Hearing youth voices - in and through media research

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LSE

To discuss…

1. Children and young people's voices in research

2. Examples of participatory creative research

3. Practical and ethical benefits and challenges

Research in 'ethical symmetry'

- Research *with*, rather than *on*, children and young people (Christensen and James, 2008)

- Methods should be *person-centred* rather than explicitly child- or youth-centred

- Acknowledge power relationships

Image of Dr. Arnold Gessell researching infants at Yale, by Herbert Gehr

Voice

Voice is both a *process* and a *value*

the capacity to make, and be recognized as making, narratives about one's life (Couldry 2010: 7)
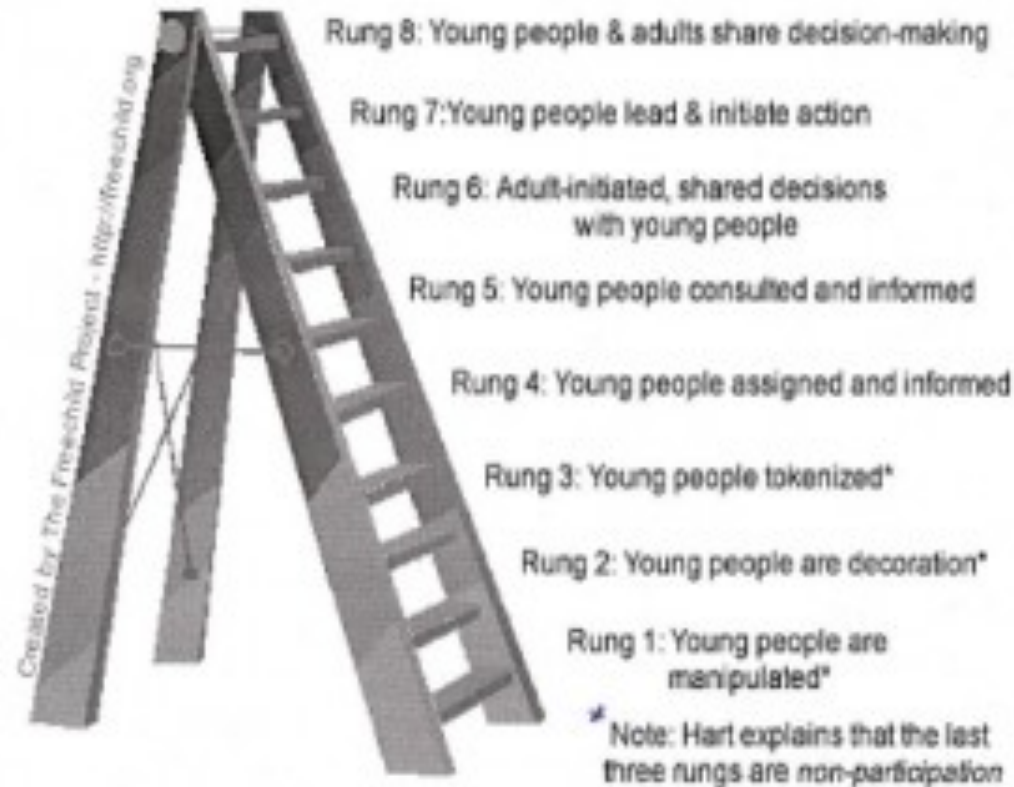

Blum-Ross, A. (forthcoming)

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Media and communications

- Children and young people as a key research constituency within media and communications studies

- Media-based research methods as a form of media and communications research

- Relevance of methods to media RQs

- Interest in 'voice'

Creative = participatory?
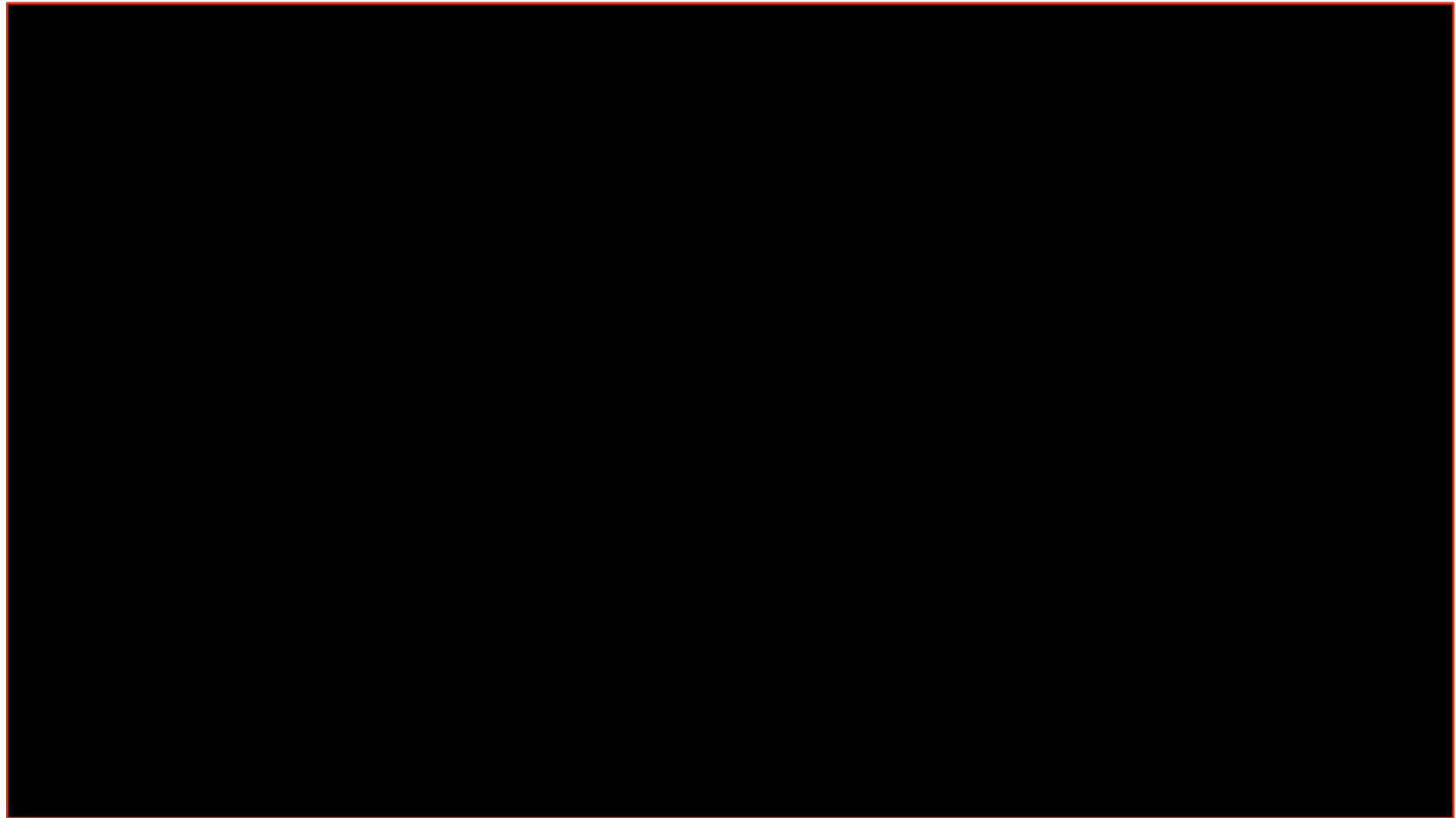

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.* Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

Research stages

- Applying for funding
- Project design (methods and RQs)
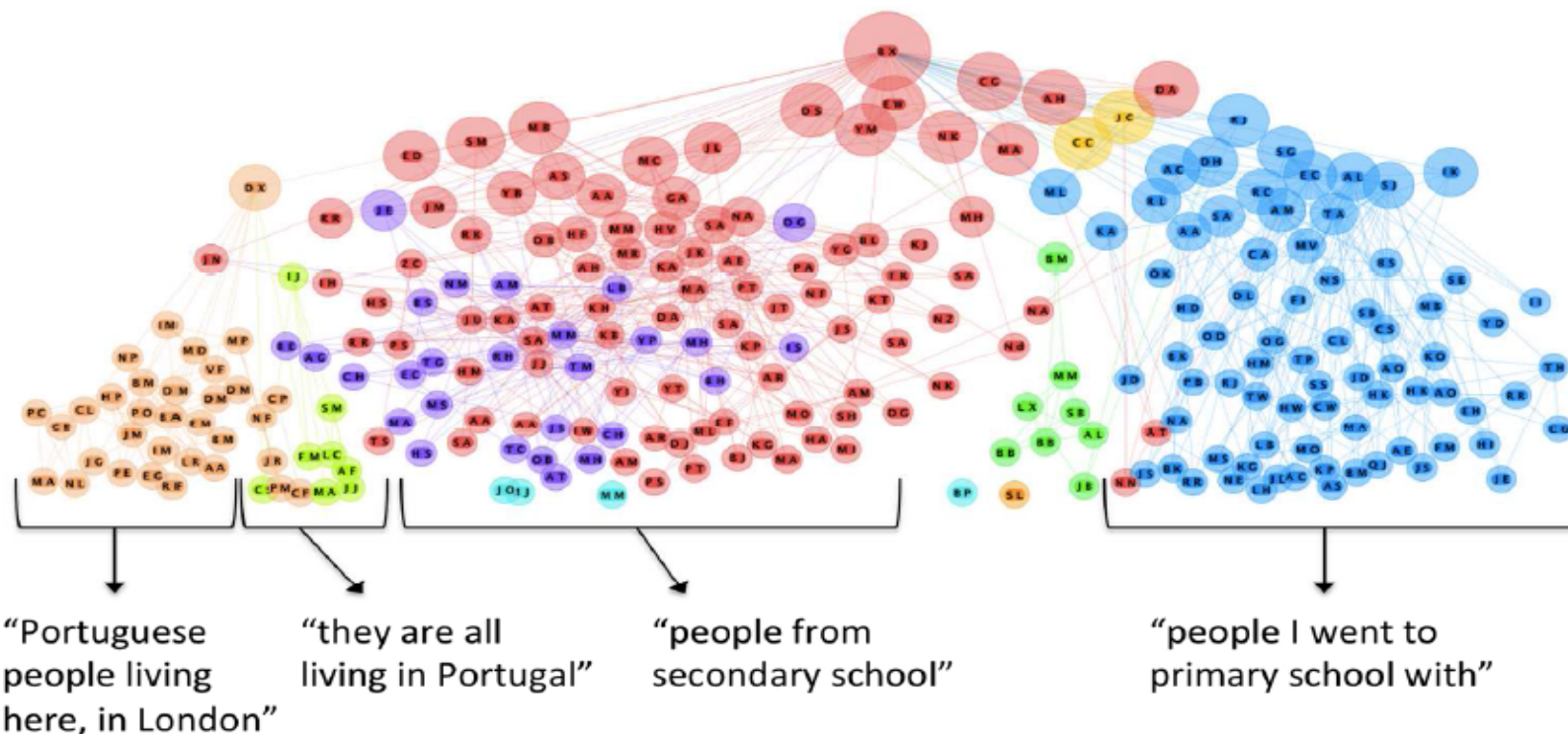- Data collection
- Analysis
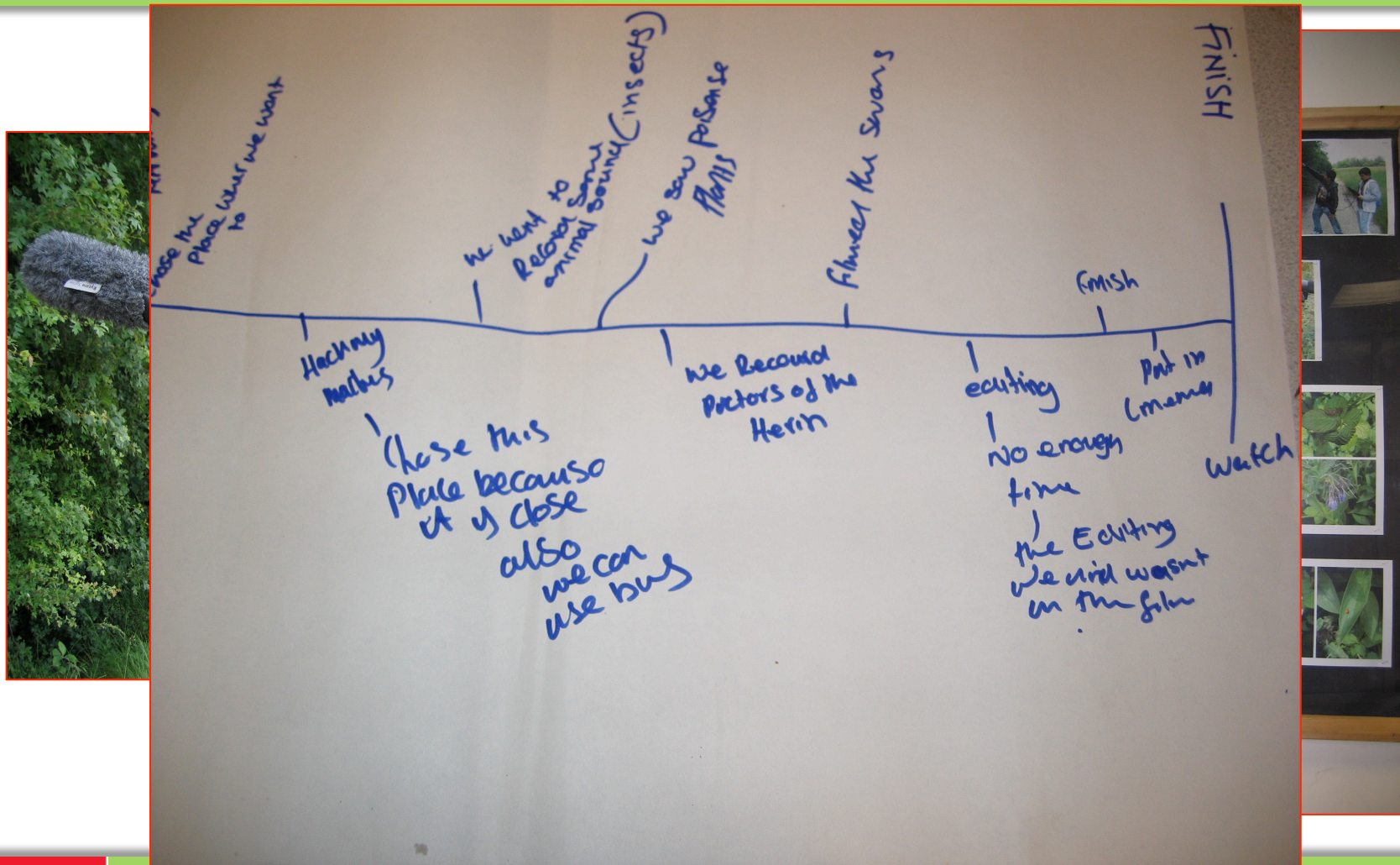- Dissemination

Project design

Data collection

Eglinton, K. (2013)

Data collection

"Portuguese people living here, in London"

"they are all living in Portugal"

"people from secondary school"

"people I went to primary school with"

Chinese, Nigerian, Caribbean, Nigerian, from Jamaica, he is from Somalia, Eritrea, she is from Wales, ehm, he is from Zimbabwe, all kind of different ehm, she is from Colombia, he is the only English person that I know, there is more, but I just don't remember, he is from Ghana, Thailand, she is from Saudi-Arabia, there is a lot, Algeria, Kazakhstan, he is from there. Ahhh there is just so much. - Xavier

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Analysis

Blum-Ross, A. (2012)

Dissemination

I've lived and worked in and around Hackney for the past 10 years and I've watched all the changes that you have talked about in your films, and... just a comment really on how useful your films are going to be for us in the Council, and for everyone because those are exactly the questions we sit around and we're talking talk about all the time
(Hackney council staff member at launch of films)

Creative methods – benefits...

- Engaging, fun, motivational
- Less intimidating than an interview
- Multi-vocal
- Multi-sensory
- Lengthy, allowing for reflection later
- Creates a 'product' that can be reflected on and disseminated

... and challenges

- How to analyse
- Length of time
- Practical issues – equipment, wi-fi
- Issues of power
- Whether/how to anonymise
- Affordances

Gauntlett, D. (2007)

To consider

- Beyond 'naïve empiricism' (Buckingham, 2009)
    - Not automatic 'authenticity' (Blum-Ross, 2012)

- What does it mean for voices to be heard?
    - In a practical sense – who is listening?
    - In an ethical sense – why and how are they listening?

    'gaining a voice that matters is predicated on simultaneously gaining an audience who listens' (Macnamara, 2013: 166)

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- PostCode Films

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