your age?

☐ under 18   ☐ 25 - 34   ☐ 45 - 54   ☐ 65 - 74   ☐ 85 or older

☐ 18 - 24   ☐ 35 - 44   ☐ 55 - 64   ☐ 75 - 84   ☐ do not wish to say

What is your ethnic background?

☐ White or White British   ☐ Black or Black British   ☐ other ethnic background

☐ Asian or Asian British   ☐ Mixed ethnic background   ☐ do not wish to say

What is your nationality? _____

What is your educational background?

☐ left school without qualifications   ☐ GCSEs or equivalent

☐ A'levels or equivalent   ☐ university degree

☐ postgraduate qualification   ☐ other

☐ do not wish to say

Do you have any physical challenges or health issues?

☐ registered disabled ☐ long-term health condition / illness

☐ difficulty standing for long periods of time ☐ mobility issues

☐ sight loss ☐ hearing loss

☐ none ☐ do not wish to say

☐ other _____

Do you feel that most people in your group are from similar backgrounds to you? e.g. in terms of their education, profession, age, ethnicity etc.

☐ Yes ☐ No

In what ways are the members of the group from similar/different backgrounds to you?

Finally, please let me know if you would:

☐ be willing to take part in further research

☐ like to receive a summary of the findings from this research

If you have ticked either of the boxes above, please give me your email address or telephone number:

Email:

Telephone:

If you would like to email me with any other comments or feedback, please feel free to do so: d.parkinson.16@ucl.ac.uk.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR HELP

Appendix G: Summary of the analysis of the interviews with group representatives

**Diversity and inclusion in adult amateur singing groups:
Findings from interviews with representatives of groups in Camden**

My research is focusing on diversity and inclusion in adult amateur singing groups. It's looking both at *who* takes part and *how much* people feel included within these groups. This is important because research in other settings has shown that diversity and inclusion are critical factors in organisational performance – they affect people's experiences of joining and belonging to a group and, when well-managed, result in improved group performance. However, very little is known about these issues in the context of adult singing groups and particularly in terms of the wide spectrum of different types of singing groups that now exist.

Between March and October 2017, I carried out interviews with the representatives of 31 adult amateur singing groups across Camden. Camden was chosen as it's a diverse borough with lots of singing groups to contact (over 50 were located in the course of my research).

Ethnic diversity in Camden (2011 Census data)
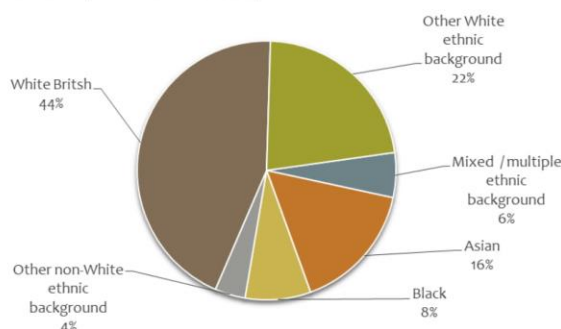
The interviews set out to explore the diversity of the groups as well as attitudes and group practices around diversity and inclusion.

Groups took part from across Camden and included:
- 7 auditioning choirs, ranging in size from chamber choirs to large choirs of over two hundred singers, singing mainly from the classical repertoire.
- 5 non-auditioning choirs, again singing mainly from the classical repertoire and ranging in size from 25 – 100 singers.

- 11 community choirs, including groups singing music from other cultures, community education groups, local health initiatives and a gospel choir.
- 8 specialist groups, including a singing group for people with experience of homelessness, LGBT choirs, gender-based and religious choirs.

Overall, these groups comprised nearly two-thirds (61%) of the adult, amateur singing groups located in Camden and reflected a good representation of different types of singing group.
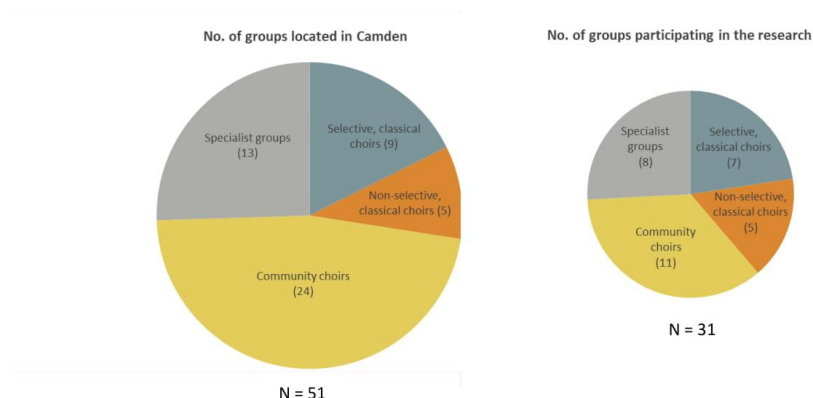
Many of the people I interviewed were keen to hear what emerged from the interviews. As a result, I have produced the following summary of my initial findings.

Diversity
- The borough of Camden has an ethnically diverse population. This does not appear to be reflected in the make-up of the singing groups in this study, as the interviews revealed that over four-fifths (84%) were largely composed of singers from White ethnic backgrounds. This pattern has been reported in other research into singing groups in the UK. However, many interviewees also described the cultural diversity of their groups, with singers from different nationalities and religious backgrounds, which has not been previously reported in the UK.
- Over four-fifths (84%) said their groups were composed of many more female than male singers. This has also previously been reported in research into singing groups in the UK and is likely to be associated with the negative perceptions of singing held by many boys and men.

- Nearly two-thirds (61%) described their groups as including singers from a wide range of ages, and a quarter said their singers were predominantly made up of younger singers. This contrasts with previous research in the UK which has generally reported singers as aged 45 and over.

- Nearly three-quarters (71%) said their groups included singers with physical difficulties or disabilities. Some of these singers were wheelchair-users, whilst others were affected by sight-loss, illness or old age. This finding has not been reported in other research into adult singing groups which has focused on other aspects of diversity.

- Five groups appeared to have a far more diverse membership than other groups. Three of these groups were culturally-focussed, whilst the others were part of local health and wellbeing initiatives. As such, they appeared to be attracting individuals who were less likely to join more mainstream groups.

Perceptions of inclusion

- Many interviewees described their groups as friendly and welcoming and emphasised the sense of belonging and community within their membership. However, some interviewees acknowledged that there were situations in which some individuals might not feel included. For example, it could be difficult for people joining the group, and in some cases, social cliques within groups might leave people feeling left out.

- Many groups were also keen to have a more diverse membership as they could see the social and musical benefits of bringing people together from different backgrounds.

- Groups also reported some challenges in responding to issues of inclusion. For example, some interviewees described how their groups were needing to take account of the different physical and musical abilities of their members, or to respond to individual beliefs and musical preferences.

- The interviews also revealed what some representatives saw as a tension between seeking to widen their membership-base and maintaining the quality of their group's performance.

- Nonetheless, some interviewees felt that having a group where people felt a strong sense of belonging tended to improve retention rates and could enhance the quality of the group's musical performance.

Responding to issues of diversity and inclusion

- In many cases, representatives described group practices that supported inclusion, such as offering concessionary rates for people on low incomes and ensuring the accessibility of their performance venues. Nonetheless, many also said that this was not widely advertised (e.g. on their websites).
- Many had formal management structures such as committees and trustee boards in place. Consultation with the wider membership tended to be informal, and often focused on music selection or practicalities associated with performances.
- Only a minority appeared to do more to support wider participation in decision-making within their groups through regular structured consultation processes.
- However, the interviews revealed that most groups were paying considerable attention to the experiences of new members and to facilitating and promoting social contact between members.
- Some groups were also particularly pro-active in ensuring they were aware of and able to address individual members' needs.

Concluding thoughts

These interviews have revealed that adult singing groups in Camden are, in many ways, more diverse than previous research into singing groups in the UK has suggested. They also strive to be friendly and welcoming both to new and existing members. Nonetheless, many are keen to recruit a more diverse membership and appeared to welcome the opportunity afforded by the interview to think about the issues they encounter.

Next steps

Thank you again for taking part in this research. These interviews are just one part of my research project so I am keen to keep in touch to know how groups are responding to these issues and would welcome your thoughts, questions or suggestions.

Diana Parkinson
Institute of Education, University College of London
Email: d.parkinson.16@ucl.ac.uk

4

Appendix H: Example summary of members' responses to the participant questionnaire

Summary of research findings

Introduction

As part of a study into diversity and inclusion within adult amateur group singing, a survey was sent out to the members of 19 choirs and singing groups across Camden. This short report provides an overview of the responses from 40 members of your choir. [1]
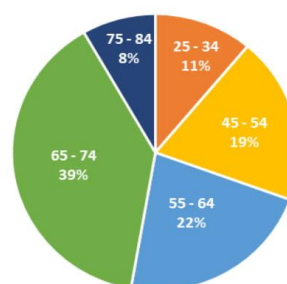
Diversity

Over four-fifths of respondents were female and the vast majority were aged between 45 and 74. Respondents also included both younger and older members, although none from the 35 – 44 age group.[2]
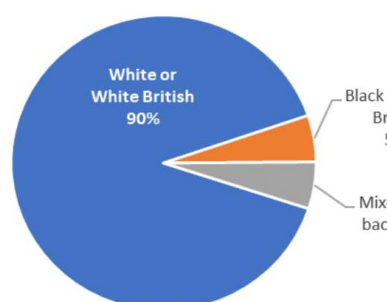
Gender

Age

Male
18%

Female
82%

75 - 84
8%

25 - 34
11%

45 - 54
19%

65 - 74
39%

55 - 64
22%
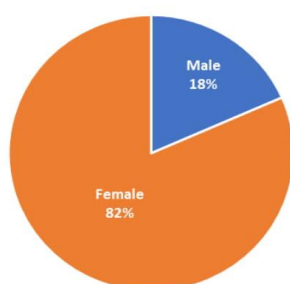
The vast majority of respondents were from White ethnic backgrounds although 10% were from Black or Mixed ethnic backgrounds.

White or
White British
90%

Black
Br

Mix
bac

---

[1] The name of the group has been removed as groups were advised that their individual group findings would only be shared with their group.

[2] Please note that percentages have been rounded so may not sum to 100.

1

Most respondents were highly educated; more than four-fifths had completed a university degree or postgraduate qualification.
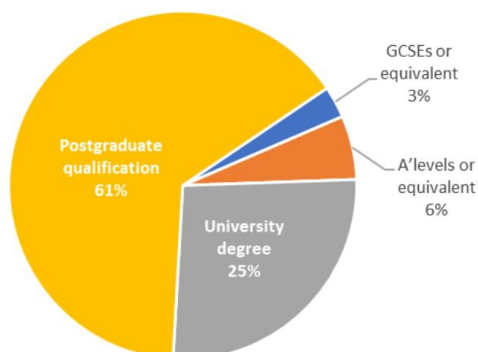
Nearly a third of respondents reported issues with mobility, sight, hearing loss or difficulty in standing for long periods of time; three respondents reported multiple health issues.
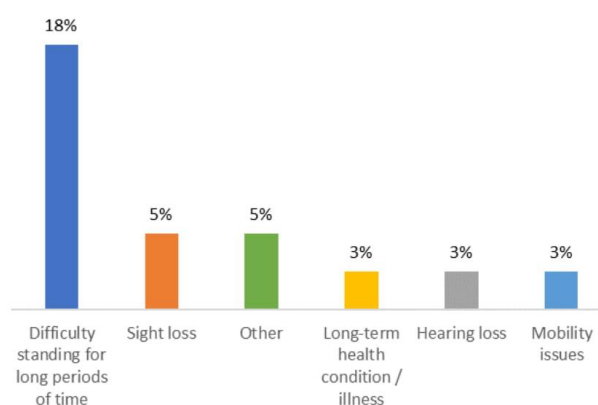

Perceptions of diversity

While the majority of respondents felt that other members of the group were from similar backgrounds to their own, over a quarter did not feel this was the case.

Several respondents linked this to being much younger themselves than the rest of the group while others reported perceived differences among fellow members:

It is a mixed North London group with different educational and professional lives as well coming from different countries and covering quite a wide age spectrum.

2
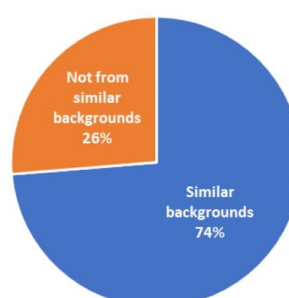
Some are from different educational levels/socio-economic backgrounds. The choir is relatively diverse and seems to have become more so over the last three years or so, which is certainly a good thing.
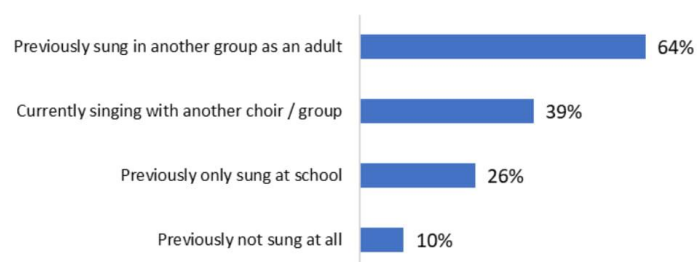
Diverse in various ways – many retired, some working, some different ethnicities too which is good. Variety is the spice of life!

Some, who felt their background was largely similar to others in the group, nonetheless highlighted differences:

I am middle class, but the fact that I am unemployed makes me a bit apart from the others.
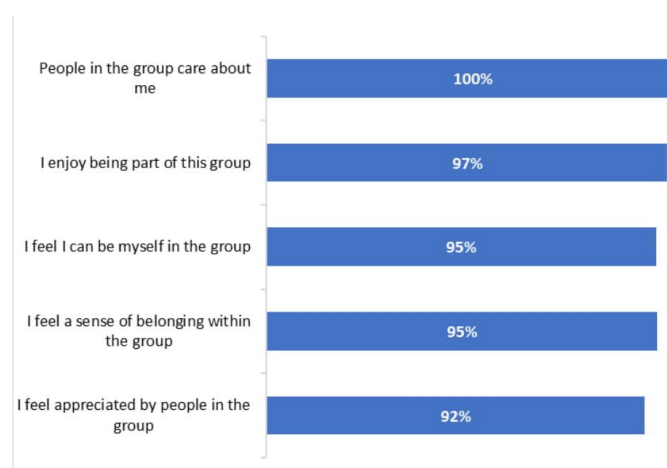
Respondents' singing experience

Nearly two-thirds of respondents had previously sung in another choir before joining the choir and more than a third were currently also singing with another group. However, more than a quarter had not sung since school and 10% had never sung in a choir at all.

Previously sung in another group as an adult — 64%
Currently singing with another choir / group — 39%
Previously only sung at school — 26%
Previously not sung at all — 10%

Sense of inclusion

Choir members generally reported high levels of perceived inclusion.

People in the group care about me — 100%
I enjoy being part of this group — 97%
I feel I can be myself in the group — 95%
I feel a sense of belonging within the group — 95%
I feel appreciated by people in the group — 92%

3

Some people said that the choir had facilitated their sense of inclusion by providing opportunities for them to become part of the group and connect with others:
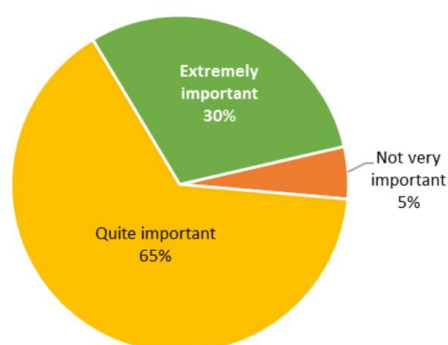
The social events have helped me slowly to get to know other members.

People making a point of talking to me especially in the pub.

Almost everyone in the group is approachable and friendly.

The importance of inclusion

It seemed that feeling part of the group was important to the vast majority (95%) of respondents.

Some respondents explained that feeling part of the group made for a stronger musical performance:

I think it can be very helpful for how the choir comes across in performance if there is good esprit de corps/camaraderie.

We can support each other to produce a strong performance and interpret the music effectively.

The happier the choir, the better the performance.

Others emphasised how feeling part of a group helped them feel less isolated:

It's a nice feeling as I don't have a big family.

Because otherwise one attends rehearsals and if no one talks to you then one feels self-conscious. This does not happen and so I am pleased.

I am retired and the choir provides a social and friendship route which I would otherwise not have as I do not have ex-work colleagues in London.

4

Barriers

Few respondents reported many barriers to their sense of inclusion. However, barriers that were seen as a problem included the costs associated with membership, a perceived lack of consideration of physical needs, and the behaviour of other members. Only one person reported not feeling socially included, although they said that this was improving. Another person described difficulties they were experiencing within their section:
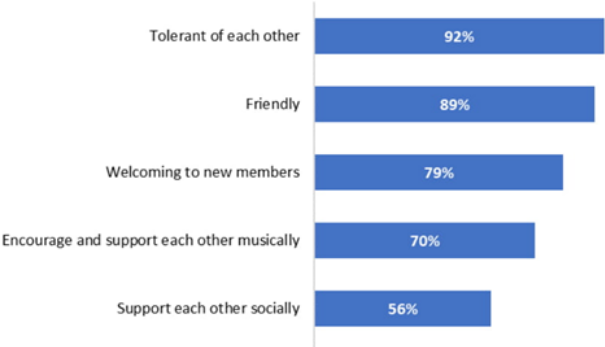
> *The section is too large with new members joining each term. No real sense of cohesion. A few people stand out as strong singers but others talk throughout the rehearsal or appear not to sing out. Also, people are inclined to sit in the same places, giving the appearance of being inflexible or cliquey.*

Group climate

Most respondents described other choir members as tolerant, friendly and welcoming.

One person commented:

> *I think mainly people are very welcoming and support each other. There are a few people that perhaps are on the periphery but mainly I feel that people are supportive.*

Another person commented:

Tolerant of each other — 92%
Friendly — 89%
Welcoming to new members — 79%
Encourage and support each other musically — 70%
Support each other socially — 56%

> *It is very cliquey, but people are still friendly. It can be hard for new members because there are so many established friendships and friends naturally wish to use the time before/after rehearsals to speak to each other, save seats for each other, etc. This is still true to a certain extent at new members events, but the effort of having the events is appreciated. Obviously, it's heartening to see that the choir helps to forge friendships, but I can see how new members would find it slow progress to get to know people.*

Group practices

The vast majority of respondents felt that the group encouraged friendships between members and treated them fairly. It also seemed that most people felt that the group provided enough information on what was happening and enabled them to participate fully in its activities. The majority also felt they had enough say in how the group was run.

5
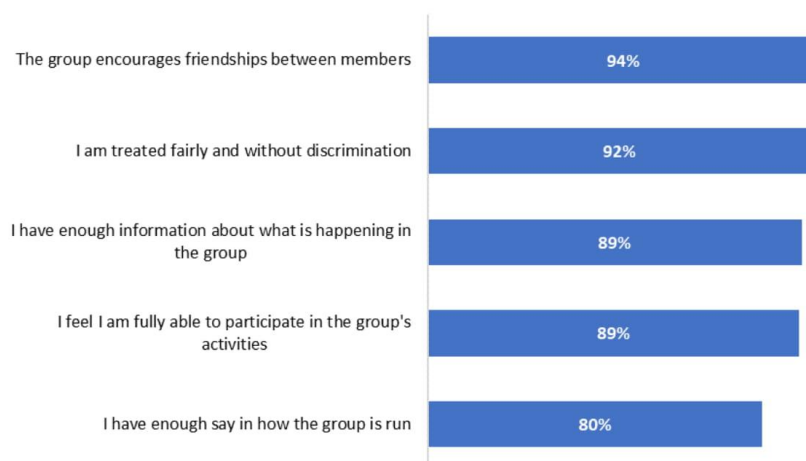
It seemed that many people valued the regular information provided to members:

I like that we're kept informed constantly.

The weekly emails are excellent in keeping members informed about the choir and other singing opportunities.

Others appreciated the sense of collective involvement:

It is efficient, clear, friendly and run for the members.

I like that it is run by a large committee of members.

The chair and committee work hard to make sure everything runs smoothly and encourage members to participate in social events.

Some also commented on the friendly, inclusive approach taken by those running the group:

Very efficient, very caring, very respectful. Those in charge of arrangements go out of their way to be helpful and friendly.

It is extremely friendly and inclusive.

Allowances are made for those who don't have as much money. It's all done in a very friendly way.

I think group is very inclusive to everyone's needs.

Nonetheless, some respondents commented on difficulties they had encountered:

As a new member I found it difficult to know who was who and what role they played.

Several people also commented on the process of music selection:

6

I would like to be given more of a choice in selecting music.

The process for choosing music is a bit opaque.

Often we do not know what we will sing until close to when rehearsals start.

Group leadership

All respondents rated their conductor as patient and committed to the group. The vast majority also felt he was enthusiastic and inspiring.

Some described what they particularly valued about the conductor's approach:

Committed to our group	100%
Patient	100%
Enthusiastic	96%
Inspiring	87%
Values the efforts we make to sing well	73%
Responds to requests/feedback	68%

He is always cheerful.

He is reassuringly confident, tolerant, good-humoured and keeps a good pace.

He is a very positive force – energetic, energising and encouraging.

*He makes clear what he wants without a scrap of domineering behaviour.*

I appreciate his warmth and vitality, and his ability to find and iron out very quickly any rough edges or weak spots; through the whole process I feel like we are being concentrated and strengthened by him in various ways. His focus is both powerful and light.

However, it seemed that fewer people felt he valued the efforts made by the group to sing well or that he responded well to requests/feedback. Some people explained:

He could be more encouraging.

He could be more direct about problems.

I think he needs to be more positive about our efforts and give more praise.
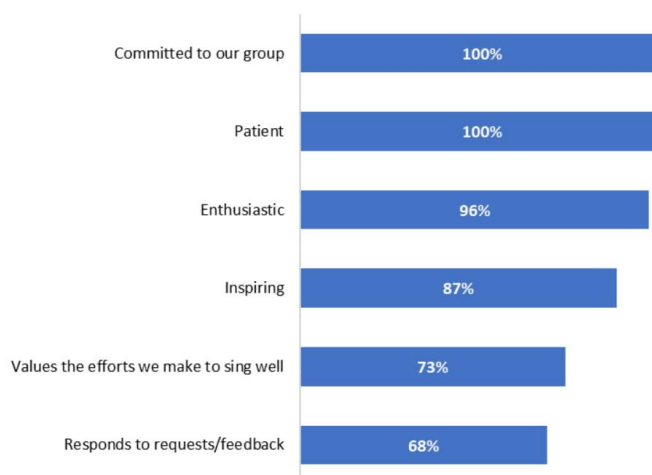
Conclusion

Previous research has generally presented adult amateur singing groups as predominately composed of white, female, well-educated individuals (Bell, 2004; Clift et al., 2008). While the

findings from this study do little to contradict this, respondents' own perceptions suggested that the group's diversity may be more nuanced, with a perceived range of socio-economic backgrounds, professions and nationalities among group members. Furthermore, while there has been very little research into the participation of adults with health issues and disabilities within adult amateur group singing, the proportion of respondents with health issues identified in this study highlights the need for greater awareness of this group of people.

Some research has also suggested that a sense of inclusion is linked to three key contextual factors: group practices, group climate and group leadership (Shore et al. 2011). The findings from this research appear to support this theory, as they suggest that this choir is a highly inclusive group whose members feel others care about them and who feel a strong sense of belonging. This sense of inclusion appears to be important to members, with some suggesting that it leads to a stronger musical performance, while others described how the group fulfils a social function for those who might otherwise be isolated.

The findings also suggest that this sense of inclusion has been established through inclusive group practices, an inclusive group climate and inclusive group leadership, with members particularly valuing the friendly atmosphere, the regular communications and the conductor's approach. Nonetheless, some members reported issues with the costs associated with membership, while others were affected by a lack of consideration of physical needs or a sense that other people were not pulling their weight. Equally, it seemed that providing more encouragement and support, as well as greater opportunities for members to make requests and give feedback, would enhance the inclusiveness of the conductor's leadership.

This research was undertaken as part of a doctoral study into diversity and inclusion within adult amateur singing groups, under the supervision of Professor Graham Welch at the Institute of Education, University College London. I would like to give my thanks to all those who participated in the research and to the groups that facilitated this.

Diana Parkinson
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Appendix I: Respondents' reasons for leaving singing groups

Members of singing groups who responded to the participant questionnaire were asked if they had previously been a member of any other singing groups. Of the 216 respondents who said they had sung with other groups prior to joining their current group, 156 provided information on why they had left their previous group(s). These were combined with responses from six individuals who completed a separate survey having left their group (see Section 3.13.5), of whom four provided information on their reasons for leaving. Initially, respondents were asked to select one or more reasons from a menu of options; their responses are shown in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1: Responses to a closed question asking respondents why they had left previous groups

Reason for leaving	No. of respondents	% of respondents (n = 160)
Not convenient	46	28.8
Not enjoying it	33	20.6
Repertoire	26	16.3
Wanted to join a different group	26	16.3
Conductor's behaviour	25	15.6
Not enough time	23	14.4
Not a friendly group	11	6.9
Group was too big	9	5.6
Change of conductor	7	4.4
Behaviour of individual group members	5	3.1
Group was too small	2	1.3

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 as some respondents could select more than one reason for leaving.

Respondents were also given the option of explaining their reasons for leaving previous groups in their own words: these responses were thematically coded as shown in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2: Coded responses to an open question asking respondents why they had left previous groups

Reason for leaving	No. of respondents	% of respondents (n = 126)
Moved to a different area	45	35.7
Standard not high enough	14	11.1
Excluding behaviour of others	9	7.1
Conductor's behaviour	8	6.3
Group disbanded	7	5.6
No longer qualified as member	7	5.6
Trying it out	7	5.6
Too much of a burden	7	5.6
Wanted to sing a different repertoire	5	4.0
Failed re-audition or lost confidence in musical competence	5	4.0
Family or work commitments	5	4.0
Not enjoyable	4	3.2
Too far away	4	3.2
Too expensive	2	1.6
Lack of democracy in the group	2	1.6
Ill-health	1	0.8