

# SOUNDSCAPES: between the music of the city and the urban noise



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## Abstract:

Starting from the overvaluation of visual culture in the modes of representation of society, this article draws a time line that goes from the marginalization of sounds promoted by disciplines such as geography, architecture and urban planning, until reaching to the acoustic definition of the landscape. In this way we demonstrate how the landscape is reincorporated in the agenda of these disciplines, not only as something visible, but as a cultural construction of our sensory activity, which is also made of sounds. This explains the anthropocentric nature of the soundscape, using the concepts of “sonorous image” and “sonorous identity” to reveal how sound attributes character to space and humanizes it, that can be seen from a global or local point of view. This in order to conclude how the patrimonial identity of sound is capable of characterizing specific urban contexts, its space, its habits and customs, while the ordinary identity contains a trait of "detachment" that transforms the "music of the city" into an urban noise.

**Keywords:** Soundscape \_ Sound image\_ Sonorous identity\_ City music \_ Urban noise\_ Urban landscape

**Resumen:** Partiendo de la sobrevalorización de la cultura visual en los modos de representación de la sociedad, este artículo traza una línea temporal que va desde la marginalización de las sonoridades en disciplinas como la geografía, la arquitectura y el urbanismo, hasta llegar a una definición acústica del paisaje. Con ello se trata de demostrar cómo el paisaje se reincorpora en la agenda de dichas disciplinas, no sólo como algo visible, sino que como una construcción cultural de nuestra actividad sensorial, que está también hecha de sonidos. Así se explica el carácter antropocéntrico del paisaje sonoro, utilizándose los conceptos de imagen e identidad sonora para demostrar cómo el sonido atribuye carácter al espacio y lo “humaniza”, pudiendo ser visto desde un punto de vista global o local. Esto de manera a concluir como la identidad patrimonial del sonido caracteriza contextos urbanos específicos, su espacio, sus hábitos y sus costumbres, mientras que la identidad ordinaria contiene un rasgo de “desapego” que transforma la “música de la ciudad” en un ruido urbano.

**Palabras clave:** Paisaje sonoro\_ Imagen sonoro \_ Identidad Sonora \_ Música da ciudad \_  
Ruido Urbano \_ Paisaje urbano

Our culture is presented, in general, as a written culture in which the sonority of oral expression only marginally interferes with social and cultural arrangements and configurations. The recognized importance of visual culture in the ways of representing the society promotes the marginalization of sonority as a cultural ingredient of social relevance in areas such as architecture and urbanism. The very sociological currents of the phenomenological, ethnomethodological and symbolic-interactionist matrix, highlight the supremacy of the dynamic and symbolic component of looking in the human perception, stating its extraordinary influence in the development of everyday events and relationships. In this sense, we can affirm that sight was converted into a privileged methodological protocol in numerous symbolic analysis of the social to the detriment of other ways of perception (Goffman 1993). Let's say that these disciplinary fields generated a dolmen similar to that of Magritte in his "White Race" (fig.1), elevating sight to the maximum exponent, while smell, taste, and hearing are reduced to its mere support.

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Fig. 1

Despite the growing development of qualitative methodological strategies, sensitive to subtle elements of social reality, the inferiority of the auditive variable is still verified in different areas of knowledge. This in contrast to the expanded consensus on the heuristic value of vision and visual culture. George Simmel himself, one of Sociology's founders, most attentive to qualitative approaches, argues that hearing can only offer a partial revelation of human beings and society. This because it only authorizes a momentary interpretation of both, delimited by the time in which they manifest and make their presence be sonorously recognized (Simmel 1981). He speaks of hearing as a passive sense stripped of its own autonomy, which clearly contrasts with sight. This because, in the face-to-face relationship, the latter always implies communication, Simmel (1981) recognizes that seeing "cannot give without receiving", while the ear is destined to receive without (being able to) giving. As Fortuna (2009) refers, the author seems to treat the senses under the form of a zero-sum game since the dynamism of the visual carries with it the marginality of the ear. Thus, Fortuna points out the selfishness and passivity of the auditory sense, condemned to "receive" without criteria all the stimuli that are offered deliberately interrupted or diverted from everything that we are not interested in or despise.

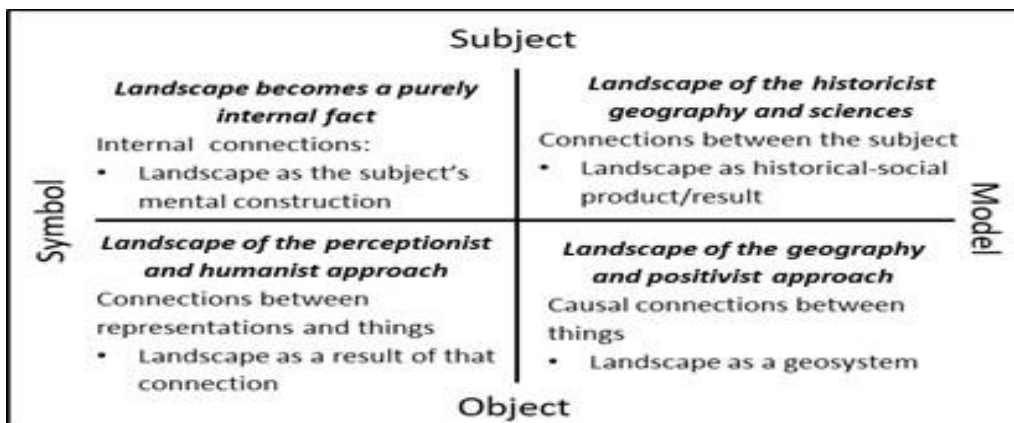


Fig. 2

Let's say that it is the criticism to this "deafness" of the social sciences that returns the landscape to the geography's agenda and other domains of knowledge such as arts, sciences, humanities and architecture, introducing the sensory dimensions of smell, touch, and sound in its conceptual definition. Here the fundamental trends developed by the geography of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries studied by G. Dematteis (1989/fig. 2) are confronted, where the landscape as a symbol (as a set of signals to be interpreted) seeks to complement the landscape as a model (as a rational explanatory construction of the external reality) through sensory aspects of perception related to the subject/object relationship. It is a new attitude towards the landscape that validates the humanistic approach of geography and its anthropocentric, holistic and hermeneutical perspective, where space requires, for its understanding, a phenomenological and existential reading that summons all the senses (auditory, tactile, olfactory) usually marginalized by sight. Here the concept of place appears as a specific portion of space to which is attributed a meaning that always evokes an affective (Tuan 1977). We refer to places as "centers of meanings or intentions, understood both culturally and individually",<sup>1</sup> "entities that embody people's experience and aspirations"<sup>2</sup> or "units of the material space of psychological significance, temporally and perceptibly limited."<sup>3</sup>

As Maderuelo refers, it is this understanding of place that leads to another conception of the landscape, which "is no longer a mere physical place, but the set of a series of ideas, sensations and feelings that we elaborate from the place and its constitutive elements."<sup>4</sup> It's this "interlocking" between place, ideas, sensations and feelings that reveals the "landscape as a construct, a mental elaboration that man make through the phenomena of culture."<sup>5</sup> That is, a global synesthesia where sounds also give character to space and "humanize" it, allowing to apprehend what M. Samuels calls the biography of landscapes through the ear. See how the works *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, *In the Human Experience of Space and Place*, *The Experience of Landscape* and *Landscape of Fear* begin to focus the analysis on our experiential relationship with the space, distilling the importance of the acoustic component in the construction of the concept of landscape. These are works that understand perception as a global sensorial phenomenon, opening new perspectives where "the landscape is not only something visible, but, as a

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<sup>1</sup> Relph, E. (1976), *Place and Placelessness*. London, Pion.

<sup>2</sup> Tuan, Yi-Fu (1980). *Landscapes of Pean Oxford*, Basil Blackwell Publisher.

<sup>3</sup> Godkin, Michael A. (1980). *Identity and Place: Clinical Applications Based on Notions of Rootedness and Uprootedness*. In *The Human Experience of Space and Place*. Anne Buttimer and David Deamon, eds. New York: St. Martin's Press.

<sup>4</sup> Maderuelo, Javier (2005). *The landscape: Genesis of a Concept*. Madrid: Abada Editores.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*

construction of our sensory activity, it is also made of sounds, noises.”<sup>6</sup> We speak of a landscape that presupposes the enjoyment of the pleasures of imagination and the poetic rationalization of all empirical sensations. This is because, like sight, touch and taste, hearing is also presented as a way of seeing the earth; and “each way of seeing the earth, each way of describing or representing it assumes that behind it there is a different kind of thinking, thus establishing a subject object relationship that leads to the landscape”<sup>7</sup>. Let's say that sonorous objects also captivate the viewer's attention, demanding an interpretation in terms of meaning. It is a semiotic imposition where sonorous matter becomes important in itself, distilling the concept of advanced sonorous image by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure: A subjective mental image that comes to each person before a sonorous stimulus.

This way, we can affirm that the landscape, whatever the degree of its acoustic resolution, is translated into an act of attribution of meaning that refers us to the human condition. This is because the meaning of a sound is always relative. Not only with concerns to the singularity of the source or objective activity that originates it – situation in which we would be faced with a denotative meaning of the sound that is interpreted – but also with respect to other sounds with which it is combined. Here we can talk about a connotative sonorous meaning or a sonorous relativism that portrays the listener's social and biographical experience. It can both reveal a memory, a past, or a lived activity, as it can reveal a state of estrangement and disagreement with unknown sonorities (and, at one extreme, before absent sonorities) that are intended to decipher in their abstract meaning or sense.

Let's say that we are capable to interpret even the smallest sonorous inflections of our usual environments. In the same way that we distinguish a step or the sound of a door in our domestic environment, we can also “read” that sound in the city's public space. This is because the meaning has been learned and “apprehended” previously. The extreme point of this situation takes place when we describe what is perceived as “noise”, thus denying it any capacity for meaning beyond dislike. But without reaching this extreme, different intermediate situations describe “floating” listening modes in which certain sounds, tones and timbres are suspended in our perception, causing an acoustic construction of the place. Thus, the landscape is identified with the denotative and connotative meanings of the sonorities learned by the listener. This because the sound biography of space is confused with the autobiographical memory of the listener. That is, the social memory of the place is, in part, the

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<sup>6</sup> Turri, E. (1979). *Semiologia del paesaggio italiano*. Milano, Longanesi.

<sup>7</sup> Maderuelo, Javier (2005). *The landscape: Genesis of a Concept*. Madrid: Abada Editores.

listener's personal memory, constituting a kind of intertextual story that highlights the parallelism of the sonorous cadences by which public life is governed with the subject's metaphorical, poetic and personal component (fig. 3). As Nogué (2011) mentions, "the landscape is on one hand the mirror of the soul in the territory, the object of a subjective perception and experience; and on the other, a social product, that is to say the cultural projection of a society in a given space and not only in relation to its material and tangible dimension, but also to its intangible, spiritual and symbolic dimension".<sup>8</sup>

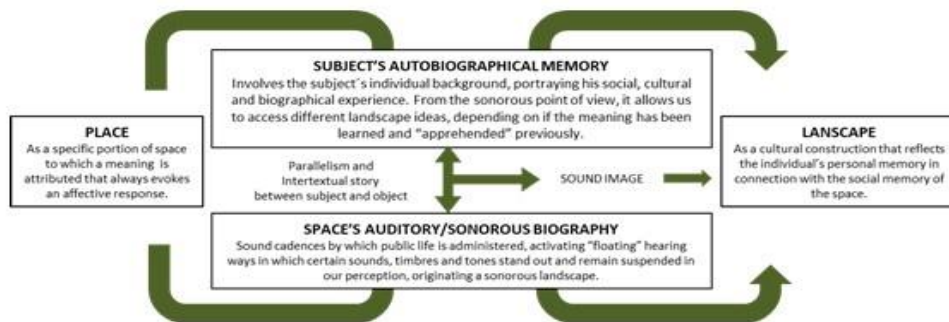
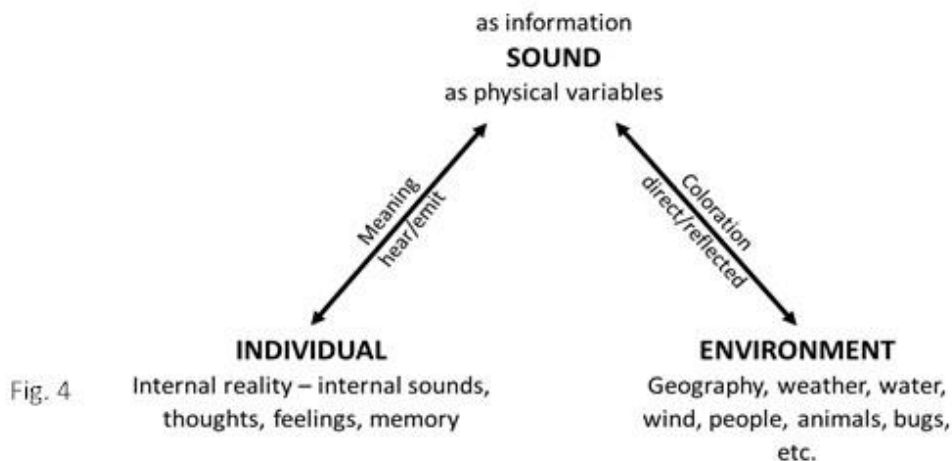


Fig. 3

This way we can affirm that the soundscape is a key indicator of the surrounding space. This because sound maintains an intimate relationship with the movement, inducing alterations in the molecular structure of the person or object that moves. These alterations propagate in space through successive waves that reach our ears, giving us specific spatial and temporal notions (Ackerman 1990). In other words, the sound appears as movement of a body that finds resonance in another specific body, organizing itself in such a way

<sup>8</sup> Nogué, Joan (2011). Paisaje y comunicación: el resurgir de las geografías emocionales. In Theory and landscape: reflections from interdisciplinary perspectives. Barcelona: Landscape Observatory of Catalonia.

that it informs us about the material structure of the surrounding space. This because the physical space (where sound occurs and is heard) becomes an integrant part of the sound and sensorial experience, which allows the ear to interfere with the identification and differentiation of spaces. We refer to a kind of explicit food chain in the Truax diagrams (1984) where sound assumes the role of the producer that is apprehended by the environment as a primary consumer and in turn by the individual as a final predator (fig. 4). Thus, the sound makes the space recognizable by the subjects that inhabit it, revealing an identity of its own that changes the landscape.



This relationship is perfectly demonstrated in the theoretical considerations of geographer Orlando Ribeiro (1968) and his customary references regarding the sonorous ambience of Islamic cities. The author tells us how geography and space maintain this relationship with sounds and their intrinsic movements. As Carlos Fortuna (2009) refers to, the landscapes of those cities are, for Orlando Ribeiro, more than their morphological, spatial or functional traces. They are part of their colors and smells but also their sonorities. Orlando considers that the landscape can hear the pulse of space and from there draw conclusions regarding its mode of functional and spatial organization. Another argument about this relationship between space and sounds is found in the work of Paul Rodaway (1994) that proposes the concept of “auditory geographies” as a specific analysis field of the sensitive experience and the acoustic properties of



the environment. There is also the work of the Canadian musicologist R. Murray Schafer who contemplates precisely the relationship between space, its arrangement/regulation, and social sonorities. We talk of the most significant theoretical contributions in this disciplinary field that consolidates the concept of soundspace. According to Schafer (1985), the sound field refers to the acoustic space generated from a specific emitting source that radiates and extends its sonority to a well-defined area or territory. As Fortuna (2009) explains, the center of this sound field is a certain human or material emitting agent that as the sound produced by it spreads and mixes with others, tends to be opaqued and its origin undetermined. For this reason, the author considers that spaces record the simultaneous presence of particular sound fields that overlap and articulate each other, originating the soundscape, that is, a sonorous multifaceted ambience that surrounds the different receiving subjects.

This way we can affirm that “the soundscape is, in this perspective, fundamentally anthropocentric and that, in the opposite to what happens with the sound field, there is no undifferentiated emitting agent – human or material – but rather the concrete human subject who, in his capacity as receiver, constitutes its center. In other words, while sound fields highlight the action of production/emission of sounds, soundscapes refer to the act of their appropriation/reception, turning the undifferentiated acoustics of the sound field to a specific one.”<sup>9</sup> This way, the soundscape becomes essential in the understanding of how sound attributes meaning and characterizes a place, since it is inextricably related to time and space, able to be seen from a global or local point of view (Raimbault and Dubois 2005). We speak of an auditory characterization that does not distinguish local phenomena, but analogies and divergences between different spatial, temporal and use dispositions and practices (Atienza 2008). This because the soundscape evolves throughout history (where the sounds of nature or pre-urban life tend to be lost) and with the passing of the day (from the chaotic hour to the calm of the night).

As Henri Lefebvre (1992) refers to, the space is simultaneously poly-rhythmic and a-rhythmic according to the cadence of its daily life. For the author where there is an interaction between space, time and energy investment there is a rhythm. That rhythm can be linear like the working world, always interspersed

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<sup>9</sup> FORTUNA, Carlos (1999). Expressões públicas da vida sensível” e “Paisagens Sonoras. Sonoridades e ambientes sociais urbanos. En: Identidades, Percursos, Paisagens Culturais. Sociological studies of urban culture. Oeiras: Celta Editora.

with moments of leisure and rest, but it can also be cyclical like the seasons of the year, the day, the night, or the sea waves.

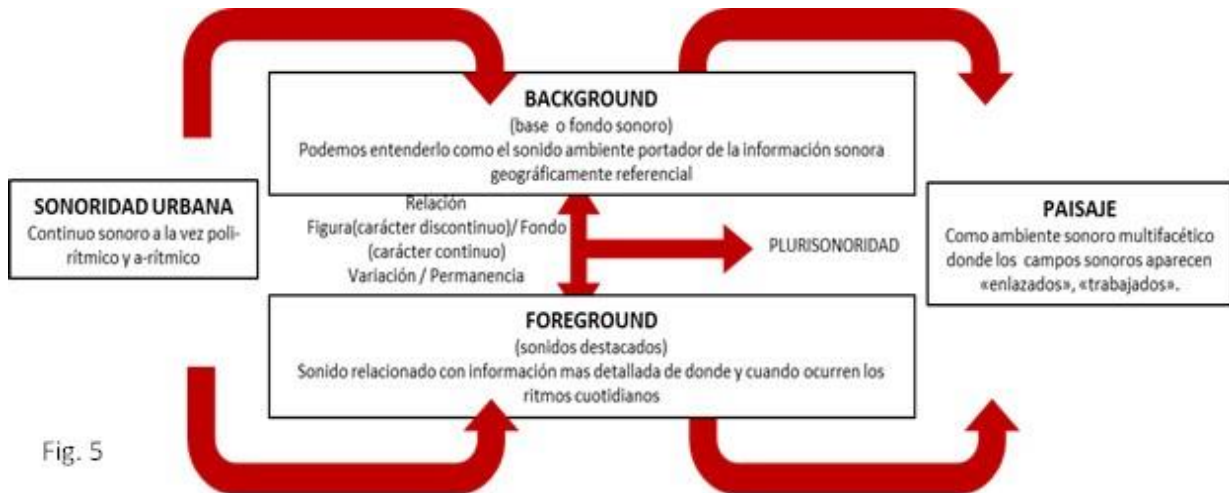


Fig. 5

In this sense, in the same way that the sea or the wind confer its voice and its inflections to certain natural environments, the city has its own mode of acoustic expression. Its sounds compose a “music of the city” (Lefebvre 1992) that, despite being permanent, may vary according to the spatial and temporal context (period of the day/time of the year), acquiring particular characteristics and senses that distinguishes it from others.

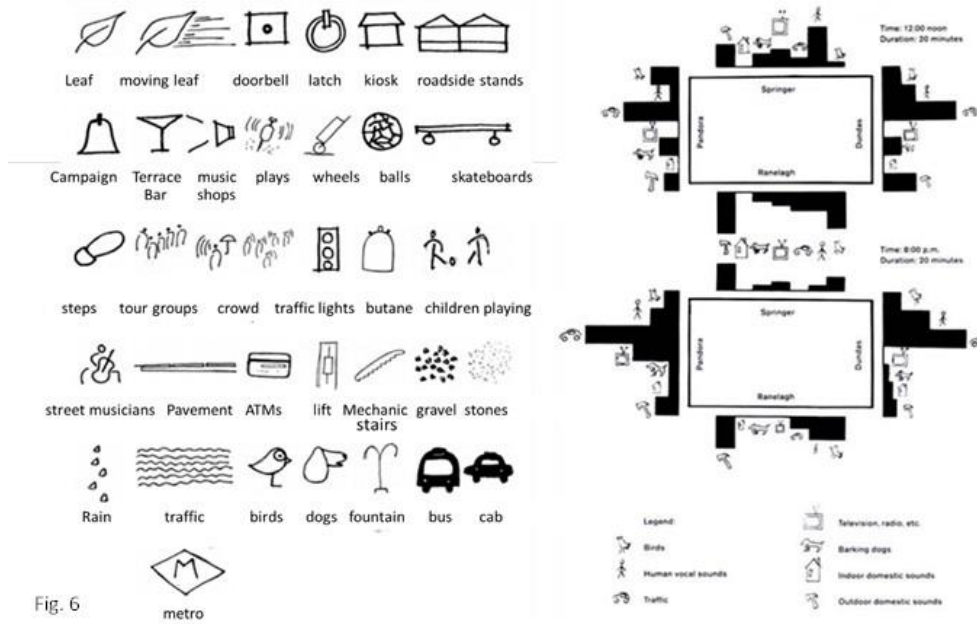


Fig. 6

According to Lefebvre (1992) there is a sonorous background in the city (sounds that manifest as field - ground), being that the nature of this “continuous sound” is far from being a clear ringing sound, but it also cannot be assimilated to a white homogeneous noise, because it has a color and a dynamic marked by the different uses and modes of space appropriation throughout the day (foreground) (fig. 5). Shafer (1977) speaks of figure (discontinuous character) and sound background (continuous) of the city, showing us that it is the dialectic between the permanence of the background and the variation of its figure, that allows us to characterize a full day or wider period of a given urban space. This through the elaboration of a series of “sound maps” (fig. 6) where the author charts the different sounds of the urban space at different times of the day, confirming that it is the variation of that sound palette that spatially and temporarily describes a certain place. This way,

Shafer deciphers the landscape as a phenomenon intrinsic to the sound matter that responds to certain rhythms, tonalities, and sequences of everyday life, which compose a multifaceted environment that reproduces itself indefinitely changing its appearance, but always retaining a specific essence that characterizes the place.

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Fig. 7



Fig. 8

See how in the Largo de Camões in Lisbon you can hear the trams, cars and the daily hustle and bustle that marks the work week, while on Sunday morning almost only the flashes of the tourist cameras are perceived. This in contrast to Saturday night where shouts, laughter, and university chants fill the square heading to the bars and cafes of Bairro Alto (fig. 7). This urban pulse is also audible in Ferrán Street in Barcelona. It is a pedestrian street that opens to

automobile traffic during the morning for the merchants' replenishment. At this moment the combustion engines of the cars are heard along with the accelerated steps of the people who run to work. At lunchtime, the voices of the crowd of tourists who walk and shop in the center are volatilized, while on a rainy day the space is silenced (fig. 8). In Lisbon's university city, sounds are closely connected with the academic schedule and calendar, making us aware of a vibrant space during the school period, that contrasts with the night and the holiday period and school interruptions.

According to these examples, we can confirm that the "city music" is not a neutral and arbitrary noise, as it describes a set of spatial, temporal and social characteristics associated with the daily activities of that space. Let's say "the sound of a particular locality (its tonics, sonorous signals and sound marks) - as well as local architecture, customs and clothing - can express the identity of a community, to the point where peoples can be recognized and distinguished for its soundscapes."<sup>10</sup> As Hildegard Westerkamp (1988) refers to, the soundscape can tell us about the political, economic, technological and ecological situation of a place. This is because "everyday life has a soundtrack. If we do not listen to it, it is because we are already accustomed to hearing it."<sup>11</sup> According to the Canadian composer, there is a multitude of sounds that tells us everyday stories. These are sounds that we produce daily in each one of our chores, allowing us to describe the place in which we live and the environment in which we move. The author refers to sounds that seek essential data for the survival and understanding of the surrounding environment, erecting auditory references that place us and provide proportions of the spaces we inhabit. We speak of the landscape's sonorous identity, described by Ricardo Atienza (2008) as "a set of characteristic sound features of a place that allow those who inhabit it, recognize it, name it, but also identify themselves with it, that is, feel part of it and (...) make it your own."<sup>12</sup>

However, it should be noted that this sonorous identity can be viewed from two different and complementary perspectives, generating a kind of paradox between the contemporary city and the traditional city. This because the sounds of globalization invade the urban space, coexisting with the sounds of the old trading houses, the street vendors or the old daily habits that prevail in the contemporary city. Let's say that the sonorous identity combines the heritage

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<sup>10</sup> Truax, Barry (ed.) (1978). Handbook For Acoustic Ecology. The Music of the Environment Series; No. 5. Vancouver, A.R.C. Publications.

<sup>11</sup> Pelinski, Ramón (2007). El oído alerta: modos de escuchar el entorno sonoro. Talk presented at the Iberoamerican Meeting on Sound Landscapes.

<sup>12</sup> Atienza, Ricardo (2008), Identidad sonora urbana: tiempo, sonido y proyecto urbano. In: Les 4èmes Journées Européennes de la Recherche Architecturale et Urbaine EURAU'08: Paysage Culturel, 16-19, Madrid, Espagn 86

identity with the ordinary identity of the sound, building the soundscape through the overlap of both.

As Atienza (2008) describes, the heritage identity houses the most explicit and specific features of the sonorous identity. The elements that constitute it are characteristic sonorous objects of the place that we can distinguish and name. Fortuna (2009) speaks of high fidelity sounds and sound personality (hi-fi), whose origin is very easy to identify; mentioning sonorities of nature, animal life and pre-industrial or pre-urban professional life. The author refers to the shrill singing of the early rooster, the sound of the manual water pump to provision the house, or the hammer that sounds rhythmically on the anvil of the old smithy. They are "transition sounds or forms of resistance and sonic revanchism of the baroque city in the modern city"<sup>13</sup>, perfectly audible in the Zona Velha of the city of Funchal in Madeira Island. Here it is still possible to meet some of the "pre-modern" professions that, a little apart from the "official" inheritance processes, contribute to the construction of the "postal image" of the historic center of Madeira. We refer to the "knives and scissors sharpener" with his strident harmonica, or to the fish sellers, who with their basket go through the residential areas located in the city center, repeating their "sayings" while doing door-to-door business (fig. 9).

At Madeira's capital center are also perceived the sounds of other "pre-modern" professions such as the wicker basket seller, or the lottery man who stops every day at the Largo do Pelourinho exclaiming "Look! The lottery! It spins today!". There is also the fifteenth century cathedral bell that rings setting the time in the island's city life. These sonorous signals fulfill functions of collective memory, constructing auditory references allowing to identify Funchal's urban landscape. This is because they refer us to the urban memory of the pre-industrial city that still persists or resists in the historic center, although without the same weight in terms of "markers of rhythms, temporality and daily ways of life."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Fortuna, Carlos (1999), "Expressões públicas da vida sensível" e "Paisagens Sonoras. Sonoridades e ambientes sociais urbanos", in idem, *Identidades, Percursos, Paisagens Culturais*. Sociological studies of urban culture: Celta Editora.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

This decrease is due to the ordinary component of the sonorous identity that tends to standardize and uniformize the heritage signals, covering them up with sound scrapes that we hear in a distracted way, without paying them too much attention. As described by Aienza (2008) it is a sound background that we are used to listen without realizing and that, contrary to the heritage signals, do not mark any event or divide the workday. According to the author, it is a sound “flow” that tells us about the passage of time, being its absence and silence, rather than its presence, which can attract our attention, pointing out general characteristics of a place. “How many of us are no longer surprised by the sound mark of the ATM or the universal sound of credit card payment, whether in Coimbra, Sao Paulo, Maputo or New York.”<sup>15</sup> The sound of mobile phones itself, automobile combustion engines or subway brakes on the rails became universal, emitting sound fields that lead us towards a collective movement, capable of breaking spatio-temporal thresholds (fig. 10).

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*

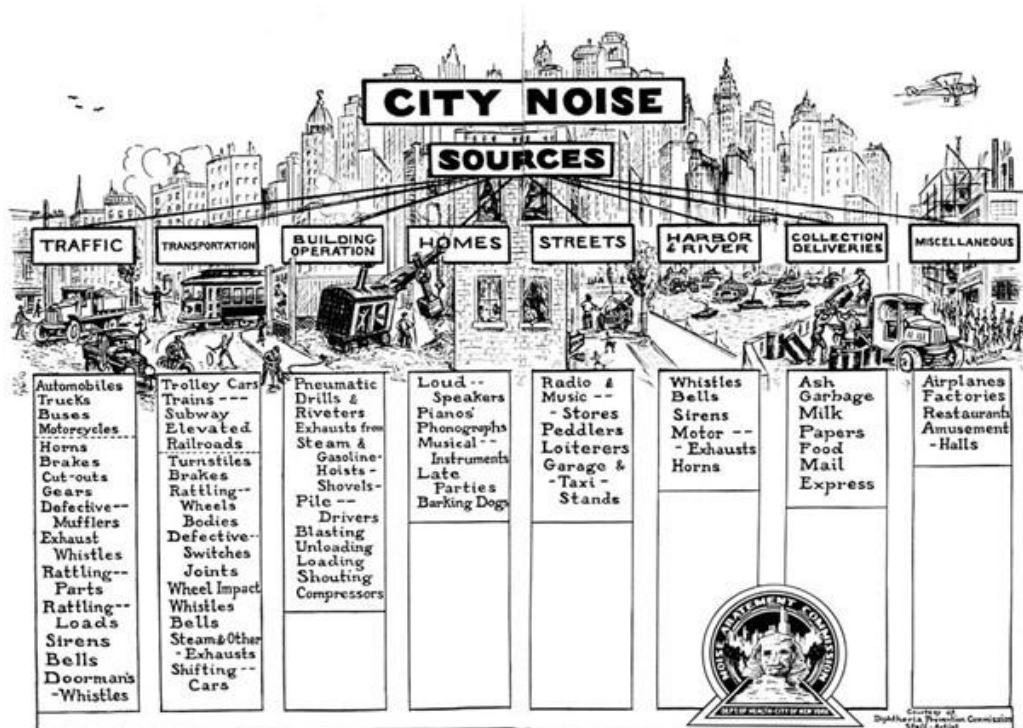


Fig. 11

As Thompson refers, in his study of acoustics in New York between 1900-1933, all the technological change that can be seen can also be heard, so it is not surprising that, being immersed in the logic of the so-called globalization, the sonorous identity of the landscape is also affected by the drastic technological innovations. Let us agree that it is this technical renovation that enhances the ordinary component of the sonorous identity, transforming the “city music” into a noise (“city noise”) triggered by different sound sources – traffic, transport, works construction, houses, streets, ports and miscellaneous factories and airports, etc. ... (fig.11) – that hide, under a supposed variety, the homogenizing logic of the technique, where the citizen is transformed into an individual without identity, immersed in a deformed mass of subjects in orderly movement.



According to this approach we can affirm that the patrimonial identity speaks to us essentially of a time that "was", and that perhaps "is", evoking the collective memory of the urban space; while the ordinary identity is by nature transversal in time. This is because it relies on a trans local experience that allows us to interpret the present and deduce future situations that reach our ears. That is, it is not limited to the description of the place, but rather puts it in relation to other spaces and other moments. As Atienza (2008) refers, the patrimonial identity allows us to accurately characterize a precise context, its soundscape, its habits and its customs, while the ordinary identity contains a feature of "detachment" from its own context.

This way we can confirm that the ordinary component negatively polarizes the sonorous identity, uniformizing and standardizing the urban landscape. This is because the soundscape of the contemporary city is produced almost technologically, promoting the construction of stereotypes that lead to a global habitat, where the anonymity and estrangement relations characteristic of today's society are reinforced. Here, relationships and particular situations are replaced by generic urban configurations that lead to a global landscape. The same sound field in such differentiated spaces makes them similar and familiar, thus building a landscape by sonorous approach. This landscape attributes a different dimension to our conceptions of territory and border, configuring a trans local space that forgets domestic expressions and local identity (fig.12).

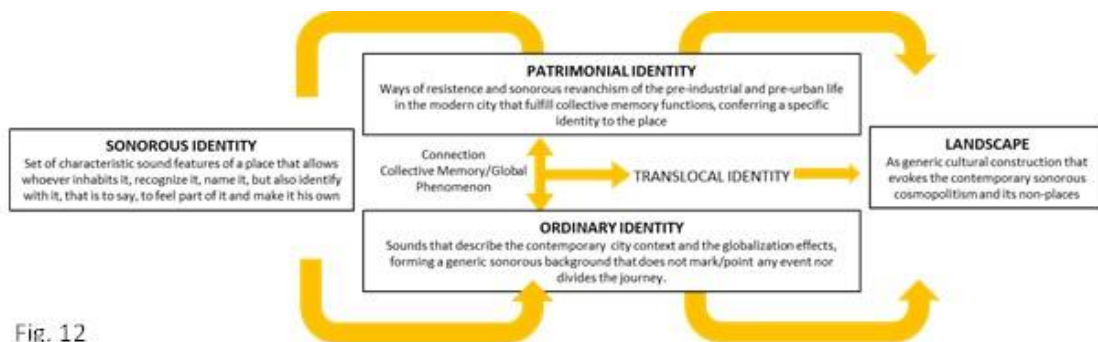


Fig. 12

Faced with this globalizing tangle, we realize that the resonances of the landscape, such as cultures, individuals and social groups, are full of ambiguity, transitory, hybrid and, apparently, without history or roots, without identity. This condition drags the soundscape of the contemporary city to the domain of the non-places enunciated by Marc Augé (2005), evoking transient spaces with circumstantial configurations, exclusively defined by the passing of individuals who do not personalize or contribute to the sonorous identity. As Fortuna (2009) explains the "sonorous cosmopolitanism" of the contemporary city ended up generating an entropy in the landscape, where individuals seem to wander like the *flâneur* amid a cloud of homogeneous and anonymous noise, characterized by the traffic's ubiquitous tonic. Given this, the author wonders if it will be legitimate to maintain that present cities have, or may have, a (sonorous) identity of their own, finding three affirmative answers in his autobiographical memory of city of Coimbra: the old academic greeting of Coimbra (the known ES-FF-RRR-ÁÁ), the unmistakable sound announcement of the train departure for Alfarelos, or the song/fado of Coimbra. We speak of a set of undeniably local sound expressions that demonstrate the heritage component of the sonorous identity. That is, urban sounds that resist to the landscape uniformity, producing "A sound signature (...) that demarcates a specific space or time, confirming in some way, its authenticity" (Amphoux 1993).<sup>16</sup>

Nevertheless, these sound signatures fail to avoid the most harsh and severe aspects of the technical renovation and its homogenizing logic. This because ears tend to "blindly" hear doctrines founded by the globalization, assimilating, with no criteria, the translocal stimuli offered by the contemporary city. It's an involuntary act of the auditory sense that end up "*moving general memories, memories of memories: if not all memories at the same time, at least an abstract memory, touched, an indeterminable déjà vu, a generic memory*".<sup>17</sup> This way we can affirm that the passiveness of the auditory sense pushes the urban landscape to the abyss of the global, planting the future of "*the post-city being prepared in the emplacement of the ex-city*."<sup>18</sup> The generic city (Koolhaas 2006), where the landscape will no longer represent historic or cultural permanencies, to show liquid panoramics that soon will disappear replaced by new ones.

Given this evidence, I think that it becomes pertinent to return to the "dolmen of the senses" represented by René Magritte in his *White Race*, reconsidering the theoretical position of Simmel (1981) regarding the limitations of the auditory sense. This because, as the theorist Herbert Marshall McLuhan refers,

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<sup>16</sup> Amphoux, Pascal (1993), "Sound signatures, Configurations and Effects". *Arch.& Comport / Arch. & Behav.*, Vol. 9, n.º 3.

<sup>17</sup> Koolhaas, Rem, 2006. *La ciudad genérica*. Barcelona: Gustavo Gili.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*

in his Theory of perception, the sonorous image needs to be strengthened by other senses. Not because it is weak, but because human perception has a great dependence on the sight and, as such, the sense of hearing needs sight to confirm and validate the perceived and assimilated content. It is not about marginalizing the auditory sense, but validating a more worked sensorial composition, because “we can only speak of landscape when there is «interlocking», when the diversity formed by the different elements offered to our contemplation appear «linked», «worked»”.<sup>19</sup> For that, I consider that it is necessary to formulate an equation with the 5 variables of the human perception, balanced sight and hearing, without neglecting the sum between taste, touch and smell. For this, I consider that it is necessary to (re)formulate an equation that articulates the 5 variables of human perception, balancing sight and smell, without neglecting taste, touch and smell. However, this equation needs a variable to designate the figurative and metaphorical meaning of the landscape. This is because the landscape is the content and container of the subject's culture, which is why it incorporates signs of mystery that allow the interpretation and transformation of the physical elements of a place through its subconscious, its individual poetics and its subjectivity. Let's say that the practice of the landscape-building subject is regulated by its subjectivity, since all the information is processed by its biological structure and consciousness. In this way, the observed territory only passes into consciousness in the form of a landscape when emotions function as geological upheavals of thought.

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<sup>19</sup> Maderuelo, Javier (2005). *The landscape: Genesis of a Concept*. Madrid: Abada Editores.

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### List and origin of images:

**Figure 1.** “White Race” by René Magritte: Graphite on paper; 1967 copper sculpture; Oil on canvas 1937. Source: website of the Patrimoine culturel of the Communauté française de Belgique, Brussels, Belgium: <http://www.wikiart.org/en/rene-magritte/the-white-race-1967>.

**Figure 2.** Table of Dematteis (adapted to Portuguese) where the reconfiguration of the concept of landscape in the field of geography of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries is explained. This is based on the cross-relationship between symbol/model and subject/object. Source: Dematteis, G. (1995), *Progetto implied*, Angeli, Milan. Page 47.

**Figure 3.** Conceptual diagram on the relationship between the social memory of the place and the personal memory of the listener in the landscape configuration as a cultural construct. Source: Author's own elaboration.

**Figure 4.** Barry Truax diagram explaining the mediating relationship between an individual and the environment through sound. Source: Truax, Barry: *Acoustic Communication*, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing 1984.

**Figure 5.** Conceptual diagram on the composition of urban loudness or “city music”, based on the relationship between background and foreground. Source: Author's own elaboration.

**Figure 6.** Murray Schafer's sound map dated from 2005. This is a sound survey carried out around a Canadian apple in two different periods of the same day. The author graphically tracks all the sounds that make up the sound environment of this urban section, to later analyze said sound palette and its variation over time. Source: <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/issues/16/the-rest-of-your-senses/39096/the-wrong-sound-in-the-wrong-place>.

**Figure 7.** Largo Camões in Lisbon on different days of the week: Monday at 9 am; Saturday at 11 pm; Sunday at 9 a.m. Source: author's photographic record.

**Figure 8.** Ferrán Street in Barcelona: in the morning; At lunchtime; on a rainy day Source: author's photographic record.

**Figure 9.** Sonorities that characterize the heritage identity of the funchalense urban landscape: wicker basket seller; lottery man; fish seller. Cathedral bell. Source: author's photographic record.

**Figure 10.** Sonorities that characterize the ordinary identity of the contemporary urban landscape: mobile phones, automobile combustion engines; subway rails. Source: author's photographic record.

**Figure 11.** Thompson's Digrama explaining the composition of the "city noise" of New York and the sound changes introduced by the technological era between the years 1900-1933. This diagram was originally published in his book *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*. Source: <http://www.fastcodesign.com/3020728/infographic-of-the-day/sound-city-just-how-roaring-was-1920s-new-york>.

**Figure 12.** Conceptual diagram on the composition of the sound identity and the consequent standardization of the contemporary urban landscape. Source: author's own elaboration.