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Singing our stories: Experiencing a sense of community and developing self-empowerment in the Childless Voices Choir

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My PhD research explores the ways in which women who are childless not by choice (CNBC) experience a sense of community and develop self-empowerment through singing in the Childless Voices Choir in England. Pronatalist discourse stigmatizes women who, like me, are CNBC, positioning them as Other to those who have children, often leaving them without supportive communities of empathetic and similarly circumstanced people. Singing is a creative, embodied, and vulnerable act that provides opportunities for personal growth. Music education and community music research demonstrates that choral singing fosters a sense of community among singers and serves as a catalyst for self-empowerment. Through ethnographic methods, and a collaborative composition and recording project, my research critically examines the ways in which CNBC women recognize, critique, and resist pronatalist discourses within the choral environment. I examine how a capacity for action derived from solidarity may lead to opportunities for self-empowerment through singing together.