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# **Listen to the band! How sound can realise group identity and enact intergroup domination**

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# **Listen to the band! How sound can realise group identity and enact intergroup domination**

## **Abstract**

Recent research suggests that sound appraisal can be moderated by social identity. We validate this finding, and also extend it, by examining the extent to which sound can also be understood as instrumental in intergroup relations. We interviewed nine members of a Catholic enclave in predominantly Protestant East Belfast about their experiences of an outgroup (Orange Order) parade, where intrusive sound was a feature. Participants reported experiencing the sounds as a manifestation of the Orange Order identity and said that it made them feel threatened and anxious because they felt it was targeted at them by the outgroup (e.g., through aggressive volume increases). There was also evidence that the sounds produced community disempowerment, which interviewees explicitly linked to the invasiveness of the music. Some interviewees described organising to collectively ‘drown out’ the bands’ sounds, an activity which appeared to be uplifting. These findings develop the elaborated social identity model of empowerment, by showing that intergroup struggle and collective self-objectification can operate through sound as well as through physical actions.

In his recent social history of sound, Hendy (2013) argues that noise is sound that ‘someone somewhere doesn’t want to be heard’ (p. ix). Hendy’s point refers to the relatively powerless, who are often forced to express themselves in hushed tones. In this paper, we suggest that the point equally applies to the relatively powerful. That is, sound can be a way of enacting the identities of dominant groups and thereby reproducing the subordination of their opponents. We examine this thesis through an interview study of the experiences of residents of a small Catholic enclave in Northern Ireland that is annually the site of a number of passing parades by the Protestant ‘Orange Order’. Below, we show first that sound is susceptible to an intergroup analysis and second that concepts from the social identity approach can usefully be employed in that analysis.

### ***Sound in psychology***

Psychological research on sound has tended to focus on investigating aversive reactions to urban noise and the resulting health effects, such as reduced sleep and increases in physiological stress responses (Stansfeld & Matheson, 2003). This research has found that a sound’s objective characteristics are not the sole factors in determining reactions. Attitude variables, such as fear of the source and the expectations of the community, can be strong moderators of experiences of sound (Guski, 1999; Miedema, 2007). Research also suggests that sounds occur within an evaluative context, and these contexts are an important condition for what reaction is produced (Leather, Beale, & Sullivan, 2003).

Recent studies have indicated that social identity (Tajfel, 1978) can operate as a further moderator of the appraisal of sound. This was shown in an experiment carried out at a large Hindu festival in India, the Magh Mela (Shankar et al., 2013). One of the festival’s features is the noise created by competing religious dialogues broadcast

through PA systems, spiritual music, and the bustle of the millions of pilgrims who attend. In the experiment, participants were exposed to an ambiguous crowd noise which was labelled as either coming from a city street or the Mela. Participants reported more positive evaluation, mood and comfort in the Mela condition compared to the city condition. Those in the Mela condition **also** chose to listen longer to the sound than those in the city condition. The key factor to sound appraisal was the participants' identity as pilgrims. Follow-up interviews showed that sounds which intruded on the enactment of their religious identity were seen as negative, whereas sounds contributing to the enactment - even cacophonous ones - were seen as blissful and beautiful. Thus the pilgrims' social definition of self was an appraisal frame through which the experience of the sonic environment was altered (Shankar et al., 2013).

However, sound isn't simply experienced negatively or positively according to group identity; it can also be *used* by different groups against each other. Historical studies of 'rough music' show how sound can be used to enforce conformity; thus Thompson (1992) describes how neighbours would bang pots and make other loud noise publicly to punish someone who'd transgressed community norms. Powerful groups have **also** used sound to maintain domination, shaping the soundscapes of others (Hendy, 2013). And sound can be used creatively to subvert power; for example, an essential element of carnivalesque, where the existing order is temporarily reversed in a festival, is raucous sound – including music and mocking laughter (Bahktin, 1941).

The role of sound in intergroup conflict is a topic that has not been examined in social psychology previously as far as we are aware. Yet there is an existing theoretical framework, based on the concept of social identity, which can help us

make predictions about sound as a site of struggle between groups: the elaborated social identity model (ESIM).

### *Sound and intergroup dynamics*

The ESIM (Drury & Reicher, 2009; Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998) is an account of the intergroup dynamics of conflict in crowd events **as well as** a model of collective psychological (dis)empowerment. According to the model, shared social identity **creates** expectations of support for ingroup-normative collective action against outgroups (Drury & Reicher, 1999). This support is the basis of collective self-objectification, which is the enactment of the shared social identity in the face of opponents. Where such actions are perceived to realise ingroup identity in a way that challenges outgroup power, ingroup members experience this as empowering (Drury & Reicher, 2005). In the same way that concretely realising ingroup identity can empower the ingroup, the experience of the opponents' identity being imposed on the ingroup has been shown to engender disempowerment in ingroup members, i.e. loss of agency and hence feelings of weakness (Drury, Cocking, Beale, Hanson, & Rapley, 2005).

The ESIM analysis of empowerment has so far been applied to spatial relations between groups – such as the actions of protesters in occupying land (Drury et al., 2005; Drury & Reicher, 2005) – and more recently to online collective actions (Foster, 2015). However, we suggest the same logic can be applied to sound. That is, groups can become empowered through the use of sound to the extent that this sound is identity-based and imposed on their opponents. And thus, where sounds **perceived** as enacting the identity of an antagonistic outgroup are so loud and pervasive they are inescapable for ingroup members (e.g., invading the home and the local area), this will diminish ingroup members' control of their collective soundscape. In this

circumstance, such outgroup sounds would be experienced not simply as aversive (cf. Shankar et al., 2013) but also as *disempowering* for ingroup members. We examined these ideas through an interview study with members of a Catholic minority in Northern Ireland who regularly experience passing parades of organisations from the much larger nearby Protestant community, in which the use of very loud bands is an essential feature.

### ***Parading in a divided country***

The tradition of public parading in Ireland goes back to the 1600s (Fraser, 2000), and over the subsequent centuries, Unionist and Nationalist groups have both utilised public marching as a tool to express cultural and political identity. Since the eighteenth century, and within the Protestant community in particular, organisations have emerged for whom marching is their core activity. One such organisation is the exclusively Protestant, pro-Union Orange Order, and every summer thousands of Orange parades occur across Northern Ireland as part of the Loyalist ‘marching season’ (Bryan, 2000; Jarman, 1997). Most parades are uncontroversial, occurring as they do within the territorial boundaries of single-identity communities or in neutral public spaces. A few pass through or near areas occupied by the other community, and some of these have constituted recurring hotspots for intercommunal conflict.

Since the paramilitary ceasefires of the 1990s, parades in Northern Ireland have increased in numbers, as have the frequency and intensity of parades-related disputes, causing some commentators to suggest that the conflict has entered a ‘symbolic phase’ (e.g., Jarman & Bryan, 1996). Many of these disputes centre on both the territorial dimensions of the display of identity (the route of the parade and its impact on the local residents) as well as the content of the identity display, which can be overtly sectarian or even paramilitary in nature.

Within this context, the sound made by the parade is of particular significance. The invasive and intimidating nature of the noise, as well as the playing of sectarian tunes near sensitive sites such as Catholic schools or churches, have often been grounds for objection among those from the nationalist community (Jarman & Bryan, 1998; Ryder & Kearney, 2001). This is recognised by the Parades Commission which has the power to impose specific sound-related restrictions on marchers by either curtailing the types of songs played by bands or by preventing any music being played as they pass particularly sensitive locations (O’Kelly & Bryan, 2007). Breaches of these restrictions are in turn highly controversial, though rarely result in prosecution.

A number of sources suggest the emotional experiences of marchers participating in Orange parades include pride and exhilaration at the expression of their collective identity, and that the sound they make is integral to this (e.g., Edwards, 2015). What is more, there is evidence that such pride may be associated with the volume of the music; former grand-master Ian Wilson described the intention of a forthcoming Orange parade to be a ‘a loud, proud and noisy affair’ (Brooks, 2014). Feelings of joy and celebration are also apparent in the cheers of the thousands of supporters who come to spectate (Keenan, 2014). Therefore, while there is no direct evidence here that Orange parade participants are empowered specifically by enacting their identity sonically in or near Catholic districts, there is circumstantial evidence that this is likely. More importantly for present purposes, it seems possible that Catholic residents in districts affected by Orange parades might perceive their opponents to be empowered by imposing the sounds, as well as the activities, of the parade on these Catholic districts.

### ***The current study***

The aims of the current study are two-fold. First, based on the recent work on identity as a determinant of sound appraisal (Shankar et al., 2013), we will examine experiences of intergroup sound in a context of conflict. Specifically, we will explore if and how social identities affect perceptions of outgroup parade sound (as well as vice versa) among residents of a Catholic enclave in predominantly Protestant East Belfast. Second, extending the predictions of the ESIM, we will examine the extent to which outgroup sound dominating the ingroup soundscape is experienced as disempowering.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

This study was exploratory as well as theoretically-driven. Our strategy was therefore to recruit a sample that was relatively homogeneous and small, to allow us to examine the shared experiences of our participants in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2002; Smith & Eatough, 2012). We recruited from a single community who would be likely to have experienced the same Orange Order parades. The nine participants were all residents of the Short Strand, a small, predominantly Catholic enclave within the overwhelmingly Protestant area of East Belfast. Ages were  $M = 44.89$ ,  $SD = 12.12$  and the range was 22-57 years. Two were male and seven were female. All participants identified themselves as belonging to the Catholic community of Northern Ireland/Ireland. They were recruited through a family friend of the first author, who was well connected within this community. Participants were informed that the project was concerned with how the sounds of Orange Order bands were experienced by Catholic communities. No incentive was offered for participating.

### ***The parades***



In order to elicit the experience of hearing a parade and to avoid general statements, we asked participants to discuss specific Loyal Order parades occurring during the summer 2014 ‘marching season’. Six interviewees spoke about the parade on 12th July; two described the ‘mini-twelfth’ on 1st July, which is similar in size; and one participant spoke about a parade on 27th April, a much smaller parade than the others, but still carried out by the Orange Order. All parades took place in Short Strand and all participants experienced an event from the same vantage point. The interviews took place in April 2015.

The parades recounted by participants share a number of core characteristics. In each case, multiple loyalist bands, dressed in militaristic uniforms and marching in formation, precede Orange ‘lodges’, dressed in traditional regalia, displaying banners and walking in time. One of the largest bass drums in the world, the Lambeg, and rows of flutes and snare drums create a massive rhythmic wall of sound which can be heard throughout the immediate area and indeed from a distance of several miles. For the larger parades, hundreds of supporters come to watch, and many walk along footpaths with the bands, cheering them on. In the Short Strand itself, roads are closed to allow the marchers to pass. In addition, large connecting metal slats are erected by police to create a solid wall across the district's boundaries to separate Catholic residents from the Orange parade and its supporters. Parades can take from a few minutes to a few hours to pass a single location and usually pass by any one point twice during one day, on an outward and return journey.

### ***Semi-structured interviews***

The topics covered in the interviews were as follows: (1) recounting the event (e.g., ‘Can you describe the experience?’); (2) sensory experience (e.g., ‘What were the sounds of the band?’); (3) feelings about the sounds (e.g., ‘How did you feel about

those sounds of the band that you heard?'); (4) community identity (e.g., 'Can you describe the experience of that ... parade from your Catholic perspective?'); and (5) empowerment/ disempowerment (e.g., 'Did you feel that you had some control over your experience of the parade?'). **In line with best practice for semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2008), we began the interview with open questions before moving on to more direct theoretically-informed questions. We also made sure that each participant had an opportunity to accept or reject the Catholic identity; thus we ensured the identity was relevant to them before moving to ask how the parade affected their experiences of it.** At the end of the interview, participants were asked to listen to a recording of an Orange Order band on headphones and to comment on how they felt. The purpose was to be able to compare memory accounts to any live reactions to sound. The track<sup>1</sup> was edited to be 38 seconds long and was selected because it contained little crowd sound and no sectarian lyrics, thus allowing a focus on the experience of the musical sounds rather than semantic content. The interviews ranged in length from 17-39 minutes. All recordings were transcribed verbatim.

### ***Analytic approach***

Thematic analysis was selected due to its compatibility with both open ended enquiry and an a priori theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Initial coding was inductive without imposing meaning. After a full reading, an initial coding scheme was created using extracts we considered relevant (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). This used explicit statements and was therefore in the participants' own words. Each transcript was then coded line by line. The initial coding list was used as a reference and new codes were added based on what we judged to be interesting and relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqkQcdRMTBQ>

Thus an attempt was made to create an exhaustive code list applicable to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The process of identifying themes was deductive. Codes were grouped based on similarities of wording and placed under an applicable research question (including ‘miscellaneous’). To guide the creation of themes, we considered the codes and searched for a word or short phrase which could link them all together. This search for phrases was also influenced by our research questions and the ESIM, by considering and weighing how they were related to the topics of interest. Codes were condensed and refined into second, higher order themes and a rough thematic structure was produced.

Based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) recommendations, we ‘tested’ the initial themes against each participant’s transcript to assess the validity and strength of each identified theme. This allowed us to refine the themes against the entire data-set by discarding weak ones or combining those too closely overlapping. From this process we produced third-order themes and a final refined thematic structure.

At each stage transcripts were re-read, codes re-grouped and themes altered. In the aim of transparency, the prevalence of each theme will be referred to in order to indicate the strength of a theme within the data-set. **This** is not intended to indicate generalisation and is relevant only to this data-set (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **Analysis**

The analysis is organised to reflect the two research questions: within participants’ accounts of their experiences of the parades, how do ingroup identities and intergroup relations affect the appraisal of outgroup sound (and vice versa)?; and to what extent do processes of disempowerment occur through hearing outgroup sound?

## The Appraisal of Outgroup Sound

Our analysis looks first at sound representing the outgroup and highlighting ingroup identity. We then move to descriptions of the sound as threatening, due to being seen as targeted and assailing, and affective reactions to this threat such as fear and anxiety.

**The recognition of the outgroup identity of the sound.** There was a pattern of responses which suggested that participants did not separate the sounds from the Orange Order marchers; rather, the sounds were seen as a symbolic enactment of outgroup identity. Two participants stated this explicitly; for example:

P2: you say to yourself, ‘Here comes the f-ing Orangies again’, you know! And that’s you know, there’d probably be more than one person say it, ‘Here they come again, not again’. And straight away you’re thinking, ‘The Orangies are out walking again today’.

Int: Right, yeah, so are you saying it highlights theirs and your identity?

P2: Exactly, I’m a Catholic in the Short Strand

(Extract 1. 27th April parade)

For P2, the sounds are not a meaningless collection. They are described as a potent and instant expression of the Orange Order. What is more, these appraisals occurred without needing to see the marchers on the street. **We can also see that, when prompted by the interviewer, P2 confirms** that this representation of the outgroup also brings to the fore their own identity as a Catholic resident in the Short Strand. **It is not clear if the representation, or the prompt, brought this about. However other comments made before identity was broached by the interviewer suggest that the sound alone was sufficient:**

Int: What are the sounds of the band you can remember?

P9: It's just the beating of the drums and the whistling as if 'we're going past the Fenians here and give it all you've got'

(Extract 2. 12th July parade)

First P9 uses a first person plural pronoun to voice the marchers' perspective ('we're'); he then references the (marchers' view of the) community identity as 'Fenians' (a derogatory term for Catholics). These two terms suggest both group-level categorisations and the salience of P9's own Catholic identity.

Other participants spontaneously used first person and third person plural pronouns at the start of the interview before questions of identity were raised, a pattern interpretable as reflecting high salience of social identity (cf. Smith, Gavin & Sharp, 2015). Examples include 'just to annoy us [...] we don't really care' (P4), 'they are making noise as if we're here, hear us' (P5), 'if you come from their side, they say they're celebrating their culture, but for us...', (P1). The use of the terms 'we' and 'us', as contrasted with the third person 'they' and 'their', suggests the relevance of group-level identities to the experience of the bands' sound.

**The collective interpretation of sound as threat.** The theme of 'sound as threat' is composed of two sub-themes, 'targeted' and 'assailing'. The themes capture the participants' perceptions of sound being used deliberately against the community and the resulting sonic aversion.

**Targeted.** A focus across accounts involved the perception of sound being directed towards the community through deliberate increases in volume. A volume increase might simply be a matter of a sound gradually coming closer. However, participants' offered a different explanation:

P4: It's just when they get to our houses. They just start to, you know, it was as

lovely as you can hear it, and then when they get to a certain point, they beat and it's all out of....[gestures]

Int: Becomes?

P4: It's *anger*... they're...they're loud and they're getting.... you know

(Extract 3. 12th July parade)

P4 describes a shift in sound quality as a volume increase which coincides with the marchers' increasing proximity to the houses of the Short Strand community. Further, the participant suggested that marchers changed their playing style to one of 'anger', which increased the volume; she therefore believed that marchers targeted Catholic residents with their sounds. All nine participants stated a deliberate change occurred, often in terms of aggression, and the majority made this statement spontaneously.

Parades, lasting for hours, are tiring events. So the volume increase could be random, due to the marchers' fluxing energy levels. However, P4 suggested the change only occurred when the marchers got to a 'certain point'. Five participants made this pattern more explicit by linking the aggressive playing to the geography of East Belfast: the transition of the band from a Protestant to a Catholic district:

Int: Ok and what kind of is it that makes you think that it is intentional?

P8: I've lived on the interface I've heard them playing nice music till they get to the top of the Mountpottinger Road or the Short Strand or the Newtownards Road where then it suddenly changes... that mad aggression... and you can even see it in the bands themselves because you can see it from the window so you can actually see it in the band itself, the aggression and it's... it's a word I don't like to use, but it's like a hatred... you know... and as I'm only after saying to you that intimidates me and makes me feel scared.

(Extract 4. 12th July parade)

It is striking that **every** participant felt that the music changed deliberately when passing the community; however, three participants said they perceived a shift in playing in terms of sectarian songs rather than volume or style of sound. It is not possible here to conclusively separate out reactions due to social meaning of lyrics (such as sectarianism) and social meanings associated with the specific context of the parade passing the Short Strand community. However, as extracts 3 and 4 show, sound is described on a level detached from sectarian meaning.

*Assailing*. If participants perceived the sound as being deliberately targeted at the community and played with aggression, we would expect these factors to increase negative reactions to the sounds beyond those of annoyance. Our analysis of sound as threat can be seen further in a pattern of affective reactions which seems to fit this **suggestion**. This sub-theme was labelled ‘assailing’ and encompasses the reports of sound causing fear and anxiety, and further, descriptions of the bands’ sounds as ‘penetrating’, ‘scary’, ‘bombarding’, ‘intimidating’ and ‘deafening’. Hence the experience seemed more like a mental attack than simply annoyance due to an intrusive sound:

Int: Thinking of adjectives, what words would you use to describe the sounds of the band?

P6: Emm.....loud, noisy.....penetrating.... it’s very penetrating....it’s just that constant drum beat just constantly going through your head eh....i-it’s rotten, it’s rotten because you don’t want to be there and that’s your home and you really don’t want to be there. [...] and you’re intimidated because these people are so close to your area and they’re intimidating you.

Int: Uh huh

P6: And... it shouldn't be like that... you shouldn't feel like that, you should feel safe in your own, in the comfort of your own home and you don't feel safe. [...]

Int: Do you think it affected the awareness of your Catholic identity?

P6: Yeah. cos your...that's you like an' that's just bringing back to the uhh.. old ages were you think you're the second class citizen all over again, because these people can do this to you [...] then you sort of way feel we shouldn't be here

(Extract 5. 1st July parade)

The extract demonstrates a range of aversive experiences resulting from the marchers' sounds. The sounds were not just loud, but were also perceived as relentless. They appeared to penetrate into the home, which the participant felt should be a place of refuge, and created feelings of distress. Seven participants described the sounds in this highly negative manner. There is nothing inherently frightening in drums and flutes to produce these reactions; however, the sounds of the bands were reported by participants to cause strong reactions of anxiety and intimidation. We suggest it is the live social context of the outgroup perceived as targeting the community with their sound that increases participants' reactions beyond annoyance. This point is strengthened by the following interview response from P5. This participant describes feeling 'scared' and 'intimidated' by the sounds of the band when they pass the area. However, a different appraisal occurs when the sounds occur in a different social context - hearing them on television:

P5: I find it loud... intimidating... it's.... scary.... you know it's.... I do find it scary....emm..... I can't really think...sorry..

Int: No, that's ok. And is there any bit that you find enjoyable or pleasant?

P5: To be honest.....when..... it's weird... cos when I hear it on the TV sometimes some of the music actually is OK.... I would... I'd say it's nice to listen to.



(Extract 6. 12th July parade)

Three other participants also stated they could enjoy the music, but only in contexts which did not involve the **perceived** attempts to intimidate the community. If the music can be ‘nice to listen to’ when in a context which does not include intergroup conflict, it would suggest social meanings given to the bands’ sounds are the conditions underlying the high aversion shown by participants.

The preceding patterns of ‘sound as threat’ were not ubiquitous. Two participants stated throughout the interviews they found the sounds neither intimidating nor anxiety-producing. For P2 the sounds are annoying, but they are also familiar and benign. P9 also said he did not find the sounds anxiety-producing, and described a stoic position of ‘under no circumstances’ reacting to the sounds. Despite these reactions, both participants still believed the bands’ sounds were intended to be **hostile** towards the community:

**Int: On that 12<sup>th</sup> how did you feel about the sounds of the band that you heard?**

**P9: Well you feel bitter towards it, big time. Why should they be doing it? [...] at the end of the day they are on the outskirts of the Short Strand, a mainly nationalist area and you’re only aggravating, but they’re getting away with it.**

(Extract 7. 12th July parade)

In other words, the lack of anxiety is attributable to the participants’ coping response to the noise rather than a perceived change in its social meaning.

Although the affective reactions used in this analysis of ‘sound as threat’ were portrayals from memory, they were corroborated by live reactions to the sound file:

[Playing sound file.]

P4: Now that makes my stomach... turn.....turn right up.....yeah..... my heart is beat...racing....

Int: Yeah so that's....

P4: That's how that affects me... that makes me feel violently sick

Int: Violently sick?

P4: Yes.... it scares the living daylights out of me.

(Extract 8)

This reaction is clearly a description of a strong anxiety response. Five participants described such a response, ranging roughly from mild to strong, indicating increased heart rates and feelings of nausea. The file was chosen as it was not a sectarian tune, which supports the argument that sectarian lyrics are not a necessary condition for negative reactions. The reaction is also not confounded by the marchers' physical presence. Moreover, **we also chose music that was** recorded in the city centre to supporters, **on the basis that it would have a** non-aggressive playing style. **All this suggests** the social context of being targeted is not a necessary condition for a negative reaction: sound itself can be sufficient to provoke anxiety. This is possibly due to associations formed with proximal histories of violence. There is a tension here in that the live group context is not present and yet an aversive reaction occurs. However, there were differences in the types of affective reaction between the sound file and the descriptions of the event in social context which could account for this. **We** will discuss **this** as part of the theme 'Collective subordination' (below).

### **Disempowerment and Resistance**

Here we analyse specific emotional reactions which resembled disempowerment. We finish by analysing a community activity which could be understood as a form of

sonic resistance and ingroup empowerment, which arose unexpectedly in some of the interviews.

**Imposition of outgroup identity through sound.** Evidence that the sonic expression of outgroup identity is experienced as an imposition, and not a benign encounter, can be seen in two ways. First from participants describing the sounds using physical terms:

P1: obviously if you come from their side, they say they're celebrating their own culture, but for us it just seems like a.... a way to just mark territory, if that makes sense? So they're you know, 'this is our road and we'll walk it and we'll play as loud as we want and have no consideration for others' – almost like a rowdy neighbour.

(Extract 9. 12th July parade)

The sound is described as 'marking territory', as if it imposes itself on the physical space of the district. Other descriptions in physical terms included 'it overtakes everything' (P8), 'it is a mass' (P2) and 'ram down your throat' (P4). **The use of such spatial metaphors to describe sound suggests the participants experienced the marchers' sounds as being imposed upon them.**

Secondly participants stated that they had little or no control over the sonic experience:

Int: So did you feel that you had some control over your experience of the parade?

P5: Em... of how I felt or?

Int: Yeah if you want to talk about feelings, yeah, but also your experience of sights, sounds as well

P5: No I wouldn't have any control over that obviously

Int: You feel you can't take yourself away or ignore it?

P5: Oh no... [ ] unless I go on holiday I have to..... bear it.

(Extract 10. 12th July parade)

Because participants are forced to hear the marchers' sounds, this enactment of outgroup identity is therefore imposed upon them. Thus, in the views of the participants, the marchers have the power to determine the sonic aspect of their experience for the duration of the march.

**Collective subordination.** The community's lack of control and the contrasting ability of the marchers to impose their identity represent an asymmetry of power between the two groups. In intergroup contexts, disempowerment occurs when a more powerful group can impose actions which alter the other group's social reality away from their own norms and goals. Therefore in the context of Orange order parades, we would expect empowerment for the marchers, due to the ability to sonically impose their identity, and disempowerment for the residents of the Short Strand due to the alteration of their social reality. Though we did not have access to marchers' accounts, our secondary sources suggested their empowerment (see Introduction, above); and further, it was clear the participants believed the marchers to be empowered by their day, with seven interviewees expressing this view:

Int: How do you think the marchers feel?

P4: Ah... oh they love it, they love it, they do, they love it and it's *their* day it's *their* time and the *hell* with everybody else, the hell with the Catholic community.

(Extract 11. 12th July parade)

A pattern of responses we have labelled ‘collective subordination’ seemed to reflect a disempowering emotional response to the Orange Order identity imposition. A significant part of this related to space. However there also appeared to be a pattern specific to sound. Participants expressed feelings of subordination due to hearing the sounds in their community. Every participant spoke along such lines and often in response to the question ‘How do the sounds make you feel about your Catholic identity?’ This was voiced in two main ways. The first was as feeling that their own community was not welcome in East Belfast (P2, P8, P7, P6):

Int: So when you heard that parade and it did highlight your Catholic identity like you were saying, how did it make you feel about your identity?

P2: Well it makes you feel that your Catholic identity is not important to these people. I always feel coming from the Short Strand... East Belfast, they’d love rid of us. You know in my opinion they’d love to just lift us and took us out somewhere, that this is their East Belfast.

(Extract 12. 27th April parade)

The second type of expression of subordination was in terms of the community being disregarded (P4, P7, P3, P1, P5):

Int: How did you feel about the sounds that you heard, you personally?

P7: Makes you feel bitter, it would make, it does, it would make you feel bitter saying like why are they allowed to get away with this [...] they’re allowed to walk past us and shout, sing, play whatever they want disregarding our respect and our views.

(Extract 13. 1st July parade)

These responses point to a possible explanation for reactions to the sound file. While participants responded negatively despite the lack of a live context, the only feeling reported was anxiety; no participant mentioned anything relating to feeling subordinate, disregarded or unwanted. One explanation is that this difference in reaction is merely the result of differences between accounting for feelings from memory and reporting them live. However, another explanation, which would be coherent with the ESIM, is that the feeling of subordination requires the embodied intergroup context; specifically it requires one community's social reality being imposed upon by the other and indeed being altered by the sounds; these intergroup factors do not occur in an interview setting.

**Collective self-regulation and resistance.** Despite the feeling of disempowerment in relation to the sonic experience, some participants also described attempts to assert some control. Thus four participants spontaneously described how, on major parade days, the community organises an event in their local park for all families to attend:

P9: now on the 12<sup>th</sup> of July and that we have parties in the park here for the kids, to drown out the sounds of the music. Maybe have a disco in the park, bouncy castle... make sure all the young ones are about.... this will go on to maybe nine o'clock at night, half nine at night...[ ]

Int: Yes.... so is that park a kind of togetherness or...?

P9: Yes that's a community... community atmosphere from the ones face painting maybe early in the morning things like that there, till the afternoon bouncy castles and then later on that night a disco and.... it's just to drown out the 12<sup>th</sup> of July if you know what I mean. [...] We have our own festivals on that day for the children for the older ones for the youths or whatever.... just so everybody's

happy and everybody's safe [...] and it's a good way to because you have your own music playing all day and face painting bouncy castles kids squealing playing and....drowns it.

(Extract 14. 12th July parade)

This **response** is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it is a form of self-regulatory action taken by the community. This is done partly to control and monitor their children within a potentially dangerous situation. But they are also choosing actions within the event that allow them to reassert control over the *sonic* environment. They play loud pop music from speakers, have kids running around 'squealing', and they 'drown out' the parade; thus they actively combat the outgroup's sounds. Clearly this negates some of the imposition. However, it is perhaps more than a negation, as through this action they can assert their community identity ('own music') as residents of the Short Strand.

Participants did not explicitly state that the party in the park was empowering, but all four participants mentioned some positive emotion or mood in connection with the event. Although such feelings could come in part from the safeguarding of their children, other references to this **latter** action did not involve such positivity. From this circumstantial evidence, we therefore suggest that the positive feelings are the result of an empowering experience for the community. **Empowerment** is achieved by combating the unequal power-relations created by the Orange parade sounds and re-asserting some control over the sonic environment. So, in spite of the disempowering experience of having to listen to the band, they have possibly found a means to resist sonic imposition and use sound to reclaim part of their social reality as a community.

## **Discussion**

This analysis of Catholic residents' experiences of Orange Order parades identified a number of themes which together were in line with our expectations. First, shared social identity framed (and was affected by) experiences of sound. Second, outgroup sound perceived by interviewees as imposing outgroup identity on the Catholic community was disempowering. Specifically, participants reported experiencing the sounds as a manifestation of outgroup (Orange Order) identity and **said** it made them feel threatened as Catholic residents. There was evidence that the sounds produced not only anxiety and perceptions of being deliberately targeted but also collective subordination (feeling unwelcome and disregarded), which interviewees linked to the imposition of the sounds of the band specifically. Finally, there was also some evidence of sonic resistance, as some interviewees described organising to collectively 'drown out' the bands' sounds, an experience which appeared to be uplifting.

These findings are in line with research showing sound perception is altered by social meanings (Guski, 1999). Our finding that identity moderates the appraisal of sound accord with the findings of Shankar et al. (2013) specifically, but more broadly with findings on the role of social identity (often measured as level of social identification) in shaping the experience of a range of potentially aversive experiences, including cold temperatures (Pandey, Stevenson, Shankar, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2013), crowd density (Alnabulsi & Drury, 2014), noxious smells (Reicher, Templeton, Neville, Ferrari, & Drury, 2016), and injury (Levine & Reicher, 1996).

However, our findings add to the existing literature in four ways. First, they validate the findings of Shankar et al. (2013) with other, different, types of noise, population and methodology. Second, whereas in the Shankar et al. study the pilgrims' social identity made cacophonous sounds pleasant and blissful, our participants' social



identity made musical sounds of flutes and drums assailing, anxiety-provoking, threatening and aversive. The third contribution of the present study is to develop aspects of the ESIM in a new direction. The evidence that marchers experienced their sounds on the parade as identity-enacting and potentially empowering comes from secondary sources. Yet it was clear from numerous comments that our Catholic interviewees saw the sound as precisely an enactment of the Orange Order identity that forcibly impinged upon participants' social reality. Physical impositions of outgroup identity have been shown previously to cause ingroup disempowerment and feelings of defeat and despondency (Drury et al., 2005). We predicted, and found, that imposing outgroup identity through sound would likewise cause disempowerment based on the reported lack of control and feelings of collective subordination. Therefore our analysis suggests that similar processes documented in physical struggle can occur sonically.

Fourth, extending this point, the study is the first in psychology as far as we are aware to identify collective *resistance* in sonic form. Through the party in the park, some in the community reported successfully combating the marchers' sounds. We proposed there was group empowerment based on to the reports of positive emotions (Drury & Reicher, 2005). However this is, to a degree, speculative, as these positive feelings could be due to the positive impact of participation in the event rather than its intergroup implications.

It might be objected that spatial or visual considerations were more important than sound in these participants' experience. However, although space and physical relations were undoubtedly major factors, we suggest that they cannot account for all of the findings. First, the majority of participants experienced the sounds in their home, away from the physical appearance and presence of the marchers. Second, on

main parade days, the security forces erect large metal slats across the district's boundaries, which block the sight of the marchers as they pass, separating the groups. So, although one knows the marchers are present, and is aware of potential conflict, sound is a primary way the parades are experienced for many residents.

Our qualitative design employed a small homogeneous sample, and an objection might be that the findings apply only to our participants. However, while generalisability might be limited, we would argue that there is likely to be transferability, given that the Orange Order parades we focused on share features with other parades, both Loyalist and Republican, in Northern Ireland, including marching bands, extremely loud drums, contested space, and the oppositional identities of participants and outgroup audiences. More generally, the use of sound to realise group identity and enact intergroup domination has been noted at various times in history (Bahktin, 1941; Hendy, 2013; Thompson, 1992). Future research should examine different kinds of groups, identities and relationships to determine the boundary conditions for the processes examined here.

The present research could be extended through use of different methodologies. First, an ethnographic design in which accounts of experiences of, and behavioural reactions to sound are gathered *in vivo* would validate the present findings by overcoming the problems of using interview reports of past experiences, which are prone to autobiographical memory errors (Hyman & Loftus, 1998; Safer, Levine, & Drapalski, 2002). Objective measures, such as use of a decibel meter, could also assess the degree to which the perception of changing noise volume is shaped by interpretations of outgroup intentions and actions. .

Second, investigating marchers' accounts would have modified the narrative to give a dual account and highlighted any asymmetrical representations and divergences

of understanding between communities. Therefore, future research should be designed to include their perspective for a full understanding of intergroup dynamics (cf. Stott & Reicher, 1998).

While the analysis presented here was conducted primarily to develop theory, it is relevant for practice too. As noted above, Parades Commission decisions can restrict band noise to reduce intergroup tensions. Our findings provide some insight into why this might have its effects: the reduction in perceived domination and feelings of disempowerment among the Catholic audience. Further investigation of the impact of such restrictions upon marchers' sense of collective self-objectification, as well as ways of successfully managing the local soundscape, could shed light on ways of creatively accommodating identity expression while protecting groups from subordination.

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