

Music Education for Cross-Community Integration

Oscar Odena

Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change

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Intervention Promoting Inclusion

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Aim

- To offer some thoughts on music education as a tool for social inclusion, with an example and implications for future research

Background of research area (Creech et al, 2014; Odena, 2010, 2014; GCPH, 2015)

- Power of music to affect human beings, e.g. marketing, psychotherapy, community studies

Example from Northern Ireland (NI)

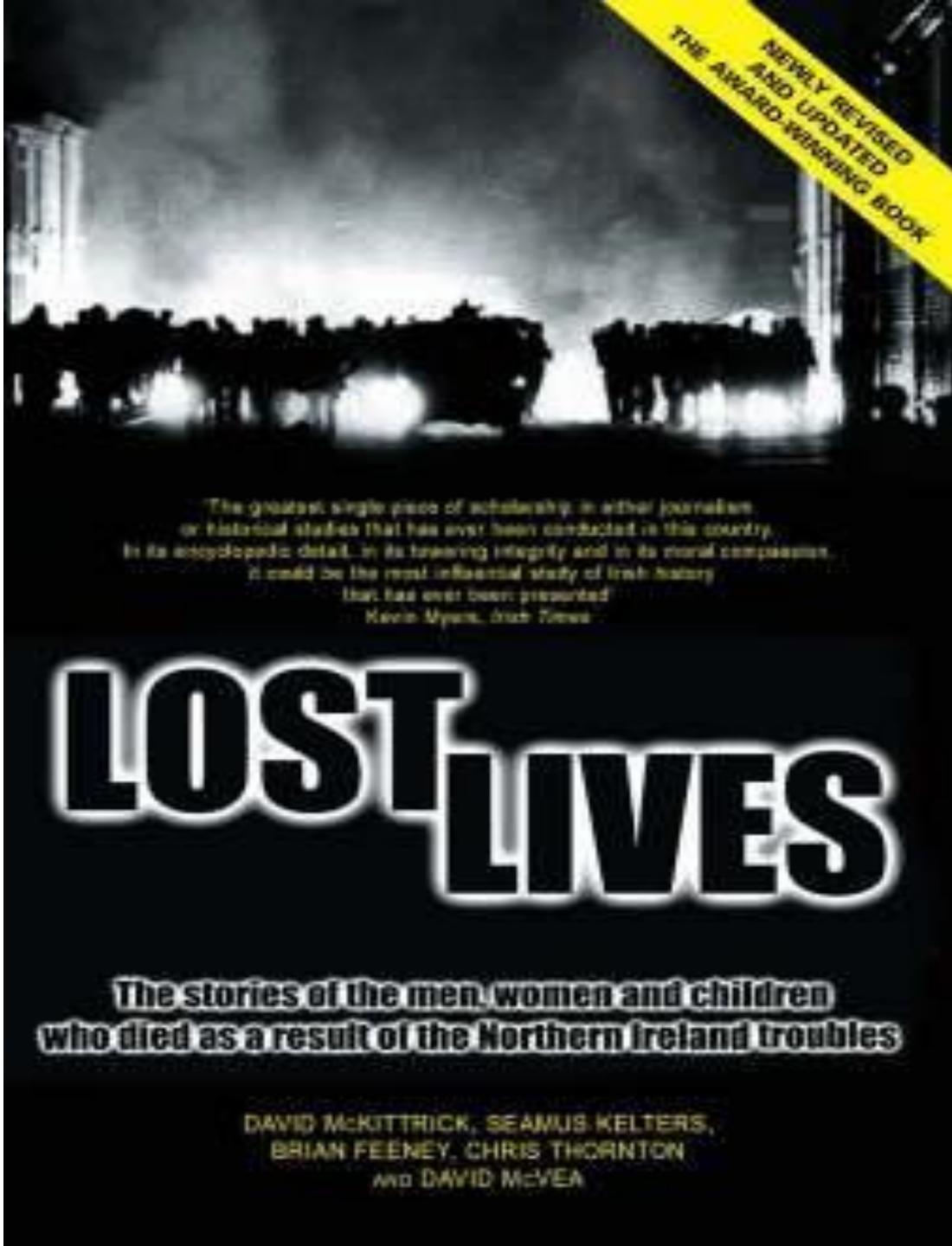
- *Practitioners' views on cross-community music education projects in NI* (Odena, 2010)
- Aimed at exploring how to develop music skills while bringing children from both main communities together
- NI background: *de facto segregated system*
 - ◆ 1 - Music as a sign of identity: Catholic vs Protestant
 - ◆ 2 - Music as means to reduce cross-community anxiety, e.g. orchestras and school projects

The troubles in NI

3.700 deaths

segregation

post-conflict
society



Methodology

- Lit. review & in-depth interviews with 14 key informants, including from HE, secondary, primary and nursery, Integrated and denominational settings (maximum variation purposive sampling)
 - ◆ Questions around: own musical background; work; music and music education in NI; project advice.
- Thematic analysis of 216 pages of transcripts using specialist software for qualitative data analysis (NVivo)
- 13 categories emerged; the following four were most relevant across interviewees:
 - ◆ *Stereotypes and alienation, Socio-economic factors, Project advice, and Music education potential*

■ Table 1: Transcript appearances of the four main categories

Category	Number of quotations categorised	Number of interviewees
<i>'Project advice'</i>	51 (16 in subcategory 'Barriers for cross- community education')	14 of 14
<i>'Music education potential'</i>	29	14 of 14
<i>'Stereotypes and alienation'</i>	23	10 of 14
<i>'Socio-economic factors'</i>	12	8 of 14

- Some pictures of the two main traditions...





Quotations: ‘Music as a sign of identity’

- *The historical background of brass bands is in the British military system...they tend to attract more Protestants; similarly Irish traditional music is part of the folk culture of the Catholics.*
- *Flute bands petrify me because to me they signify the Twelfth of July and marching...for many it's a very appropriate way of being part of the community, but it still frightens me because it's an alien culture.*
- *Like any stereotype, once you start to dig into it, you see that that's not the case, but music has been used as a weapon to sort of define communities...it's like gang mentality.*

'Socio-economic factors'

- Participants acknowledged their views were influenced by their upbringing
- The normalization and slow disappearance of segregation in more affluent areas brought with it a wealth of (*de facto* cross-community) music and music education activities:
 - ◆ *It works on the professional level and the leafy green suburbs...and to a certain extent in grammar schools*
- But cultural alienation remained in poorer areas

'Project advice'

- Practical activities: singing and composing regarded as ideal to engage all children: '*that's when they get interested...when they're getting involved in actually doing rather than listening or just watching*'.
- Consensus to ignore any type of music that could be related to two main communities (except Integrated schools & affluent areas)
- Non-competitive activities, e.g. *Music Makers*, an innovative series of music workshops for all schools (which consequently brings together children who would not normally meet)...





- **Barriers for cross-community music projects:**
 - ◆ School teachers' insecurities
 - ◆ The 'extra work' involved
 - ◆ Insufficient funding for transport
 - ◆ Reluctance of parents in more polarised neighbourhoods
 - ◆ ...and some school Principals were curiously perceived as obstacles too:
 - 👉 A *number of Principals do not understand the value of Music; [they] see it as getting in the way of teaching English, Maths and Science.*

'Music education potential'

- Schools with good music reputation attracted parents regardless of their denomination (arguably in more affluent areas)
- Nevertheless, the potential to develop music skills while bringing children together regardless of area was acknowledged in many positive experiences:
 - ◆ *[Music] is a superb tool for encouraging children to work together...they throw themselves into it wholeheartedly and are quite prepared to work with other people in doing that.*
 - ◆ *They can inspire people like no other group of people can.*

Inter-group Contact Theory as framework

- Pettigrew (1998) proposes 3 stages to reduce conflict between communities:
- (a) Initial contact: more anxiety; emphasis on personal identity and inter-personal interaction (in an effort to 'de-categorise' the individual);
- (b) Contact well established: with less anxiety, the old categorization of belonging to a particular group is highlighted, resulting in weakened prejudices that are generalised beyond the activity;
- (c) Final stage: after extended contact, individuals begin to think of themselves as part of a redefined new larger group that comprises all communities (development of the idea of a new community, or a 're-categorisation' of the old ones).

- **SOME IMPLICATIONS:**
- Analyses illustrate the need for:
 - ◆ Schools/institutions to get involved in project design
 - ◆ Provision of CPD and appropriate funding
 - ◆ Focus on deprived areas
- Focussing on young children appears to maximise impact: participants remembered 1st time coming across youngsters from across the divide = diluted stereotypes
- In post-conflict zones, projects would need to entice children (fun), parents (quality) and schools (status), focussing on quality (with ‘respect’ to develop naturally)
- Steps ahead: AHRC £1M bid to be submitted in 2016 on The Arts in Cross-Community Integration
- On-going study: *Student teachers using music education to integrate new arrivals (Chancellor’s Fund, 2014-16)*

- **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:**
- Programmes and interventions need to be supported by quantitative outcomes to convince funders (and partners) of its benefits. However, experiences, emotions and aspirations resulting from participation are central but less quantifiable. How do we evidence them?
- Links between music, well-being & inclusion supported by literature. How do we infer causality (if any)?
- More research needed on:
 - ◆ Transformative potential of social music programmes.
 - ◆ Effective practice, e.g. contact time, non-selective admission and continuity.
 - ◆ Appropriate research designs, e.g. RCTs with longitudinal mixed-method studies (including qualitative) to evidence (and understand) processes and impacts delivered

References

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- Odena, O. (2010) Practitioners' views on cross-community music education projects in Northern Ireland: alienation, socio-economic factors and educational potential, *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(1), 83-105.
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