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The Sound Wars: Silencing the Working Class Soundscape of Smithfield

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Abstract

The concept of sounds associated with a social class is not new, Emily Thompson and Hillel Schwartz both present historical evidence of the segregation of communities because of the soundscapes they produced, from ancient Greece where noise was often linked with production, madness, and poverty, and was often used as a method for the segregation and suppression of certain groups, to New York City where anti noise campaigns, led by the upper classes, have fought historically for the suppression of unnecessary noise. However, contemporary classifications of noise as a quantifiable and verifiable phenomenon in cities have created what seems like an unambiguous and non-judgmental critique of sound pollution based on statistics. This suggests that we have progressed from the classification of loud sounds as associated with social classes to one connected to pollution.

In this paper I expand on a body of work conducted between 2009 and 2014, which examined the social construction of urban soundscapes in the Smithfield area of Dublin city, Ireland. The research was conducted with a group of participants, 84 teenagers and 5 older adults. These participants helped identify, through a series of research methods, concepts and ideas about the meaning of noise and sound and how certain sounds are often linked to social class.

Abstrait

Le concept des sons associés à une classe sociale n'est pas nouveau, Emily Thompson et Hillel Schwartz présentent à la fois une preuve historique de la ségrégation des communautés en raison des paysages sonores qu'ils ont produits, de la Grèce antique où le bruit était souvent lié à la production, à la folie et à la pauvreté, et a souvent été utilisé comme méthode pour la ségrégation et la suppression de certains groupes, à New York, où des campagnes anti-bruit, menées par les classes supérieures, se sont battues historiquement pour la suppression du bruit inutile. Cependant, les classifications contemporaines du bruit en tant que phénomène quantifiable et vérifiable dans les villes ont créé ce qui semble être une critique sans ambiguïté et sans jugement de la pollution sonore basée sur les statistiques. Cela suggère que nous avons progressé de la classification des sons forts associés aux classes sociales par rapport à la pollution.

Dans cet article, je développe un ensemble de travaux menés entre 2009 et 2014, qui a examiné la construction sociale des paysages urbains dans le Smithfield, dans la ville de Dublin, en Irlande. La recherche a été réalisée avec un groupe de participants, 84 adolescents et 5 adultes plus âgés. Ces participants ont aidé à identifier, à travers une série de méthodes de recherche, de concepts et d'idées sur la signification du bruit et du son et de la façon dont certains sons sont souvent liés à la classe sociale.

Keywords

Soundscape, class, teenagers, noise, perception

The Smithfield area Dublin: Market and Community Soundscape

In 2009 I began a period of research in the Smithfield area of Dublin city. I created a series of methods, which included ethnographic research, working with 84 teenage participant researchers and interviewing 5 older adults from the Smithfield locale. This area has historically been associated with the wholesale selling of fruit, vegetables, flowers and fish. For over 300 years, the north side of

Dublin city was connected to agricultural markets and the Dublin docklands (Cahill 1861; Drudy and Punch 2000). Since the 1960s the relationship between the north side of the inner city area and these trades has slowly diminished in part because of changing economic practices and the impact from various economic crashes throughout the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Until the 1970s the Smithfield Square and its environs was a central meeting point for the trading of cattle and agricultural produce. Smithfield also contained, up until 1971 the Jameson whiskey distillery, today the building is a tourist space. During the crash of the early 1980s and even preceding this period, the Smithfield area has shrunk economically, with the markets bypassed as a space to prepare goods before shipping. The wholesale selling of goods were relocated gradually, to industrial estates outside Dublin city centre. Trades within the area such as cattle slaughtering, the making of whiskey barrels (coopers) and whiskey, and furriers, disappeared.

From the 1950s on the Irish government began an extended period of ex-urbanisation, sending communities from Dublin's inner city to live in new suburban housing estates. This involved sending whole communities in to areas where no comparable employment was available. Often families were split, removing the social and family bonds that glued the community together. On some occasions people were moved to the outer circle of Dublin city, but even such a small move was seen as potentially problematic, you weren't close to family, friends and work. Within Smithfield streets could be seen as having "huge differences", shaped by a variety of socio economic and cultural differences (female cohort aged 65). All of these changes created a dramatically different soundscape over time; with the disappearance of economic sounds you lost what Schafer called archetypal or historic sounds. The loss of communities meant a gradual decrease in the sounds of children and women's voices on the streets.

An example of the relationship between class, noise and gender is the move by DCC and a number of businesses within Dublin city since the early 1980s, to move street traders off the main shopping streets (Lee 2009). Part of the process involved using the law to police and criminalise mainly on female street traders. This was carried out by the confiscation of their goods and arresting the women.

Lee (2009) argues that female street traders were defined as disrupting shoppers from using the new supermarkets and clothes stores in areas like Henry Street, which during the 1980s underwent a significant rejuvenation project (DCBA 2013). The argument was mainly focused on their visual presence; they were seen to block the new modern shop fronts. However, what these traders were mostly famous for were the cries they made about the price and goods they were selling, which would reverberate, in competition with other voices, around the streets. I remember as a young teenager witnessing women shouting down Henry street warning their fellow traders that the Garda¹ were coming, and then you would see them scatter down side streets. Over the years these traders started to disappear as regulars and then were replaced with a mix of street sellers allowed on Henry Street during the Christmas period. Today, the only street to sell fresh produce in that area is Moore Street, a small street off Henry street that has always been a market area. However, even streets like this are still under threat, with Dublin city council wanting to 'bring order' to the place (Pope 2015).

Ex-urbanisation and the silencing of communities

Following the economic slow down in the area and the movement of people out to the suburbs Smithfield became both visually and sonically derelict. Buildings and factories were abandoned leading to slow dereliction and the decline of industry. The soundscape of community and economic practices began to decline and then almost disappear. As one interviewee stated, during the 1970s, which was when the wholesale markets of Smithfield began to 'wind down' it still had its moments of chaos and noise,

" Interviewee: you'd run through there (Smithfield) in the morning and then that's where you get all the sounds, sights and smells, and it was a mixture of kind of cobbles and tarmac and you had fellas pushing everything. The sound I can remember are forklifts I suppose, but also people with kind of trolleys, and that kind of battle going on... there would have been vans coming up from the country to collect stuff, and it was an impossible place, it was chaotic, it was the most chaotic fucking place. You

¹ Irish police service.

know the way when you move through the city now it's actually all very well kind of regulated and there are footpaths and there are regular kinds of flows of people." (older participant aged 60)

The early 1990s saw the beginning of a period of economic growth in Ireland. Smithfield was designated as a site for regeneration and redesign, as its location right beside Dublin city centre and within walking distance of a growing service sector industry, banking, retail, hotels etc., made it an ideal site for the construction of new private housing/apartments and the types of businesses that are seen as attractive to a commuting and transient population: cafes, boutique stores, mildly expensive restaurants. Numerous properties were built to meet an emerging housing demand for these new types of workers. Property prices in Dublin during the 1990s skyrocketed and these included the apartment complexes in Smithfield. In addition, under the rubric of regeneration the Historic Area Rejuvenation Project was established (HARP). Russel argues that what was different about such projects, was the role afforded to communities "at least in the rhetoric of regeneration" (2001:2). The partnerships between communities and urban developers were initially encouraged through the financial support of European funding initiatives during the 1980s.

The development of such areas like Smithfield followed American models of "modernisation construed as commitment to the growth model of prosperity with its economic and social adaptation" (Soper 2013:249). During the economic boom of the late 1990s to the 2000s, and because of "property-based tax incentives" in Ireland, numerous sites were built or regenerated; as a result the "character of urban spaces became increasingly generic" (McCarthy 2005:235). One can attribute this generic profile to the lack of engagement with older people or teenagers in the community, or little, if any examination of the non-physical properties of urban spaces.

The various steering groups involved in the development of the Smithfield area did not include the voices of youth or children in this urban development, see figure 1. In examining urban regeneration projects, one must also look at ways "in which regeneration policies impact on the lives of socially excluded groups"

(Degen and Rose 2012:3273). These groups, such as teenagers and the elderly, arguably use local spaces the most, being often limited in their ability to access other spaces for reasons of finance and age. When examining spaces for regeneration or rejuvenation, one must include the voices of these groups. The rationale for this, as it connects to the study of sound and the soundscape, lies in the familiarity both groups will have with the local soundscape as a result of their frequent use of public spaces. For the older generation, it is the connections they have made to sounds and their production over time, as well as their ability to trace changes within the soundscape and link them to the devolving of social and productive practices. For the young people it is informative in its implication that public space is increasingly disconnected from urban social practices of use and participation. Inner city teenagers have few places to congregate, but most of the research participants identified street corners, laneways, doorways etc., in and around Smithfield as places to hang out. Their use of this space as a place to congregate far exceeds any of the steering group who were included in discussions around Smithfield's redevelopment.

Membership Drawn From	Members
Local Authority	Local Authority Officials - Project Manager Assistant City Manager Elected Representatives 5 councillors from the local constituency
Social Partners	Unions – ICTU Employers - IBEC
State Agencies	FAS Enterprise Ireland Dublin Tourism!
Local Development Agencies	Dublin Inner City Partnership Company Dublin Inner City Enterprise Board
Local Businesses	Henry St. Mary St. Partnership Capeel St. Traders Association
Local Community	4 Community Representatives 1 drawn from each of the four area cells
Conservation	An Taisce

Figure 1 Composition of HARP steering group²

Regeneration and gentrified soundscapes

² Image from Paula Russel's paper cited in the bibliography

By the 1990s Smithfield was beginning the first of many regeneration phases. Most of the market buildings had been closed down or demolished, the area was under its first of many design phases to turn it in to a more publicly accessible space. The area was one with a large public square at its centre, tall complexes - a mixture of apartments, hotels, private hospitals and an art house cinema - squashed within and surrounded by social housing areas.

The Smithfield square exemplified poor urban planning with public art works installed, removed and installed again, trees planted then cut down, benches added and removed, and finally oddly placed green spots, two Dublin Bikes racks, at both ends, and a small playground installed in 2013.



Figure 2 Trees at one end of the Market in 2010, knocked down later that year



Figure 3 Smithfield Square under construction again, 2010



Figure 4 The Square complete on the 8th of February



Figure 5 By the 17th of February 2011



Figure 6 Still under construction 18th July 2011

The soundscape of Smithfield paralleled the design, the sounds of construction overlaying every other sound, and in the evening within what was a very quiet space you would hear the shouts from groups of addicts or homeless who would gather in and around the square, mixed with the sounds of bicycle bells - the sounds of emergency service vehicles - the Four Courts was located at the south end of the square facing a police station where prisoners are held before sentencing. What was missing and defined by both the ethnographic research

and the research participants was the a central community soundscape one that includes the sounds of community activities, peoples voices regularly heard on the streets, children playing, the sounds of productive practices, a regular rhythmic sonic pattern. Rhythms solidify routines and social and cultural practices. It is important to note that the participants understood the concept of repeated patterns and rhythms in a space. For the younger participants, the one continuous rhythmic soundscape through Smithfield, which gave it meaning was that of the newly constructed Luas tramline which opened in 2004. The tram was assigned meanings connected to graceful movement with one teenager comparing it to a “ballet”. This was disconnected from its function as a public transport vehicle.

Designing spaces without sound

The soundscape pre 1960s was fading and being replaced by the soundscape of what Degen (2008) would call a new urban aesthetic, one where the city is "constituted through the sensory-practico body" (2008:41). Lefebvre argues that the conflicts between the sciences and urban design arise when a space is divided into “logico-mathematical space on the one hand” and the “practico-sensory realm of social space” on the other (1974:15). What occurs in the design of city spaces when the phenomenological is ignored, tamed or controlled through scientific management is abstract space (Blessner and Salter 2009). Often the construction of urban space is shaped by more practical ideas, such as stylistic concerns, material use and aesthetics, as sensory information is relegated to the fields of subjectivity and interpretation, therefore useless in urban design. The sensory space is seen as having to figure itself out after the fact. In contemporary terms, there are a number of projects within capital cities, not the least of which is Dublin city, where the designers/planners of space neglected to examine the sensory experience of the urban and the everyday. The Temple Bar area of Dublin city, defined as a cultural quarter (Corcoran 1998; Temple Bar Cultural Trust 2013), was rejuvenated in the 1990s, its main purpose to house cultural institutions. However, as a space to attract tourists it also

contains numerous bars and nightclubs. During most evenings the space becomes incredibly loud and smelly with the presence of hundreds of drunken locals and tourists.

There are no documents related to the re-design of Smithfield that point to a consideration of the senses, whether this was the addition of sounds, smells etc., or the loss of said sensory activities in Smithfield. A city councillor interviewed for the research stated that no such consideration was brought forward to or by the steering committee. Instead, the outcome of the regeneration of this space was a soundscape of silent spaces with occasional activities that produced, as a by-product, sounds and smells connected to seasonal events such as fairs and markets. By 2014 even these events had stopped appearing in the square. There was no stability to the space whilst constantly under construction. Instead, the soundscape represented an aural non-place. A space, for Augé (2009:79), is an area where places are enacted through the movement of bodies within the milieu. He states that a public place which no longer concerns itself with history and identity will become a non-place. He advances that 'supermodernity' "produces non-places, meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places" (2009:77) because they do not integrate the earlier identities and memories. Instead, new public spaces, such as Smithfield "are listed, classified, promoted to the status of 'places of memory', and assigned to a circumscribed and specific position" (Augé 2009:78). The sounds within public spaces are marketed to cater for types of publics, the public park for example in which it is presented as "a stage and an oasis for our busy city lives" (Yang and Kang 2005:62) where sound is defined as a sensory aesthetic. However, few urban planners examine the subjective engagement with aesthetic sound, instead designing objects in space, which they consider will provide a universal experience. The Smithfield soundscape has become a non-place of sound, with no site-specific sounds other than the general sounds of an urban space, traffic and construction. It means that there are no sounds defined as belonging, sounds that were defined by the older research cohort as specific to the area. For the younger cohort and during my own ethnographic walks and notes, we all defined

the area as generally absent of meaningful sounds. Today, the Smithfield area still contains a large working class community who occupy the last social housing complexes, flats and small houses. The keynote sound of the area is silence a mark or impact of the creation of non-place and the exclusion of the working class voice in the creation of new urban planning.

With the crash of 2008, many spaces sited for construction were left abandoned, mass unemployment meant a new soundscape emerged. As mentioned above, groups of addicts began to make the Smithfield Square and the surrounding space their home. A constant sound of emergency services seemed to increase during my time researching the space, this was also remarked on by my research participants, and silent spaces began to emerge, spaces empty of all activities. However, a growing interest in silence and quiet began to take shape within county councils, with spaces in the city demarcated for silencing, creating spaces of quiet and calm, defined as proper, safe and appropriate.

The following section explores the different methods undertaken to explore both the historic and contemporary soundscape of Dublin city and the Smithfield area.

Listening to the city: ethnographic sound walks

The first phase for examining the soundscape of Smithfield involved the development of a sound walk. The purpose of the walk was twofold: to listen to the soundscape as it changed over a 24-hour period and to compare the sounds of Smithfield to the centre of Dublin city. This meant mapping routes that took me through key sites within Smithfield and towards the city centre.

The first of the 24-hour documented walks took me through what was left of the markets, the housing areas and public squares of Smithfield and then through to the city centre. This involved walking one day a week for two hours at different times of the day to cover the 24-hour cycle. These were designed to transition through areas connected with different types of work or social practices around the north inner city. This included passing by schools, pedestrian only areas,

small green spaces, small housing estates and what was left of the Smithfield markets. Interestingly I never went in to the squares of the flat complexes, I always felt that this was not a public space that a stranger could simply walk in to. Although not a gated community, it seemed inappropriate for me to simply walk in to what is essentially the front garden of a home or collection of homes. This was a feeling that was also expressed by the younger and older participants, whereby even streets would be off limits to outsiders.

Interviewer: do you feel like there's any spaces that you're not allowed, that you're not welcome?

Group: See right, it sounds very stupid right, but, see if you're like from (area in Dublin city), and you go up to like (area in Dublin city-different neighbourhood), and you're not related to, or you don't know anyone, they'd be like, who are you?

Interviewer: How would they know that you're not from there?

Group: They just would.

Although they gave no specific reason the older participants were able to point out specific reasons why one wouldn't belong in an area, what job your parents had, what clothes you wore, and what you sounded like, your accent or way of talking.



Figure 7 Social housing flats from the outside

The sounds of the walks were recorded on to a zoom audio recorder, which included my dictating some experiences. I used a digital camera to document

sounding objects and areas. Following each walk I would annotate my experience through reflective journaling. My journals would note for example

- The weather;
- Time of day;
- Type of places passed through;
- Types of activities taking place;
- The grouping of people;
- The speed I walked and why.

Journal note 2010 Feb. 7th

“After a day of soundwalking I found it frustrating to find that all I noticed was either the traffic or the absence of traffic. Is it a case that when I try to hear a place, I stopped actually hearing it as whole and break it up into pieces? This seems similar to photographing a space; we take a snapshot of the whole. The idea of Smithfield being in any way an area of a particular kind of practice (as in economic or social activities) seems nil. When I walk up Grafton Street I hear footfall, people, music, laughter, bags banging. It’s the sound of a shopping district. Smithfield seems empty of sounds that signify anything.

Conditions: Dry windy day, very difficult to hear at certain angles. Lunchtime traffic and lunch time crowds. Walked through Smithfield to markets, not too busy with market people, no kids”. (Linda)

The walks were subjective sensory experiences annotated by my own knowledge of this part of the city. Unlike de Certeau's flaneur who walks a foreign city taking in what is unknown and experiencing it as an outsider, I had a connection to Smithfield that started in childhood, and of course a strong connection to Dublin city, as a Dubliner. My walks revealed what de Certeau (1988:92) highlights is the goal of the city designer or planner, to create cities of beauty from a distance.

Designed as if to be seen from above, a space of interstices and lines, a distancing from the sensory activities that occur below which might distort our view of the total. Tall buildings with bold edifices and gated access, vast hardscape public areas, with little occurring at street level. Only for very brief periods of the day did Smithfield come alive sonically, when the schools let the children out for lunch - one school had its playground on the roof, and the opening of the markets in the morning. It is these kinds of sensory experiences that surround the walker that allow us to interpret a *place* as site and sensory specific.

During my time walking I noted that the housing areas of Smithfield rarely offered the kinds of sounds connected to social or communal activities, such as neighbours chatting or children playing on the streets. The soundscape defined by the older cohorts as a constant in Smithfield pre the 1980s were locational; streets and complexes contained unique sounds specific to those small communities. This included an ambience that immersed the Smithfield population from the various businesses', factories, churches and schools that at regular intervals sounded out specific signals, throughout the day. Both Soja (1996) and Lefebvre explore the notion of rhythmic cities and spaces as places defined by sonic moments and intervals. Smithfield was a space that followed both a machinic and circadian rhythm, linked as it was to rural activities of production, but contained within it factories and other types of industry not necessarily connected to the markets.

Rhythm is often linked to notions around music: Soja uses musical analogies to denote how space can be represented as a production; although his terminology is linked to the language of music, which reflects both de Certeau (1988) and Schafer's (1977) examination of the world as rhythmic and sonorous. However, this is not a useful metaphor as music is often linked to the ephemeral, transitory, and not static. Instead the soundscape can, for various reasons, be a permanent part of space, through its repetition and connection to historical, cultural practices.

During my soundscape walks I noted that each street offered particular sounds, or obstructed sounds from particular areas. For example, one could hear traffic

at all times but, depending on the shape or design of a housing area, a certain level of filtering took place, which meant that other sounds in the space would either be muted or amplified depending on the physical design of the space. There were small parks within different housing estates, and central squares within flat complexes where children or adults could congregate. However, I rarely heard or saw either groups use these spaces throughout the four years of this study. A part of this may have been a result of the time of day chosen to walk by these areas. The teenage participants often defined these spaces as noisy, with the screams of small kids invading the soundscape of their homes: this suggested poorly insulated accommodation. In addition they described hearing on occasion the shouts of drug dealers or drunken revellers late at night heard even through closed windows.

As discussed above the soundscape that stood out and made Smithfield, for a few hours in the day, unique, were the sounds produced within the wholesale markets. According to both the older participants and the documentary film maker Joe Lee whose film *Bananas on the breadboard* (2009) explored the history of the Smithfield markets, this is a radically reduced market space compared to what it was in the 1960s and 1970s.



Figure 8 Market area Smithfield 2011



Figure 9 large indoor markets in Smithfield

From approximately 4am to 10am Greek Street, Mary's Lane and Little Green Street began to fill with the soundscape of a market. The sounds were that of pallet trucks rumbling along the cobblestoned streets accompanied by a constant beeping as they reversed in to warehouses, boxes banging onto the ground, the cacophony of men's voices talking in several languages shouting orders and instructions, shutters being opened and closed, seagulls screeching above as they waited to dive bomb fallen food. This was accompanied by the smells of fish, fruit and fresh flowers, essentially the rhythm of a busy market.

In contrast, at this time in the morning, Mary Street and Henry Street, the main pedestrian shopping areas of the North side, were extremely quiet, with a number of homeless people sleeping in doorways. At 04:00am the rest of the city had yet to wake up while the Smithfield markets were in full flow.



Figure 10 Trucks delivering goods to the wholesalers



Figure 11 Crates of onions delivered to the market

Walking around the outskirts of these market streets without the buzz of activity was a slightly threatening experience. There were numerous demolished sites

surrounding Smithfield covered with boarding, empty buildings with 'To Let' signs, abandoned structures and streets with low lighting, in the early hours of the morning every corner or laneway felt slightly threatening. The lack of ambient sounds in these areas emphasised other sounds such as footsteps or small bangs, creating an eerie sensation as they echoed in the predominantly empty streets.



Figure 12 Abandoned sites in Smithfield, the old Fish market site

By Midday the soundscape of Smithfield started to change, the wholesalers were closing: the traffic was disappearing. There was less foot traffic, instead, you could hear the sound of the rest of the city appearing from the distance, the low rumble of traffic, church bells, alarms, emergency service vehicles even air traffic. Smithfield was quiet in comparison; there was no replacement activity in the area. Unemployed men and women started to gather in groups on corners and in the square, teens and their guardians hung outside the youth courts located on Smithfield square, smoking and talking, and the sounds of construction would emerge again as a dominant sound.



Figure 13 Outside the youth courts in Smithfield square

Researching with young people - the teenage ear view

Working with young people was part of exploring a gap in the field of sound research where historically the voices of young people were ignored in social and psycho-social research (Merleau-Ponty 1948). However, contemporary research into space and spatial practices has highlighted the importance of working with young people (Kato 2006, Matthews, Limb, and Percy-Smith 1998, Travlou 2003). Researchers exploring governmental policies concerning youth have found that there is an increase in “the exclusion of young people from public space through the criminalisation of certain activities (i.e. skateboarding, graffiti) and the policing of their movement (i.e. juvenile curfews)”³ (Travlou 2003:3). Bull argues that there is “no contemporary account of the auditory nature of everyday experience in urban and cultural studies” (2000:2). One could argue that there is also no contemporary account of youth and their relationship to the auditory in everyday life. Urban working class teenagers locate themselves within the city, creating zones to 'hang out'; 'safe places'. They create what Blesser and Salter (2009) call acoustic architecture: soundscapes

³ The Irish equivalent is the Juvenile Diversion programme, “the intended outcome of the Programme is to divert young people from committing further offences” www.citizensinformation.ie.

that surround them in a protective bubble, they produce sounds that include them and exclude others. They are very cognisant of this fact recognising that their sounds might be seen as a threat or a nuisance

“Like a housing area, like you’d be sitting there and everyone would be making loads of noise cause like you’re having a bit of a laugh, like you’d be shouting you wouldn’t realize that you’re shouting but you are and you’re told to move on like, I understand that”. (Group 2c: male)

This paradox suggests both a reflexive approach adopted by the teenagers to monitor their sounds and paradoxically, ambivalence to being quiet. However, the participant suggested that part of the reason that they, teenagers, use particular spaces at night was their closeness to communities, lights, and adults; these were seen as safe spaces.

Sound methods

There were three stages of research conducted in collaboration with the teenagers, sound walking, deep listening and focus group discussions, which included the creation of sound maps. These methods were designed to use a combination of qualitative social methods with sound methodologies that allowed access to information, which would not have appeared in most social science studies. The methods examined sound as an immersive social experience connected to all aspects of life. The use of some of these methodologies are grounded within other studies that have examined the urban sonic experience (Adams 2009; Adams et al. 2006; Augoyard 1979; Gell-Mann and Tsallis 2004; Venot and Sémidor 2006). However, the exploration of the qualia (the qualitative aspects of conscious experience) highlights the seldom-explored phenomena of sound as integral to spatial relations and community (Degen 2008; Waskul, Vannini, and Wilson 2009).

This stage focused on teenagers between the ages of 15 and 16 who lived or studied within the research area. The choice of age group was based on the relationship these teenagers would have to the Smithfield area. Smithfield was

designated a space for rejuvenation in the early 1990s so these teenagers would only have known this part of the city as a space undergoing physical transformations. However, their families, immediate and extended, might have had some relationship to the space, passing on perhaps memories of past experiences. Over a period of two years the 84 teenagers explored themes around noise and silence, mediated listening, the soundscape of the home and the city. Themes and topics that emerged over this study included concepts around class and gendered soundscapes, classifications of noise and sound, and mediated listening as a form of protection from silent spaces.

The teenagers were selected from four local secondary schools, located within a kilometre of the Smithfield area. The schools included three state funded schools and one private, two all boys and two all girls schools. At each school approximately 20-22 teenagers became participant researchers on the project, they were further broken up into 4 smaller research groups of between 5-6. The teens became active researchers in the project collecting, analysing and formulating theories about sound and listening in urban spaces. They were fully aware that the research project was exploring regeneration and re-urbanisation and were cognisant of the impact of construction sounds on their impression of the city soundscape, having lived within this sonic environment most of their lives. They were also very aware of a changing soundscape, which they defined as the impact of the global crash of 2008. This was seen as having had the side effect of silencing parts of Dublin city, especially Smithfield, as the previous years constant construction sounds were gradually disappearing. Instead of large-scale construction projects to create housing or business, construction was limited to finishing up street or road works, with continued work on the Smithfield Square.

These groups conducted specific research tasks over the period of two years. This included documenting the soundscape through a variety of methods from photographing sound producing objects, using audio recorders while conducting sound walks through mapped routes to keep sound journals and designing sound maps. The idea was to explore the variety of ways in which sound can be catalogued, perceived and examined (O'Keeffe 2015).

The images and sounds were used as a way to elicit discussion during the focus group sessions and to develop ways to categorise sounds, particularly in the creation of the sound maps, or as they later became known as, the sound pyramids.

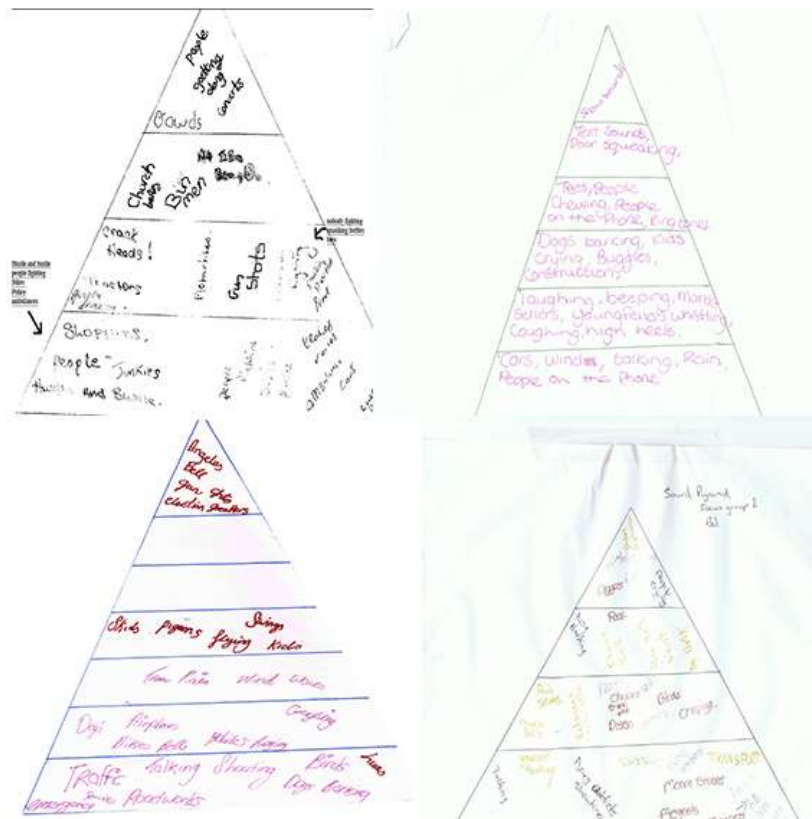


Figure 14 sound mapping projects from four groups

The above pyramids were designed to think of the city as one of sound layers, the bottom most layer being the general background or ambient soundscape of Smithfield and the surrounding city. The layers above used elements of Schafer's soundscape descriptors, Keynote, Sound mark and sound signals. Each description designates meaning to particular sounds within the soundscape. The 'keynote sound' is the fundamental tone of a space and is analogous to a musical term, for example the sounds of forklift trucks moving crates within a market space are identified as a fundamental tone of that productive practice. The 'soundmark', is a sound that emanates from one space. Schafer saw this type of sound as a 'community sound', one that signified a specific meaning to a community. The 'sound signal' is a sound which attracts your attention: a fire

alarm, bell, whistle, something which is in contrast to a 'keynote sound', in much the same way "as figure and ground are contrasted in visual perception" (Schafer 1977:275). Though these conceptualizations help us to analyse the sounds of a place, from a more subjective perspective, the words themselves limit the elucidation of sounds as a social contract between people and space. These terms were useful to a point with the teenagers, however, Schafer's terminologies appear frequently within soundscape studies, but such research regularly ignores how sound can be co-opted and transformed through everyday social practices. Schafer's terminologies have become a framework imposed on sound research and has become somewhat universalized and rigid as a method for interpreting the soundscape. For the teens the soundscape of Smithfield had become fragmented and co-opted by sounds, which they felt while present in a space, and perhaps becoming a sound mark, such as the soundscape of addiction, unemployment and homelessness are rarely defined as a sound type. For the teens sounds were not disconnected from social problems or societal issues. They linked soundscape descriptors to what was happening in the world, from job losses, to government spending cuts on community activities. For example, when they became aware of the closure of the Christmas market and ice rink in the Smithfield square, an event that had been taking place for several years at this point, there was great dismay. They realised that an event which brought, music, activities, joy, groups of people, was going to leave a real silence in the space over the next Christmas period.

Interviewer: What about Smithfield, anybody know Smithfield?

Group: (participant 1) ice skating, (participant 2) no, it's real loud when the ice-skating there. (Participant 3) The ice-skating's not going there anymore.

Interviewer: Is it not!

Group: No, (participant 1) why?

Interviewer: How come?

Group: (participant 3) Cause they're building everything new or something

Interviewer: Is it not finished?

Group: (participant 3) No, they're putting the lights... (Participant 2) they're always building something over there, (participant 1) eh buildings... (participant 1) tell me, is there going to be crap now about this... (Participant 5) yeah cause the city like needs it (participant 1), ahhh, I love it, (Participant 4) are they not doing it? Why? (Participant 3) I don't think they are (participant 3) aww. (Group 9b: Female)

The sense of disempowerment was underscored here by their acceptance of the fact that they would never be included in discussions over changes to the area. The ice rink represented a time in Smithfield when the area had a sense of happiness and life, and part of this was the sounds produced when the ice rink was in *situ*.

Group: (Participant 1) the ice rink used to be there as well. (Participant 2) Yes you used to always hear the music there, and all the people you know like everyone, everyone like screaming and laughing and all

Interviewer: and that made Smithfield sound better?

Group: (Participant 2) only during the winter. (Participant 3) Yeah because everyone is real depressed during the winter
(Group 13a: Female)

Interviewer: do you go regularly to the Smithfield square?

Group: (Participant 1) Only when ice-skating is on. (Participant 2) when ice skating is on (laughing),

Interviewer: it's the only reason to go there?

Group: (Participant 3) yeah, that's the only reason I know that cause it's called... (Participant 1) Smithfield ice rink, (Participant 2) yeah
(Group 11b: Female)

A lot of the terms used to define sounds they heard were based on where they lived, on the construction quality of their homes, the routes they travelled through as they walked the city, and what sounded safe, dangerous, annoying. However, a keynote sound that caused almost a physical disruption in their daily lives was that of emergency services and the sounds associated with crime.

Group: (Participant 1) I hate the traffic sounds. (Participant 5) I hate ambulance and police. (Participant 3) Aw yeah. (Participant 2) I hate that. (Participant 1) Yeah. (Participant 2) Like in the middle of a nice day and if your asleep and its deafening and the police just fly past my window. (Participant 1) I hate that, I like the noise of town but I hate when addicts are shouting, just shouting. (Group 10b: female)

This topic of emergency services sounds and the soundscape of criminal activities emerged throughout our discussions. It seemed that these sounds were an inevitability of city life, part of their everyday sonic environment. They had become accustomed to these sounds but nonetheless found them unpleasant and threatening. These teenagers used media as a process of tuning out of their

soundscape for these teenagers " mediation practices have allowed them create acoustic bubbles, which allow them to overlay their physical world with a virtual aural space" (O'Keeffe and Kerr 2015:3566).

One of the schools that participated in the research was a private school, for those teenagers the soundscape of the city and Smithfield was observed and categorized quite differently. They identified *noise* in a city as part of the city soundscape, in fact, there were "no unnecessary noises really, most of them have a purpose" (participant group 4d). The private school participants also argued that the city and its spaces are regulated by city councils so as to function. These boys described the city as efficient; altering any aspect of the space, would have a negative impact on the city. For them, noise was not a negative it was simply part of the Dublin soundscape. They saw the city as an economic space with people using it as such; therefore all city activities including the soundscape of these activities were necessary.

Interviewer: so the sounds, the ones that you describe as noise, are they necessary?

Group: (group response) yes. (Participant 2) Yes there are no unnecessary noises really most of them have a purpose

Interviewer: all right, okay,

Group: (Participant 4) you can hardly complain about it, it's supposed to be there.

Interviewer: so if say Dublin City Council were actually creating a bill or a policy to monitor the sounds in the city and therefore to start to take certain... (sounds) out of city do you change the soundscape, would you be on for that?

Group: (Participant 1) you wouldn't take anything, what could you take out of the city you're hardly going to stop cars from driving through, and you're not going to stop trains going through or the Luas. (Participant 3) It's mainly cars and it's not like there is a lot. (Participant 1) There are all things that have to happen to get people from A to B you can't say no cars or anything

Interviewer: so you wouldn't say for example pedestrianize the city

Group: (Participant 1) no you wouldn't be allowed. (Participant 2) Yes there would be more people in the shops. (Participant 1) Yes but think about a pedestrianized city think about things like people had to get from one side of the city to another. (Participant 3) Yes, that's if you pedestrianize it, stuff like the Luas can get you from Stephen's Green to. (Participant 1) It would be packed. (Participant 3) Then they would have to put on more (trams). (Group 4d: male)

As a predominantly middle class group, living outside of the city centre, they were unaware of the sounds experienced by those who are constantly surrounded by the city centre soundscape. They prioritised working practices over the social aspects of the city. For the private school participants it was difficult to argue for a reduction in sound levels, for them, loud sounds and traffic noises were indicative of a busy productive city; for these participants the sounds of commercial activity are the character of the city.

For the working class teens living in the city their relationship to the soundscape was similar to that of the 5 older cohorts, it was linked to daily practices, community experiences and housing conditions. Schwartz (2011) and Bijsterveld (2008) argue that historically, middle and upper class groups took issue with noise in cities. The young participants from the private school either lived in private accommodation in the city, or in private suburban housing areas. There were no links between the sounds they hear while moving through the city and where they lived. They identify noise as a general rather than a specific sound. These participants argued that changing sound levels in the city seemed arbitrary as loud noisy sounds characterized a space:

“You kind of associate different sounds with different places, so, if you took them away, it would be almost like, you change the place, like it’s character or something cause in town like all the manicness, traffic and people, all of that stuff is like the city’s character but as you go out it gets more quiet and it’s like kind of more individual” (Group 7d: male)

However, the public school teenagers often suggested potential physical changes to the landscape as a way to transform the general soundscape. They did recognise that a noisy city was also not necessarily a bad thing. Loud sounds, 'the buzz' of the city, was a comforting sound linked to busy streets, shops, meeting friends, etc. But as city locals they recognised the potential to change certain areas, which had through neglect become negatively associated with disruptive or dangerous sounds. Simultaneously, as working class kids living in uncertain times, they sometimes saw little point to such changes.

Interviewer: would you add more green spaces to the city?

Group: (participant 1) There is a park their right beside the McDonald's. (participant 2) Yes loads more. (participant 3) No I wouldn't. (participant 4) I don't know, like places do you know where the Jervis Street is, do you ever see Mary Street park there with the big bull in it, I like green in there like

Interviewer: that was a green, do you know that was green, a couple of years ago that was a park

Group: (participant 1) All the junkies, there's loads of junkie there. They should change stuff like that and then they should put more grass. (Group 1c: male)

Interviewer: do we need more parks?

Group:(participant 1) but if we had more parks there just going to be wrecked, so if you're getting more parks there just going to be wrecked. (participant 2) Everything is wrecked. (Group 14a: female)

The young participants argued that the sounds of addicts shouting are noise and have become implicitly connected to public city spaces. Therefore, the goal of city planners to increase access to, or, create more quiet spaces, such as parks and squares is seen as introducing a noise not foreseen by urban planners, something which de Certeau (1988) argues is almost always a consequence of designing from above.

Conclusion

Increasingly policy has been used to legitimize noise as a social and health issue, which ignores how historically noise was linked to the sounds of the working class and production (Schwartz 2011; Thompson 2004). Noise as some binary opposite to quiet is not reflected in the working class experience. An ideal of quiet and tranquility, which have been defined as necessary to thinking, peace and harmony, has existed for centuries. Yet the very purpose of a town or city is defined by its 'hustle and bustle', its modes of production and consumption, its places where people can experience culture, music, the arts, entertainment and socialising. Intellectuals from the 17th century to the early 20th century, such as Babbage, Schopenhaur (1942) and Haberlandt, argued that noise destroyed the ability to reason and think. Schopenhaur went further arguing that the producers of noise "the mob" or working classes, had very little use for thinking; "there can be no harm in drawing the attention of the mob to the fact that the

classes above them work with their heads, for any kind of headwork is mortal anguish to the man in the street" (1942). This suggested a particular elitist or intellectual class associated with quiet and silence, or an appreciation of both, and another class associated with the production of sound, a working class who had no need to either think or reason.

Yet contemporary examinations of the soundscape have revealed that even with the increase in the presence of technologies, western cities have become quieter (Bijsterveld 2008). With this decrease in congested soundscapes comes unique and street specific soundscapes, connected to particular sounds: sociability, community and technology. In this way the "street obtains a particular identity" (Degen 2008:44), one which was defined by both participant groups.

Alongside these identifiable street sounds are the spaces, which no longer contain sounds: empty streets, empty squares and derelict sites. Furthermore, these new quiet spaces i.e. Smithfield Square, initially defined as commoditised spaces for a middle class cultural consumption (Degen 2008), have had historical, cultural and community sounds removed. In order to maintain these sterile zones/soundscapes, no arbitrary sounds are allowed enter: groups of youths, women gathering for a chat, or unauthorised activities. Soja argues that a "location in space will always have attached to it some degree of relative advantage or disadvantage" and that injustices of spatial division are often based on "race, class and gender" (2010:73). Yet, what occurs is an influx of voices, which are regarded as a form of noise, particularly by the young participants. These are the noises of the outsiders in society: homeless people, alcoholics, addicts and criminals, subaltern sounds.

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