

As part of The Leverhulme Doctoral Centre for Aural Diversity¹ at the University of Salford, we invite applications to the interdisciplinary PhD research project titled “**The Aural Embodiment of Place: Multisensory Soundscapes in Post-Industrial Urban Spaces.**” This fully-funded PhD research explores how sound and sensory experiences shape our understanding of place, focusing on multiculturalism and aural diversity.

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When & How to Apply: Applications are due by the end of February 2025, and the PhD begins in September 2025. Visit the [LAURA website](#) for information on eligibility and application procedures.

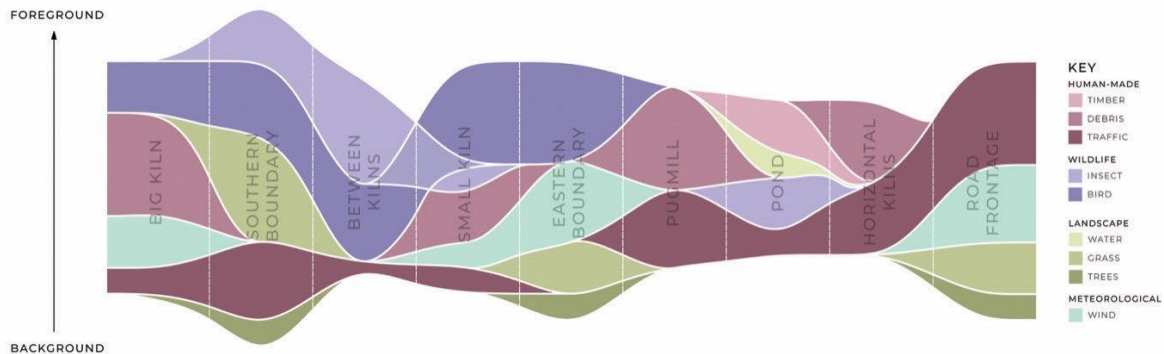


Figure 1 Graphic score representing existing soundscape character. Source: Usue Ruiz Arana & Dan Hill, 2024.

This research examines how diverse soundscapes shape the sensory and communal experiences of multicultural urban environments (Sen & Silverman, 2014); theorising the body as a dynamic site of aural perception, interaction, and negotiation. Inspired by Bruno Latour’s understanding of the body as a process of learning to be affected (2004), the project explores how diverse auditory experiences cultivate sensory skills and foster relations among individuals, communities, and their environments.

Focusing on post-industrial sites such as the Manchester Ship Canal, the study investigates how sound engages bodies in practices of inclusion, tolerance, and identity formation. Through participatory methods, including oral histories, sound recordings, and augmented reality tools, the research amplifies the experiences of aurally diverse participants— children and adults from indigenous and migrant communities, including anglers, residents, visitors, and wildlife—whose sensory engagements challenge the notion of a “normal” auditory body.

By drawing on Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 2005; Mol, 2002) and Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony (1984), the project considers soundscapes as sites of embodied be(com)ing, where the interplay of visible and invisible spaces reveals the body’s capacity to adapt, connect, and make sense of its environment. The cacophony of urban life is reframed as a medium for constructing shared sensory worlds, facilitating an inclusive approach to designing spaces that embrace aural diversity.

This interdisciplinary PhD opportunity bridges urbanism, architecture, psychology, sociology, and anthropology, contributing to a novel understanding of urban soundscapes as dialogic and transformative environments. It invites candidates to rethink the relationship between the body, sound, and space, advancing methodologies that celebrate the full spectrum of sensory and auditory difference in multicultural cities.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (C. Emerson, Ed.). University of Minnesota Press.

Latour, B. (2004). How to Talk About the Body? The Normative Dimension of Science Studies. *Body & Society*, 10(2–3).

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford University Press.

Mol, A. (2002). *The Body Multiple*. Duke University Press.

Sen, A., & Silverman, L. (Eds.). (2014). *Making Place: Space and Embodiment in the City*. Indiana University Press.

¹ Run by Professors Bill Davies, Sam Gregory, Alan Williams, and Katherine Yates.