Sonic Etiquette: Domestication of Acoustic Neighbourhood Relations in Istanbul[1]
Sessel Etiket: İstanbul'daki Akustik Komşuluk İlişkilerinin Ehlileştirilmesi

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Öz

Bu makale İstanbul'un Çengelköy semtindeki kişisel ve toplumsal ses ortamın dinamiklerini incelemektedir. Araştırma Ata-2 sitesindeki orta sınıf yaşamının sessel bir etnografisini sunarken, site sakinlerinin bir akustik topluluk olarak nasıl davrandıklarına ve bu topluluğu meydana getiren ilişki biçimlerine odaklanır. Çalışma, bir sitede ikamet eden insanların içinde yaşadıkları ortama özgü *soundscape*ler ile ilgili sessel etiketi nasıl oluşturduklarını ve akustik düzenin nasıl sağlandığını sormaktadır. Çalışmada akustik komşuluk ilişkilerinin, mekânsal ayrım ve stratejik mahremiyet içeren rutinler, beklentiler ve öngörülebilirlikler çerçevesinde nasıl tanımlandığı vurgulanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ses Ortamı, Siteler, Mahremiyet, Etnografi, İstanbul.

Abstract

This article examines the dynamics of private and communal soundscapes in the Çengelköy neighborhood of Istanbul. The study provides a sonic ethnography of the middle-class housing cooperative Ata-2, focusing on how the inhabitants operate as an acoustic community and the types of articulations that this community is made up of. The study asks, how do people living in the housing cooperative form a sonic etiquette of their domesticated soundscape and how acoustic orderliness is maintained? The study emphasizes how the acoustic neighbor relations are defined by routines, expectations, and predictabilities involving spatial segregation and strategic intimacy.

Keywords: Soundscape, Housing Cooperatives, Privacy, Ethnography, Istanbul.

We are facing a block of flats.[3] It has six residential floors (no elevators), in two adjacent stairs. Each floor consists of two apartments of about 90 m2, dwelled by families, couples, widows and their pets. They are either lodgers or own the apartments they call their home, where they rest, sleep and spend their private lives. Each apartment has about five clanging doors separating the rooms, a clinking sink, a humming shower and a gurgling toilet with a drainage system through the building structure. Most probably there is also a loud vacuum cleaner and music player, playful children, and a number of ringing mobile phones. Probably someone in the household enjoy watching football on TV, during others praying five times a day. While one resident works night shifts, another is a housewife, and a third is at home only at night. Imagine 110 of

[1] Makale başvuru tarihi: 01.12.2017, makale kabul tarihi: 25.02.2018.
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[3] This manuscript is a modified and rewritten translation of the article "Moderni kaupunkilaisuus akustisena järjestyksenä: istanbulilaisen taloyhtiön äänimaisemaetnografia" published in *Etnomusikologian vuosikirja* vol 23, 2011. The research has been funded by the Academy of Finland, *Soundscapes and cultural sustainability* project (2009-2012). I wish to acknowledge the help provided by the Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology.

these kinds of blocks of flats side by side and 557 terrace houses around them, so that the whole might look like the one shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The ground plan of Ata-2 housing cooperative (Kroki 2011).

Ata-2 is a housing cooperative with circa 10,000 to 12,000 inhabitants, located in Çengelköy, Üsküdar district of Istanbul. It is a middle-class gated community, a *site*. Like Ata-2, *sites* have often been built with a pre-purchase program and loan of TOKİ (Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı), the Turkish government's housing development body.

The first residents moved in in 1996. Ata-2 has a fairly good reputation as a well-kept cooperative, although many people think it is too large in size; distances from the gates to the apartments are a long walk. Therefore, as it is common in Istanbul, cars are used to move about inside the *site*: the residents own a total of circa 3,500 cars that are squeezed in inadequate parking spaces in the front of the apartments. When asking the residents what are the aspects that make them feel comfortable living in Ata-2 they mention the relative silence and calmness of the area, and especially the lack of traffic. The *site* lacks the low-fi traffic hum, a keynote sound (see Truax, 2001: 25) present almost everywhere in Istanbul. The hum is mainly caused by car and shipping traffic, and it penetrates into homes as a potent broadband noise blurring the soundscape. The lack of hum is due to the structure of the environment. The *site* is densely built on a gently rolling terrain, and the nearby main street, Bosna Bulvari (the Nato street in the local vernacular), with its commercial buildings, is located above the valley-like terrain, keeping the hum away and above the site. The Nato street is at its busiest at commuting hours and gets quiet a couple of hours after sunset for the night. In addition, as a residential area Ata-2 is away from industrial and entertainment areas.

I lived as a room tenant in Ata-2 in the spring of 2010 for two months. My plan was to do field work in the nearby Kuzguncuk residential area to explore acoustic communities. Acoustic community is the conceptual result of the Five Village Soundscape project conducted by the World Soundscape Project group in the 1970s (Truax, 2009: 286). For Barry Truax (2001), acoustic community is a dynamic system of exchanging sonic messages and information. This system enables a community to keep track of and in touch with the everyday life of the community (65–92). The model emphasizes conscious listening, vast amount of shared sonic information (the basis of acoustic communication), locality, stability and balance in the sound environment. When R. M. Schafer's classic book *The Tuning of the World* (1977) was re-released in 1994, the name of the book was substantially altered to *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and The Tuning of the World*. Soundscape is often understood as "our soundscape", which appears to be constructed of public sonic space, shared listening experience, often surprisingly in open-air space, the outdoors, or in urban settings, "the street". The choice of perspective, or rather the rhetoric of the books written during the era of awakening of environmental and social consciousness has affected the emphasis of soundscape research during the last 40 years. This has meant that the mainstream of soundscape research still often focuses on a presumption that soundscape is something shared and in common. "The shared" is sharing of cultural understanding of sonic environments and social memory often represented in a national or geographically local context. "The common" is the mundane and material environment to which the inhabitants or citizens

have a responsibility to, or – in the light of today's global climate – even an obligation to. My study intended to experiment how the model of acoustic community could be understood in an urban neighborhood in Istanbul.

To make the field work easier, I wanted to rent an apartment in Kuzguncuk. Before long it became clear that small and temporary rental apartments with average amenities were not available or at least affordable in Kuzguncuk: the apartments I found were mostly sized for larger families. On the other hand, I could not afford to rent a furnished apartment (with a refrigerator and a stove). That was a luxury offered to wealthy tourists. My Turkish acquaintances expressed their concern about me, a young foreign woman without a husband at the mercy of unknown landlords on the open market. (I consider myself as half-Turkish but most of my Turkish acquaintances take me as a foreigner.) They were afraid that as a foreigner I would not understand if I was being financially deceived and that my privacy could be compromised. Many people urged me to look for a rental room in an apartment of someone familiar. In the end, a room was found in Ata-2. My first impression of the soundscape confirmed the description of calmness. There seemed to be, what I call, a good acoustic orderliness in the area.

Acoustic orderliness is made by creating, negotiating and following norms based on shared understanding of what constitutes the community. Sociologist Kimmo Lehtonen (1990) summarizes, that a community forming around communal interaction functions with two types of norms: regulative and constitutive. Regulative norms enable and restrict action. Constitutive norms support and sustain the actions forming the community. Finding and understanding these constitutive norms is the endless task on empirical research (Lehtonen, 1990: 32). The sonic organization of the domestic environment – to negotiate the regulative and constitutive norms to form a sonic etiquette – of more than 10,000 people is not at all self-evident, but requires constant harmonization of the different ways of dwelling. The norms are being kept an ear on by the residents and taught actively to those who are not yet familiar with them. People living in the *site* articulate their acoustic neighbourhood relations and their domesticated soundscape based on these written and tacit rules, but understanding of communality thought to be common is not unproblematic for all resident groups. By listening to the day-to-day soundscape, the various spaces of dwelling and the meanings given to them, it is possible to interpret the values, differences and power associated with them in the apartment culture. In a previous study I conducted in Finland, the topmost norms of the sonic apartment culture are domestic peace (the right to be undisturbed in one's home, written in the constitution) and privacy (Kytö, 2010). What about Çengelköy's Ata-2?

Listening and privacy - Method, material and concepts

I approach Ata-2's auditory culture with the following question: How do people living in the housing cooperative act as an acoustic community and form a sonic etiquette of their domesticated soundscape? My aim is to describe and analyse the articulations of the private and the communal in the soundscapes of the *site*. By articulations I mean how, why and with what kind of consequence certain things and sounds related to them are understood to be different, opposite or separate from each other. According to Stuart Hall, being different can be both positive or negative, but it is essential for the production of meaning, language and culture (Hall, 1999: 160). At the same time, being different can be something threatening, a point of rupture, hostility and aggression toward the Other.

At the core of my study is the question of spatial segregation. In urban studies, the term refers to a phenomenon where public spaces and residential areas are divided into the use of different

groups of people, on the grounds of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and so on. I study how spatial differentiation works in the housing cooperative when justifying, creating and maintaining acoustic orderliness. In Istanbul, the spatial differentiation is carried out not only by the official city administration, urban planners and housing cooperatives, but also by the residents themselves. Spatial differentiation is connected through acoustic orderliness to many kinds of social phenomena such as strategic intimacy (Özyeğin, 2002), of which more at the end of the article.

I will interpret the ways in which residents dwell in their everyday life from two different sets of research materials. The first set of materials consists of the laws and regulations in the housing cooperative, written complaints about noise sent to its board of directors, and the proposals for counter-measures from 2000 to 2008, and a group interview conducted with the board members. The second material consists of my ethnographic field diaries as a *site* resident, as well as soundscape recordings made inside and outside the apartment. This material focuses on the observations of residents (including myself) about the use of the everyday acoustic space, the types of acoustic communication taking place, and possible causal relations in it.

In the analysis of these materials, I pay attention to the articulation between the private and the communal in the fleeting moments and overlapping acoustic spaces of the domestic environment. The materials I collected complement each other. Instructions and complaints referring to these bring out the official sonic etiquette of dwelling that was also a discussion topic in the interview with the board of the housing cooperative. In this source material, the soundscape is turned into linguistic terms: the meanings of the sonic environment are described verbally, in the form of statements and opinions. The material consisting of field diaries and recordings, however, focuses on non-verbal meanings, sensations, and perception. Since the object of my study is the interface between the private and the communal soundscape, this type of non-verbal observation data significantly increases information about micro-level sonic environments, everyday keynote sounds and practices that, due to their apparent insignificance and ordinariness, remain outside of spoken and written as well as public speech, in light of the study in question.

A challenge in the processing of non-verbal material is to turn it into verbal research text, which brings the researcher's interpretative position and understanding of the field into focus. Then the object of interpretation is the soundscape together with information about cultural meanings, as it was filtered by the researcher's research question. Soundscape ethnography or sonic ethnography (see, Vikman, 2007: 39–42) can be considered as part of sensory ethnographic research (Pink, 2009: 141–144) that relies on participatory observation. Sensory ethnography is a process of producing and representing information in which experiences of space and corporality are studied and memory work is conducted. The sensory ethnographic material is also based on the ethnographer's own experiences and thus approaches auto-ethnographically produced data.

My interest in the interface between private and communal sonic space is connected to the idea that the domestic sonic spaces of homes in densely built areas of big cities such as Istanbul are intertwined and overlapping. The acoustic space in apartments is porous and flowing: both the city as a public sonic space and neighbours' private lives penetrate the home, regardless of the walls. "Private" is not a separate part of culture but an area of life that is strongly dependent on values and the concept of the individual. As a historical concept, privacy has been strongly linked to the formation of the Western bourgeois nuclear family in civic society (Habermas, 2004: 213–236). Privacy can also mean information management and hence an individual's right to self-

determination, the formation of an autonomous and considerate citizen as a precondition for a democratic social order (Räikkä 2007, 85). Sociologist Nilüfer Göle (2011) takes a step back from the metanarrative of modernisation and its concepts of the individual, secularity and equality as the results of the Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution and pluralistic democracy. She emphasizes the need to position oneself anew to the language and culture under study, to contextualize the terms used. "Privacy" and "the modern" are concepts that have to be thought over in non-Western contexts. Göle proposes that we must disentangle local meanings of these concepts for us to be able to analyse and understand ontological narratives, collective identities and political conflicts (Göle, 2011: 20–21).

What is essential for the domestication of the soundscape is the processing of private and public not into an abstract juxtaposition, but into an articulation and a concrete acoustic space that produces the understanding of "home," "neighbours" and the rest of the environment (cf., Kytö, 2011). Sociologist Christena Nippert-Eng (2010) describes the dynamic spatial relationship between the public and the private with a metaphor of an island: The sea around the islands of privacy represents the public. As the waves wash the shores of the island what interests her, as does me, is not what each individual or community keeps in the core of the island, but what happens at the shore of the metaphorical island. How far others are permitted to land and how high the surf is (Nippert-Eng, 2010: 4–5, 325). The metaphor of a shore is insightful because it contains an idea of perpetual movement and thus suits well for the study of changing soundscapes.

Geographer Doreen Massey (2005) speaks about a simultaneous space, space as a dimension for multiple trajectories and durations; thus, space is a collection of our "stories-so-far" that manifest in relations which are necessarily embedded in material practises. Massey's views on the inseparability of space and time is also applicable to research on auditory culture. Producing sound and giving a meaning to what one hears are relative to cultural practices that produce and form our views on place, space, and time (Feld, 1994: 11; 2003: 226; Uimonen, 2005: 43; Kytö, 2010: 42). These concepts are formed together with the physical behaviour of sound (acoustics), which again is affected by, for example, the acoustic qualities of the space, structural forms with their reverberations, materials, weather conditions and comparable phenomena indoors. The materiality of sound reveals the space where the listener operates.

Flow of signals – Rhythms of the soundscape

The district of Üsküdar (*ilçe*) consists of 33 *mahalles*, including Çengelköy and Bahçelievler. Ata-2 officially belongs to the more recent administrative district of Bahçelievler, but most of the residents feel they live in the older Çengelköy *mahalle* signified by the picturesque seaside cafés on the Bosporus. Çengelköy is more easily perceived on the map of massive traffic connections in Istanbul, and also the postal address of the *site* refers to Çengelköy.

All *sites* are not socially middle-class like Ata-2, but they have spatial segregation as a recurrent feature. An illustrative, but extreme example of spatial segregation can be found in Bartu and Kolluoğlu's study on the proletariat Bezirganbahçe *site* and the luxury Göktürk *site*, criticizing neoliberal urban policy. In the first *site* the residents are socially and spatially isolated from the rest of the city, as they have been forced into the new peripheral residential areas, while in the second one they are isolated by their own choice (Bartu and Kolluoğlu, 2008: 41). *Sites* are part of the fragmenting dynamics in urban planning that was reinforced in the 1990s and is clo-

sely associated with the project of the modern that started in the 1920s, as it was "dictated from the top" and determined by the process of globalisation. An indication of this process is the flight of the rich to the outskirts of town, with self-sufficient infrastructures and secluded residential blocks, while the majority of city-dwellers must settle for deteriorating and insecure living conditions in illegally built houses (Keyder, 1999; Ayata, 2002: 25). The modernism of this form of residence may echo the attempts of Kemalists in the 1930s to clean Istanbul of all buildings referring to rusticity or the Ottoman past, and to replace them with stately, new, box-like houses. Rusticity, in particular, appeared to Kemalists as backward and an obstacle to the modern project. Architecture was considered a significant medium in building the new republic, to the extent that the urban model for Istanbul proposed by Le Corbusier was rejected, because it would have maintained the wooden mansions of the Ottoman period within the townscape (Bozdoğan, 2001: 67).

Spatial segregation directly affects the structure of the soundscape and the residents' expectations of the neighbourhood. As one resident in the housing cooperative said: "It would be good, though, if the residents could somehow be screened so that they would be suitable for here" (Field diary, 15 May 2010). In the horizon of expectations for *site* living, there exists a middle-class modern urbanity that adheres to order, emphasises family-orientation, and distances itself from the urban street life, pollution, and social heterogeneity. There is also an assumption about a certain mental and physical distance from the neighbour. Neighbours are not expected to have much say in one's private life, and unannounced visits are not welcome (Ayata, 2002: 26, 31). But then again, being on good terms with the neighbours, a sense of community and spontaneity are appreciated in living, as in more traditional town area dwelling (*mahalle*), but this requires sufficient socio-economic-ethnic homogeneity from the resident base. In Ata-2, if one hears teenage girls fighting on the neighbour's balcony in the opposite building, it is acceptable to shout from the window and politely complain about it. As a response, the mother apologises, and the noise moves indoors. On the other hand, neighbours may be people with whom it is no use going to their door and complaining about the noise they make. In that case people rely on the negotiating help of a spokesman they elect among the residents (Field recording, 30 May 2010).

To approach the everyday rhythms and privacy in the soundscape, it is useful to refer to rhythm analysis developed by Henri Lefebvre (2004 [1992]), which observes the relationship of people and the city as the repetitive braiding of movement and articulation in time and place. Lefebvre does not consider private and public rhythms as opposite, but reminds us of their diverse variability between place (home, street, squares) and human relations (family, kinship, neighbours, friends) (Simonsen, 2004: 45). Soundscape scholar Noora Vikman (2007: 38, 124–150) points out that the dangers of interpreting everyday rhythms include the over-rationalisation of the rhythms in the soundscape and the illusion of similarity of days. She therefore encourages us to remember that one should constantly place oneself in the listening position through the theme under research and thus try to avoid the dulling of the tool – that is, listening ability –¬ which inevitably happens as the environment becomes a part of everyday life.

The soundscape of the *site* consists of daily keynote sounds and signals that could be heard extensively in our apartment. Over the weeks I started to form an impression of the cyclic rhythm and sonic routines of the soundscape that, due to their repetitiveness, created a framework for the course of the day. In the following extract I depict the sonic events of one ordinary Wednesday morning:

> "A very routine-like morning. *İmsak* call at four a.m. when the day breaks. I can barely hear the wavily stretching, interlaced calls through the window and fall back asleep. The sounds of *müezzins* are languid and faint, almost polite. Someone walks through the door under my window to our staircase. The electric lock hisses open, the door opens with a metallic crunch and bangs shut. I only hear a couple of steps. I snooze. Around nine o'clock, B's bedroom door opens, the spring suspension of the door handle crunches, the kettle buzzes in the kitchen, and I hear the knock of the cupboard doors, the movement of porcelain coffee cup, the clink of a metal spoon. B walks quietly to the study in her slippers and switches the desktop on. It clicks on, and the fan begins to buzz and crackle. The sound of typing on the keyboard. I can hear sparrows chirp outside. The *hababam* jingle of the school. More clatter of the door downstairs. I get up, and the footboard of my bed and the wooden parquet of the floor creak. B whispers *günaydın*, good morning, from the next room." (Field diary and recording, 2 June 2010)

The signals that can be heard in our block of flats over 24 hours are repeated day after day, with only slight variation. Over 24 hours, mainly three preset signals alternate in the apartment: the recess bell of the two nearby schools rings, the *ezan* (prayer call) from the local mosques, and the caretaker's visit to the door. There would certainly be more signals, if the administration of the *site* had not forbidden the service and shop mobiles to play their commercial melodies inside the *site* walls. The delicate female voice and the melody played by bells, with the help of which the pickups trucks advertised *Aygaz* and *Ipragaz* gas bottles are becoming things of the past, now that a large proportion of the kitchens in the *site* are using piped natural gas.

It is the caretaker's (*kapıcı*) duty to come to the apartment door three times a day and ask if residents need anything delivered from the shop, or if they have other small errands to run. He makes his rounds punctually at ten in the morning, three in the afternoon, and eight in the evening. After the crack of the door buzzer the agreed lines are repeated: at ten o´clock "*Bir ihtiyacınız var mı?*" (Do you need anything?). At three: "*Bir ihtiyacınız var mı?*" (Do you need anything?). At eight: "*Çöp var mı?*" (Do you have rubbish?). These words are surrounded by the running steps of the four-year-old son of the caretaker's family and polite greetings with eyes cast down.

An essential part of the horizon of expectations for *site* life, with its meanings of urbanity and modernism, is the caretaker's services. The residents of the block are divided into different social classes without calling such a divide into question. Some 80 caretakers from the towns and villages of the Black Sea, many with their families, live in the entire housing cooperative. They have modest apartments on the ground floors assigned to them. The men act as caretakers on the staircases, and their wives provide cleaning services and domestic help. These 80 households form a community inside the *site*; they are relatives or come from the same villages. Even though the everyday life is close and the daily encounters diverse, social interaction between these two social classes is not common. For instance, caretakers' children and other residents' children do not play together. In the making of private sonic space, there are plenty of distinctions in these daily encounters, to which I shall return at the end of the article.

Another signal that is heard in the block, albeit on weekdays, is the minute-long recess bell coming from two private primary schools located outside the walls of the *site*. These bells start at ten to nine in the morning, and they can be heard about every 10–20 minutes, some 25 times a day, until no later than five in the afternoon, depending on the day. There are two recorded melodies as signals: a swinging nursery-song-type melody in thirds, and a theme melody from

a popular comedy of the 1970s, *Hababam Sınıfı* ("The Disobedient Class"). Schools can choose the melodies they use. Popular melodies elsewhere in Istanbul include "Für Elise," "Unchained Melody," and "Oh Susannah." In addition to the recorded melodies, the weekly routines include singing the national anthem (*İstiklal Marşı*) with recorded accompaniment on the schoolyard on Monday afternoons. It is preceded by a pupil reciting a nationalist poem into the megaphone under a teacher's instructions.

The *ezan* is heard five times a day. In May 2010 the call times according to the sun were the following: *imsak* (dawn) at 03:53, *öğle* (noon) at 13:08, *ikindi* (afternoon) at 17:01, *akşam* (sunset) at 20:22, *yats*ı (dusk) at 22:00. At night, in calm weather, one can distinguish the voice of five different *müezzins* reciting the prayer. During daytime the number is reduced to two or three. Amongst the blocks it is difficult to estimate the direction of the sound coming from megaphones and other sound reproducers, as it seems to ricochet between the buildings.

According to Eve McPherson (2011), the Istanbul, i.e. Turkish national style of *ezan* prefers a high pitch comparable to a tenor or baritone, as well as rich ornamentation. This style also includes reciting each of the five calls in a different *makam* (mode). The *ezan* heard in Turkey is based on the palace recital style of the Ottoman era. In 1932 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ordered the *ezan* to be recited in Turkish, thus trying to separate the new republic from the conservative Ottoman era, and to join what was the smallest common denominator for the majority of population, Islam, with the national spirit. The trial did not gain absolute popularity; it was actually considered as the most repulsive of all the secularist changes. Those engaged in civil disobedience received fines or prison sentences, or could even be ordered to undergo involuntary treatment. The return to Arabic recitals took place only after the governing party changed in 1950. From a long-standing habit, certain stylistic mannerisms remained and formed the recital style associated with Istanbul. The meaning of *ezan* is formed in a way of dialogue: listeners have a similar responsibility in receiving and understanding the prayer, and they shall recite the prayer silently with the *müezzin*. The recital echoes a complex tradition through the nuances of its mannerism: Islamism, Turkishness, the Ottoman Empire and Istanbul; they are meanings with which both *müezzins* and the majority of the audience can identify themselves (McPherson, 2011: 7–8, 12–16).

The socio-political significance of the prayer call changes constantly. The extract below is from an interview with a member of the board in a housing cooperative. The board member (H) explains, and my landlady (B) comments on the motion to the board concerning the prayer call in the *site* during Ramadan:

> "H: One day I was sitting like this in the administrative building, I was then already on the board, when in the month of Ramadan one lady called and said that "we miss the *ezan*." "So what?," I asked. She proposed that "we should pull cords to loudspeakers from some nearby mosque." [laughs]
>
> MK: That is what I wanted to ask about; there is no mosque in the *site*.
>
> H: I said: "Now look here, ma'am, I shall tell you now how... so I respect your faith, and you may well miss the **ezan**, and they are, of course, communal decisions, but nowadays there are those clocks reciting *ezans* [playing the prayer call recording]. Buy one, place it in your home and let it read you the *ezan* five times a day with all the noise."
>
> B: They also read the *ezan* on TV in Ramadan. Ibrahim Tatlıses [famous arabesque singer] and any number of people are reading the *ezan* there." (Interview 2010)

In the example given by H there is negotiation about whether Sunni religious worship should be public and spread throughout the housing cooperative. H and B clearly think it should not. They react to it with amusement and some irritation. It is not a question of the *ezan* not being heard in the *site*, but of how loudly it should be heard. The word H uses for noise is an onomatopoeic *bangır bangır* with which he shows that the current volume is sufficient for the *site*. H and B represent the secular thought that state and religion must remain separate. Religious worship is thus a personal activity and should not occur under pressure by the ruling class.

Religious matters affect the neighbourly terms in other ways, too. One resident told how he and his family feel discriminated during Ramadan, because they are *Alevi*. The resident said that neighbour relationships stagnate during that month, although it is the time when most visits, teas and joint dinners take place in the *site*. The prejudiced Sunni neighbours assume that the food made by the *Alevis* is impure and ruins the *abdest* (state of purity) during Ramadan (Field diary, 17 May 2010). Prejudice affects the dynamics of the site that is considered homogeneous, and many actually keep their religiosity to themselves, if they are not Sunni. Based on a survey (Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2006) conducted years before my fieldwork, Turkey has a narrow sectarian – that is, hegemonic-ethnic – rather than a pluralistic concept of democracy in which one's own rights are emphasised, but forgotten for other groups. "We" consists of Turkish Sunni and "others" of Kurds, *Alevis* and non-Muslims. According to Çarkoğlu and Toprak (2006), 24 per cent of the respondents in the survey did not want a neighbour from a different religious group, 28 per cent do not want a Kurd as a neighbour, 39 per cent a Jew, 42 per cent an Armenian, and 43 per cent a Greek neighbour. In 2010 this seemed to reflect the situation among the site inhabitants, although the change in the socio-political atmosphere as it has become infused by populist politics since then have probably aggravated the situation.

Constructing acoustic orderliness

The construction of an acoustic orderliness requires rules that guarantee residents freedom of action in forming private and communal acoustic space. Ata-2 has multi-page by-laws (*Apartman yönetim planı*, 2011) for housing blocks to which each resident is committed to comply at least in name. Rules related to sound are mentioned as follows:

> "General rules: the commercial spaces on the ground floor of the building must not be used as game arcades, restaurants serving alcohol, pubs, bars or similar. [....] No activities causing noise, vibration or smell problems may be performed in the commercial rooms. [....] Residents' rights and obligations: Radio, tape, record or stereo player, television or other music instruments must not be used, played loudly or played non-stop, if it disturbs / irritates other residents in the block of flats. [....] No gatherings to do with music or that otherwise cause noise may be organised in the interspaces and common spaces. No assemblies may be organised on the yard of the housing cooperative. On wedding and engagement days or similar obligatory meetings, one must make as little noise as possible and try to maintain peace in the block of flats. Gatherings of this type must end no later than 23:00." (Apartman Yönetim Planı, 2011)

The official sonic etiquette that these rules reflect is detailed and accurate considering the neighbours' subjective experience (if the sound disturbs or irritates other residents) and the basic assumption that generally silence prevails in the block of flats (an assumption that presumes

that buildings are silent before people move in to inhabit them). The assumed problems to do with sound seem to derive from the use of alcohol (game arcades, bars), from excessive listening to music (the abundant and non-stop use of musical instruments), and from people's gatherings (wedding parties and similar).

In addition to the official rules, acoustic orderliness is maintained in a more informal way. Below an extract from an interview with a member of the board of the housing cooperative (H) tells about the early days of the site in the mid-1990s, when only few residents had moved to the area:

> "Only five or six people were living on our staircase, and in the building opposite ours, on the ground floor, when the houses were still quite empty and everyone was living to their own liking, that family had bought hens and a rooster, and were keeping them. [....] Okay? So our child was still small. In the mornings he woke up to the rooster crowing. A child is obviously afraid; he does not recognize the sound and wakes up crying to the rooster crowing every morning. At the time I was not on the board of the [*site*] [....] so I told the board then: Friends, I am not against such matters, I come from a village myself, so I am a village child, roosters, hens are no strangers to us, but... So we said that this is not acceptable for a site, this won't do in a *site*. [....] Later the site calmed down and expanded, and they gave up these kinds of things, but in the early days we went through such things." (Interview, 2010)

In the interview, H refers to neighbours who had moved from the countryside and not yet internalized the modern urban etiquette. A rooster's crowing was already unknown to the new generation. H presents the situation as fixed, a problem of the early stage that was removed from the *site* by adding a ban against keeping farm animals to the general rules, but actually similar cultural disturbances occur on the *site* even today. A typical example is changing into slippers on the staircase and leaving the outdoors footwear outside the door. This is a clear sign of village life that is only allowed for the caretakers. Those born outside of the metropolis constitute some 70 per cent of the 15 million residents in all of Istanbul. Hence, this is a question of majority. The othering into not being from Istanbul is argued for in various ways: The length of these people's residency in the city, their work situation, their financial situation, and their cultural and political orientation (Keyder, 1999: 157). Assimilation is expected particularly from people identifying themselves as middle-class.

The activities of residents who grew up in a different cultural environment or do not express the cultural values of the middle-class are interfered with sometimes quite strongly on the communal as well as administrative level. People leading "the wrong kind of life" have been pressured to move out by asking questions, by defamation, and sometimes by invading their privacy. One example that came up in the interview with the board is the case of a woman who was believed to work as a prostitute and to receive customers in her rented apartment in the *site*. The neighbours suspected improper behaviour when they bumped into unfamiliar and evasive men on the staircase. Neighbours reported their problem to the board which then increased the surveillance of the woman and her presumed clients. Guards and neighbours kept stopping her guests and asking them where they were going, whom they were going to meet, and what they were going to do. The woman was treated in the same way and with contempt by the neighbours. Finally, the woman "got the message to move out." This well-known and traditional community

pressure has its own term: *mahalle baskısı* (neighborhood pressure).

The seemingly indifferent interference into other people's affairs and curiosity may turn even more serious. Intimidation and making others uncomfortable and insecure based on spoken comments or explicit gestures and looks aim at extinguishing individuals' self-expression and independent lifestyle. The significance of the matter is put into context when we consider that Istanbul is a refuge to many with minority identities such as homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender people who would not be able to lead a quality life in a small Anatolian town due to discrimination and the threat of violence (Toprak et al., 2009). Therefore, community pressure in Istanbul is considered a cheap and old-fashioned way of keeping order, and one that is contrary to the city-dwellers' values of tolerance. Yet, many take part in it in one form or another.

Sociologist Sencer Ayata (2002: 38) distinguishes three groups of *site* residents who react in different ways to the social control. The first group, the urban mass, is assumed to have only little self-control; they are led by their emotions and instincts, are temperamental and behave badly – they are not cultivated enough. The second group consists of people with a strong sense of community and the will to adapt themselves. This group, mainly consists of Islamists, who are considered not having self-direction or the ability of critical thinking. The third group includes the truly cultivated individuals who have their very own personality, self-direction, self-regulation, and who know how to behave in public. This group of people is peculiar about their dress, enjoys modern city life, and is generally more laid-back than the others. Although the setting Ayata presents is a stereotypical and caricatured breakdown, – and clearly formulated from the moral perspective of the third group and thus seems tendentious – it has a surprising sounding board among the residents in Ata-2, many of whom identify themselves with the third group.

This type of identity also provides misgivings and reservations towards other people. Like other *sites*, Ata-2 is guarded not just by walls, but also by barred gates, surveillance camera systems, and security personnel moving around on foot and on motorcycles. Security and guarding are a big business in Turkey, and 20 per cent of the ca. 500 000 professional guards work in *sites* (Öztürk, 2010: 52). The feeling of insecurity can be detected also in some of the written complaints about disturbing sounds submitted to the board of Ata-2 (Table 1).

The as such minor volume of complaints included in the table is only the tip of the iceberg. There were certainly more complaints over the period of eight years, but not all of them were recorded and archived. Furthermore, only a fraction of all the noise problems discussed by the residents is brought to the board's agenda, and fewer still are formed into a written complaint. Problems between the households in the block of flats are usually dealt with in direct contact. If this proves unsuccessful, complaint can also be made to the responsible spokesman elected annually from among the residents. The housing cooperative prefers to interfere in the matter only if more serious aspects such as violence or other illegality is detected. Then the last resource is to call the police (Interview, 2010).

Written complains for their part exemplify the regulation of the shared acoustic space based on the residents' initiatives. For instance, the request to move the noisy staircase (complaint 12) was approved, and it was moved further away from the wall of the building. In a similar way, the requests of residents who were tired of the noise in the yards and disappointed with the security were finally carried out in summer 2010 when the security company of the *site* was changed.

Concern about the harmony of the environment where children and adolescents grow up and protection against issues that are frightening or can disturb a child's growth, such as sexual rela-

	Date	Topic of complaint or notification	Sound mentioned	Proposal for measures or measures taken
1	9.5.2000	Unsurveillanced sports field, ruining of yards and lawn	Shouting and swearing of children and teens	Add fences with barbed wire to protect the lawns, add more surveillance
2	19.3.2001	A construction area next to the apartment	Music and construction noise	Intervene with the construction work
3	14.5.2001	A basketball field is planned next to the apartment	The sounds of playing ball will disturb the husband who is an airplane pilot working in shifts	Move the planned playing field somewhere else, add a sitting area instead
4	15.12.2003	The generators of shopping center Maxi	Noise from a generator	Sound insulation is needed around the generators
5	28.7.2004	Youngsters from outside the *site* are throwing pebbles to balconies, climbing over the fences	Sound of small pebbles hitting the apartment walls and balcony	Add some more barbed wire on top of the fence
6	22.11.2004	Neighbors renovating their apartment	Construction noise before 9 am	React to breaches of *site* rules, "they don't listen to me"
7	23.11.2004	The dilapidated house next to the apartment, suspicious and dangerous-looking users	Suspicious noises and threatening sounds	Do what is necessary so we can let our children play outside
8	4.2.2005	Unknown people (potential thieves) inside the *site*	Steps of suspicious people at the yard	Pitch more chain-link fences
9	29.3.2005	An apartment is used as a workspace	Construction noise during a religious holiday	Pressure the tenants to abide the rules, "they threaten me"
10	26.5.2005	Street cats and dogs, littering	Loud cats	Eliminate the cats
11	24.7.2005	Burglar alarm ringing in a house	Alarm bell	A guard reports that a sparrow has been removed from the bathroom
12	30.10.2005	Heavy pedestrian traffic on a staircase	Thudding steps	Move the staircase away to a place we have suggested
13	S/D 2005	The generators of shopping center Maxi	Generator noise at early morning	Please add sound insulation around the generators, at last
14	3.5.2007	The generators of shopping center Maxi	Six hours of 'unfathomable' generator noise during the night and early morning in 2 May (90 dB)	Pressure the shopping center to build sound insulation or we will call the police
15	15.7.2008	A group of teenagers using alcohol and possibly drugs while gathering in the yard in the evenings	Swearing, talking, merrymaking	Remove the benches, increase surveillance and guards
16	15.8.2008	Traffic monitoring inside the site	Loud music from cars	More surveillance and monitoring is needed

Table 1: The written complaints about noise and proposals for action of years 2000–2008 (Complaints 2000–2008) addressed to the board of the Ata-2 housing cooperative.

tionships (complaints 1,7 and 15), use of alcohol (complaints 7 and 15), and stray dogs (complaint 10) are raised in the complaints. The proposals for action are in many cases related to strengthening security measures: surveillance should be increased, more fences and barbed wire were required around the *site*, people breaking rules should be pressured more, if negotiating was not enough. Differences between the *site* and the outside world are blatantly exaggerated, which in part is linked to the rhetoric of the complaint letters.

Sociologists Çarkoğlu and Toprak (2006: 59) emphasise that the basic indicator of difference between a metropolis and a small town is the existence of public spaces where people representing both genders or mixed groups can meet during day or night-time. This is one of the main features forming urban life. Young people and also children living in a *site* can go out without a

guardian, as long as they stay inside the *site*, under general surveillance. This is a very important freedom for a young person in the context of a metropolis with 15 million inhabitants, but it also causes concern in some residents and security guards who suspect indecent behaviour such as kissing and hugging.

There exist security threats that are more serious and concrete than sexual indecency, but they are not visible in the written complaints. Istanbul is located in a zone that is exposed to earthquakes. The 7.4 earthquake in the Sea of Marmara in the small hours of 17 August 1999 destroyed some 50 per cent of the building base of the Bahçelievler district. Of the Bahçelievler residents, 0.6 per cent lost their lives in the earthquake. Altogether 17 480 people died and 43 342 were injured in the earthquake (Akıncı, 2004: 530). The residents of Ata-2 only suffered a shock, and the reputation of the housing cooperative as a safe and well-built residence grew. The quality of the building stock still affected the residents' sense of security after a decade of the incident. After the earthquake people were instructed to acquire a flashlight and whistle and to place them on their bedside tables. Should the next earthquake take place at night and the building collapse, the trapped people can blow the whistle to draw the attention of people looking for survivors and indicate their location with the flashlight. The whistles have now been forgotten and disappeared in the closets.

In the addition to the earthquake risk, there are also other urban insecurities serving as a discourse to legitimate massive redevelopment projects. According to Bartu and Kolluoğlu (2008: 19), such a rationale in urban planning is normalised in the following way: the earthquake and internal migration together with the constantly growing population and crime create urban threat and fear and thus a need for an intervention that will remove the state of emergency. The redevelopment projects in the city are presented as the only possible solutions and cure for these metropolitan problems and as self-evident truths. The then director of TOKI, Erdoğan Bayraktar, claimed that terrorism, drug and human trafficking stem from construction disregarding regulations, referring to *gecekondu*, illegal buildings that fall outside the urban plan and do not comply with the security regulations (*Zaman* 28 November 2007). Bartu and Kolluoğlu (2008: 35) draw the conclusion that poverty is criminalised without hesitation or question.

Landlady, researcher and caretaker – Autoethnography inside the apartment

In order to not allow large societal structures to overshadow acoustic everyday life, I shall next interpret sonic dynamics and segregations on a smaller scale, inside our apartment, using the analytic autoethnographical approach (see Anderson, 2006).[4] Figure 2 depicts the plan of our apartment block. In the middle of the plan, there is a staircase separating the two apartments on each floor. The apartment in which I lived is located on the left-hand side. My room was on the upper right-hand corner, the "children's bedroom" marked in pink. During my two-month stay I did not even once hear sounds through the walls from the neighbouring apartment. This was due to the fact that there was no next-door neighbour: the staircase divides the floor so that there is no shared wall surface. The acoustic neighbourly terms were rather formed with the residents' downstairs and upstairs, and with them, too, only as the enthusiastic babble of occasional guests.

[4] Analytic autoethnography refers to research in which the researcher (1) is a full member in the research group or setting, , (2) visible as such a member in published texts, (3) practices analytical reflectivity and is conscious of her impact to the setting, (4) is in dialogue with her informants, and (5) is committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena (Anderson 2006, 376–378).

The layout and room arrangement of the apartment follow a familiar pattern in Turkish housing block design: a corridor stretches along the apartment; at one end there are he bedrooms and bathroom; at the other end, there is the sitting room and the kitchen – the more public and representative spaces.

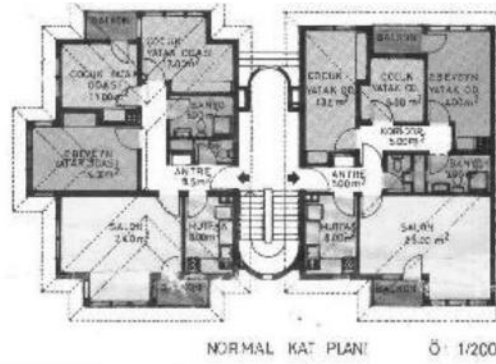

Figure 2: The floor plan of the residence (Konut planları 2011).

Soon after moving into Ata-2, I discovered how strenuous it was to live as a guest in a stranger's household – especially as I was used to living alone in my own apartment, my own domesticated soundscape. At first I planned my own use of space carefully and tried not to disturb my landlady. I refrained from listening to music, watching TV, performing morning routines too early or taking a shower too late, cleaned up after myself and cleared away my things from the common rooms. This felt difficult on top of the tiring fieldwork and the culture shock. After a couple of weeks, however, we started to get used to each other's presence, and the soundscape in the apartment started to form itself so that both of us could retreat to our private rooms without explanations or without feeling impolite.

> "Concerning the routines and keynote sounds in the apartment; there is someone talking on the phone almost ceaselessly. B has two phones that keep ringing around the apartment from dawn to dusk. I happen to hear plenty of social interaction when B is around the apartment while taking care of errands on the phone. I speak my code language, Finnish, on the phone, but only once or twice a week, in my room. Other daily occurrences: we hum a lot. B has a beautiful singing voice, and we tap a lot on the computers by ourselves. Tomcats caterwaul and bicker on the yard almost all the time (the window of my room is almost always open, although it is cold indoors). Lately we have started to watch romantic and melodramatic series on TV together at night: *Ömre bedel, Aşk bir hayal, Hanımın çiftiliği*… weekly episodes last up to two hours (!) with their overly cheerful commercials. Plenty of dramatic strains, melancholic music, crying people. I turn the volume down on the remote control, and B turns it up again. At ten in the evening M rings the doorbell to take the trash out. B always opens the door if she is home. I mostly don't if I am alone. I feel it is unnecessary and disturbing: I can take the litter out myself." (Field diary, 25 May 2010)

We received weekly guests for whom the sitting room TV was kept on at a moderate volume. Only we two watched the TV in B's bedroom in the evenings, chatting easily, having an evening snack and commenting on the programmes while lounging on the bed. This was an important counterbalance to the social effort that I felt obliged to practice whenever guests arrived. To help I retreated to the kitchen from time to time to take a break from being social and from the stream of conversation. Also the abundant use of the telephone came to me as a surprise. Text messages were not reliable tools of communication; one had to reach the person at the other end of the line, to listen and talk. As for me, I avoided using the telephone the best I could, as I was afraid

Figure 3: The apartment intercom next to the front door, including buttons to the caretaker's apartment downstairs and to the outer door on the ground floor of the staircase, as well as the opening buzzer for the lock in that outer door. Photo: author.

my Turkish skills would fail me. Nor did I want outsiders to witness a potential mistake. However, I had to learn to use the phone extensively and to answer the phone at all times. Answering calls led later to the situation in which an unknown male lout started calling my number. B made the calls end by answering my phone and using a maternal chiding strain – a means for which I would have had no opportunity or skill.

Acoustic communication between residents and the caretaker takes primarily place over the intercom (Figure 3).

Intercoms can be used for talking with the outer door of the staircase and directly with the caretaker's apartment. If there were guests to entertain, one could ask the caretaker to run to the shop to buy more drinks or groceries. It was assumed that the caretaker was awake and available after dinner had ended, after ten at night. The device first rings with a strong electronic throbbing sound in the caretaker's apartment. When the caretaker takes the call, one presses the white button while speaking and releases it when listening. The same procedure is repeated when speaking to the outer door. For its part, the intercom eliminates the private sonic space of the caretaker's family: there exists no division between work and home environment, as the device cannot be switched off.

As for me, over the two months of my residence there I created no relationship to the caretaker or his family apart from the routines of opening the door and the one afternoon when the caretaker's wife was cleaning our apartment. The woman talked a great deal and in a familiar tone, gently prying into everything starting with my marital status. During the cleaning, the apartment was given a proper airing. The woman made observations while listening to her children playing in the yard. The smallest whimper made her say: "Isn't that my child?" She would then go to the balcony and ask if the children were alright. After years of acquaintance, my landlady spoke quite familiarly with the caretaker, and to the small boy following his father she gave chocolate if he came to ask for it. For the most part I tried to cover my embarrassment over the services that I was not accustomed to and thought were not part of my own identity as a middle-class city-dweller.

Cultural scholar Gül Özyeğin (2002) describes in her article how apartments and middle-class homes build a physical and social space for intersections and encounters between classes, particularly among women. Having interviewed over a hundred caretakers' wives she has drawn the conclusion that the encounters between residents and caretaker families develop a particular self-reflection in terms of modernism and urbanity. It is a special way of being, in which one's behaviour, emotions and actions in relation to the modern and traditional is constantly observed. The seemingly trivial fields of every day life are full of restlessness. Özyeğin calls this line of action strategic intimacy, social closeness that both parties benefit from and appreciate. The benefit can be flexibility and room for negotiation in work issues or reliability and the alleviation of class guilt in household management. Service providers call their employer, who is often the

mother of the family, big sister (*abla*) and thus put themselves in the position of a little sister to be addressed by their first names. In principle, social intimacy requires empathy and understanding another person's world of values and experiences. Thus, it is a matter of a type of denying diversity. Strategic intimacy is a tool with which we can cover, process and utilize status and class distinctions in every day encounters (Özyeğin, 2002: 44, 59, 65). I also felt the class guilt depicted by Özyeğin under the circumstances, and confusion about the strategic intimacy, the familiarities that developed in the sonic space of the apartment with the caretaker's wife. It could be said that my parallel process of strategic intimacy with my landlady was part of the feelings of lost private (personal) acoustic space and the simultaneous growing cordiality that I felt would be beneficial for the ethical rationale of my study.

Acoustic neighbour relations and sonic segregation

The quietude in Ata-2 is not merely the passive absence of traffic noise. Good acoustic orderliness creates expectations and foreseeabilities for the sonic environment, which are maintained by the harmonising measures of the residence culture, thus forming a sonic etiquette. In Ata-2's case these mean an emphasis on modern urbanity in both official rules and practical actions. The acoustic orderliness is also maintained by the residents, face to face with the neighbours, with the help of the negotiation of a spokesperson, or by complaining about the grievance to the board of the housing cooperative. The general acoustic orderliness is dictated via the board of the housing cooperative, and this is justified within the practices of "modern urbanity." In the *site*, the aim is to reach a negotiating culture, and clear and non-discriminatory rules; yet, community pressure is practiced from time to time.

In the light of these data, acoustic neighbourly terms at Ata-2 are constructed on many overlapping levels. Sonic routines are used to create distinctions between different social classes and religious groups as much as to define "proper" urbanity, moral and even national values. The horizon of middle-class expectations created by the spatial differentiation and the mentality guarding it primarily prevent the action of heterogeneous residents – that is, residents outside the lifestyle of a "modern city-dweller" – inside the walls of the *site*, apart from the caretakers and their families living in the basements. The tolerance and alarmfulness of the sonic environment hang in the balance. On one hand, tolerance and community attitude are expected from residents; on the other hand, the official urban planning creates worst-case scenarios on the risk caused by diversity and particularly by poverty and class distinctions.

Signals carried from the outside the *site* not only give rhythm to everyday life, but also remind of a societal change, heterogeneous sets of values and the on-going negotiation therein. Urban life in Istanbul is greatly affected by the conception of a different lifestyle and growing conservativeness affecting the privacy of citizens. Privacy is also the privacy and autonomy of communities; it is a free existence without discrimination.

Inside an apartment the soundscape is, however, formed between individual actors. By taking part in everyday life, a researcher can add another perspective to the layers of privacy in auditory culture. For research into private soundscapes, the construction of strategic intimacy between the employer and the service provider (the caretaker's wife) is a significant and considerable issue and changes the character and use of the space in the apartment. The tacit agreement about relieving segregation changes expectations about sonic behaviour, thus creating trust while each party needs to exert an effort to maintain the identity of the "modern city-dweller."

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