Planning Urban Ambient Sound?

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The Ambient as an alternative category

- *ambient music... ambient commons...
  ambient intelligence... ambient rhetoric...ambient poetics*

- architectural & urban ambiances
  affective atmospheres

- ambiances: sensory experience / all the senses

-> a general framework for Sonic Ambiances  (8 points)
Louvre (Paris)
From Subway to Carrousel
Sonic Ambiance 1: *Sonority*

Sonic Ambiance
- not a specific sound signal
- not only a composition of various sounds

An overall sonority
- the specific sonority of a situation / its tone
- pervasive power of sound (mereologic - homogenizing)
  - a capacity to bind all the sounds into an indivisible whole
- unfocussed & peripherical perception
Sonic Ambiance 2: *Situation*

The scale of the situation

-> a space-time of activity

*I am always hearing from somewhere*

*in a specific circumstance*

*and in the process of doing something*

-> embeddedness of sound

in built space – social practices – technology – weather...
Sonic Ambiance 3: *Medium*

Sound as a context sensitive medium

-> capacity to create a specific milieu
to generate various forms of immersion

Various sonic envelops

  * proxemy    close / far (reach of the ear)
  * consistency compact / porous

*Subway corridor*  
- reverberation effect -

*Carrousel Louvre*  
- drone & mask effect -
Sonic Ambiance 4: *Affect*

Sonic Ambiance is felt as much as perceived

- capacity to be affected
- sound gives the tone to a situation
  - affective tonality (*Stimmung*)
- a diffuse quality to be experienced with the whole body

*ambient sound*: vibrant... tense... peaceful... uplifting... dull...
Sonic Ambiance 5: *Action*

Sonic Ambiance is enacted – a feature of social practices

*footsteps... voices... closing doors...*

-> activation of ambient sound
everyday practices & ordinary gestures

-> places more or less responsive to inhabitants’ expression
amplification / neutralization / alteration ...
Sonic Ambiance 6: *Dynamics*

Double dynamics

- sound as qualified time
  temporal dimension of sound
- sound as articulation of sequences
  mobile dimension of experience

*transition metro:* 
*decrescendo effect*

Sonic Effects
Sonic Ambiance 7: *Sonic Effects*

From sound signal to sound phenomena

Effect: not cause-effect logic but modal logic

The way sounds appear

signals are always filtered
by the built environment...
perceptual system...
cultural codes...
Sonic Ambiance 7: *Sonic Effects*

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Interdisciplinary language

- Physical & Applied acoustics
- Architecture & Urbanism
- Musical & electroacoustic aesthetics
- Sonic effect
- Psychology & Physiology of perception
- Sociology & everyday culture
- Textual & media expressions
Sonic Ambiance 7: *Sonic Effects*

a basic grammar of sonic ambiances

**COMPOSITIONAL EFFECTS**
- Accelerando
- Blurring
- Coupling
- Crescendo
- Crossfade
- Cut Out
- Decrescendo
- Doppler
- Drone
- Emergence
- Mask
- Mixing
- Rallentando
- Release
- Reprise
- Tartini
- Telephone
- Wave

**ELEMENTARY EFFECTS**
- Colouring
- Delay
- Distortion
- Dullness
- Echo
- Filtration
- Flutter Echo
- Haas
- Resonance
- Reverberation

**PSYCHOMOTOR EFFECTS**
- Attraction
- Deburau
- Desynchronization
- Chain
- Intrusion
- Incursion
- Lombard
- Niche
- Phonotonic
- Repulsion
- Synchronization

**MNEMO-PERCEPTIVE EFFECTS**
- Anamnesis
- Anticipation
- Asyndeton
- Cocktail
- Delocalization
- Erasure
- Hyperlocalization
- Immersion
- Metamorphosis
- Phonomnesis
- Remanence
- Synecdoche
- Ubiquity
- Wall

**SEMANTIC EFFECTS**
- Delocalization
- Dilation
- Envelopment
- Imitation
- Narrowing
- Perdition
- Quotation
- Repetition
- Sharawadji
- Suspension
Sonic Ambiance 8: *Sociality*

Sonic Ambiance as an expression of a social form of life

- not only individual & subjective experience
  a collective and anonymous production
  a common good to take care of...

- ways of interacting and being together

-> which conception of public space
  is embedded in ambient sound?
Final remarks

- Sound is not just a physical signal
  -> embedded in built space – social practices – technology – weather...
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• Sonic experience: situated – embodied – enacted – felt – shared
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  Empowerment of city dwellers
  which sonic competences of city dwellers?
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  Attunements of social life
  which kind of affective tonalities for public places?
  privatization and standardization of sonic ambiances?
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  -> planning sonic environment
  or conditions of possibility for sonic effects?
Thank you for your attention