



CHANGES IN SOUNDSCAPES IN POST PANDEMIC TIMES

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ABSTRACT

During the pandemic new formats of meetings and communication have been developed to overcome the situations that did not allow any form of in-person-meetings. It became popular to do home-office, to meet on virtual platforms for conferences, to do things from home instead of starting traveling to diverse destinations, taking planes, train, or cars. This was rapidly changing current soundscapes, the slowdown of traffic was causing soundscapes with a different sound climate. There is much research about it that will help to understand those processes. The question arising is whether soundscapes were changed for the moment or for a longer time or even in their structure. Moreover, it has to be asked whether a sincere habit change happened that will give soundscapes a different face in the future. These important questions will be discussed, results will be provided.

Keywords: *Soundscape, post pandemic times, habit change, sound climate*

1. INTRODUCTION

During the pandemic, it was under duress, that worldwide daily life was changed and new habits had to be developed as for example according to home office, home schooling, family life in narrow space, lock downs.

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At the beginning, it was causing irritation and helplessness, but later it was changed to habits in regard to so called daily routines. Following, post-pandemic soundscape research must and can be related to daily life in its status and noticeable changes style file

2. POST-PANDEMIC TIMES

Current times classified as post pandemic have to be seen from a multidisciplinary view point, moreover it is something that needs to go across disciplines. The question for the meaning of “post pandemic” does have many facets, especially in regard to new habits and expectations. It is based on the understanding of living contexts and for sure it is not only a matter of lower or higher loudness. Work-Life-Balance is one of the very important viewpoints that got during COVID 19 a higher value.

As Murray Schafer [1] classifies “[...] the general acoustic environment of a society can be read as an indicator of social conditions which produce it and may tell us much about the trending and evolution of that society. [...] noise pollution today is being resisted by noise abatement. This is the negative approach. We must seek a way to make environmental acoustics a positive study program”.

3. CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Among others, post-pandemic soundscapes could show changes in regard to pioneering city-planning involving the concepts of smart growth and smart cities based on soundscape techniques that can be applied to urban planning for communities.

Taking this into account, soundscape research in post pandemic times has to get new technologies under scrutiny as well as new approaches in soundscape methodologically

also including virtual reality. Aletta and Xiao [2] force “to bridge soundscape research and practice, to explore how to adapt the current (urban) soundscape frameworks for other contexts/disciplines, to identify impacts of other sensory inputs for soundscape appraisal, to understand how people react to different types of sounds, behaviorally and psychologically, in specific contexts and to analyze data collected from emerging technologies, archives and platforms in an ecologically valid way”. All pointed out here has to mirrored in regard to the definition of soundscapes as any acoustic environment as perceived or experienced and/or understood by a person or people in context see ISO 12913-1:2014

4. SOUNDSCAPE STUDIES

Soundscape studies		
Interview	Questionnaire	Sound level indicators
Soundwalk	Interview (open, semi-, structured)	Psychoacoustics
Observation	Observation protocols	Sound mapping
Biomonitoring	Physiological responses	Acoustic patterns
Big data	Verbalization	Source recognition
Methods	Instruments	Acoustic measurements

Figure 1. Methods, Instruments, and Measurement in Soundscape Studies [3]

There is the shared understanding how to proceed in soundscape research strictly related to the ISO Standard ISO 12913 series. Applying these measures will help to understand the changes and developments in decisions related to living situations and life quality.

5. INTERVENTIONS

There is a broad variety of interventions available to design urban soundscapes.

Interventions can be realized on a micro-scale, like introducing locally a new sound source ensuring diversity in the specific acoustic environment, up to macro-scale intervention levels where for example a whole city quarter

is subject to a redesign. Typically, different types of interventions are combined within an acoustic environment to have potentially the greatest impact on residents and visitors.

One of the best examples of application of the soundscape approach and in processing types of intervention is the Noise and Soundscape Action Plan of the Welsh Government’s as a central noise policy [4] document. It has been produced collaboratively with local authorities and other public bodies. It outlines the Welsh public sector’s strategic policy direction in relation to noise and soundscape management for the next 5 years. By referring to Soundscape in the title and throughout, it signals that it understands sound in context, and that noise is about more just decibels. It recognizes that we also need to create appropriate soundscapes, meaning the right acoustic environment in the right place at appropriate times. The Action Plan notes at para .4.4.7: “Good acoustic design is, however, about more than just the numbers. It is a holistic design process that creates places that are both comfortable and attractive to live in, where acoustics is considered integral to the living environment”.

6. CONCLUSION

There is the strong need for research that clarifies the measurement and data collection in post pandemic times in regard to Soundscape. It is written in stones that the perception is the main issue to be investigated in soundscapes. [5] As it is know from its definition soundscape is any acoustic environment as perceived or experienced and/or understood by a person or people in context. The soundscape standard ISO 12913 series is providing the procedures and as well the framing concept. Current development in soundscape research brings the Virtual Realty in the focus, and for sure it has to be proven whether the current measurement procedures will fulfill the needs in this virtual environment and context.

7. REFERENCES

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