Sustainability of Urban Sonic Heritage as Part of Intangible Culture: Sounds of Istanbul

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This research evaluates urban sonic heritage within the context of intangible culture. Sounds constitute an inevitable part of daily life and are of great importance for any urban identity; therefore they are considered valuable intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements. In the light of the penetration of two disciplines—intangible culture and soundscape studies—into each other, this research offers the term "Cultural Soundscape" to define the related urban values. This study investigates daily urban traditions mainly under six categories such as religion, culinary, street profession, entertainment, sports, and transportation and explores their practice frequencies on daily, weekly, monthly and annual timeline basis. Evaluating the acoustic urban culture deeply, this transversal research offers ways for protecting characteristic sonic values towards the sustainability of traditional activities and everyday life within urban space. Moreover, it aims to increase public awareness of urban sounds to ensure a stable mechanism in which cultural sustainability is maintained by society voluntarily and automatically. As a case study, I assess the significance of sonic elements of the contemporary city of Istanbul to determine the unique cultural sounds of the very city such as the call to prayer, the bells of the nostalgic tramway and so on. I explore ways for protecting this contemporary cultural soundscape in the context of ICH and I offer designing an experiential exhibition to raise public awareness of urban sounds for a sustainable sonic urban development. Since protecting contemporary cultural soundscapes in the context of ICH and increasing public awareness of urban acoustic values are crucial for the sustainability of sonic environments in the future, I aim to suggest a model for determining the most characteristic sonic values of any urban city and for preserving them, and to create an inspiration and encouragement for increasing public awareness of acoustic heritage of urban spaces.

Keywords: sustainable urban space, sonic heritage, daily urban culture, soundscape