Project SPP
SOUNDSCAPES IN PUBLIC PLACES
Sound levels and social interactions in venues with music
2004-2009

Memo^7   *Exploring the impact of loud music on verbal communication*   **30-11-08 BR**

❖ *Research approach*

From 2000 until 2008, altogether 12 substudies have been conducted. These include 4 types of data collection (cf Memo^5): Sound measurements, interviews of venue customers (using standardized or open-ended questions), observation of customer behaviour, surveys with venue staff, and combinations of these approaches.

In four of these studies, the impact of loud music in venues such as cafes, bistros, restaurants, pubs and gyms was the core interest. This was investigated embedded in a wider set of issues related to people's attitudes towards and experiences with particular venues.

❖ *Profile of main surveys*

SIM ~ Sound levels and social interactions in venues with music: Melbourne Study

> 2005. Three types of venues: 3 cafes/restaurants, 3 pubs, 3 gyms; qualitative interviews; N=36, mean age = 25 years, male:female = 50:50%.

IMC ~ Impacts of music exposure in public venues - cross-cultural comparisons: Melbourne

> 2007. Two types of venues: 2 restaurants, 2 gyms; quantitative interviews; N=48; 50 % of these were foreigners; mean age = 31 years, male:female = 50:50%.

SIH ~ Soundscapes and interactions in venues with music: Study Hamburg/Germany

> 2007-8. Three types of venues: 5 cafes/restaurants, 3 pubs, 2 gyms; quantitative interviews; N=39, mean age = 29 years, male:female = 48:52%.

SII ~ Soundscapes and interactions in venues with music: Study Innsbruck/Austria
> 2008-9. Two types of venues: 4 cafes/restaurants, 3 pubs; quantitative interviews; N=41, mean age = 34 years, male:female = 54:46%.

For Study SIM, a systematic set of issues to be covered in interviews was developed, and utilized as semi-standardized guideline for interviews. The questionnaire used in Study SIH and Study SII was a fully standardized version of the instrument for Study SIM, translated into German language. Study IMC was based on a mostly standardized conversion of the questions used in Study SIM; it is mostly equivalent to the later developed SIH&SII device.

❖ *Structure of the questionnaires/interviews*

In all surveys listed above, 12 core issues were covered:

0   Preliminary introduction
A   Familiarity with the venue (based on previous visits)
B   Reason/purpose of being in this venue
C   Personal company at this visit

D   Intention regarding verbal interaction with others
E   Expected sound level in this venue
F   Personal preference regarding the soundscape in this type of venue
G   Appraisal of actual sound level (on this day)
H   Satisfaction (or lack thereof) with the venue's soundscape
I   Impact of the existing sound level on talking with other people
J   Main behavior to deal with communication difficulties
K   Overall liking of the venue (regarding its purposes)
L   Demographic info (only age, gender, type of profession)
Y   Add-on thoughts rised by interviewee

For each of these topics a set of specific questions was developed.

❖ *Questions focused on verbal communication*

In the following, a selection of questions is presented which deal with the communication behavior of customers in cafes/bistros/pubs/shops/gym.

G   Appraisal of the actual sound situation (on this day)

<G2>
Wie wuerden Sie die heutige Lautstaerke an diesem Ort hier einschaetzen?
sehr ruhig (1) ruhig (2) mittel (3) laut (4) sehr laut (5)

How would you rate the current sound level here in this {cafe/restaurant/pub}?
very quiet (1) quiet (2) medium(3) loud (4) very loud(5)

H   Satisfaction (or lack thereof) with the venue's soundscape

<H1>
Wie zufrieden sind Sie mit dem *Ausmass* von Geraeuschen an diesem Ort?
(*Zufriedenheits-Urteil, 0-bis-10-Skala*)

How satisfied are you with the sound level given in this venue?
(*satisfaction score, 0-to-10 scale*)

<H2>
Und wie zufrieden sind Sie mit *der Art* der Geraeusche hier? (*Skala 0...10*)

And how satisfied are you with the kind of sounds occurring here? *(Scale 0...10)*

<H3>
Insgesamt, wie zufrieden sind Sie mit der Geraeuschsituation hier? (*Skala 0...10*)

All together, how satisfied are you with the sound situation in this venue? *(Scale 0...10)*
                                    {*in SIM: open question, no response scale*}

.I.   Impact of the existing sound level on talking with other people

<I1>
Ist Ihre soziale Interaktion aufgrund der gegebenen Geraeuschsituation vermindert? *(0...10)*

Is your social interaction reduced because of the sound situation in this place? *(Scale 0...10)*

Study IMC: How much is the music impacting on your conversation? *(Scale 0...10)*

<I2>
Wieweit veraendert der Geraeuschpegel hier das Ausmass Ihrer Kommunikation? *(0..10)*

To what degree does the sound level change the extent of your communication? *(0...10)*

Study IMC: To what degree is it difficult to have the kind of communication you like? *(0..10)*

<I3>
Ist *die Art* von Gespraechen die Sie fuehren wollten, angesichs des Geraeuschpegels moeglich? *(0..10)*

How feasible is the kind of talking you had in mind in the current sound situation? *(0...10)*

IMC: Do you feel the music allows you to have the type of conversation you intended? *(0...10)*

J Main behaviors to deal with communication difficulties

Falls ueberhaupt, wie aendern Sie Ihr Verhalten, um an diesem Ort ein Gespraech zu fuehren?
If at all, how do you change your behaviour to communicate in this venue?

<J1>
Sprechen Sie lauter? *(Skala 0...10)*

Do you talk louder? *(0-to-10 scale)*

<J2>
Ruecken Sie naeher zu ihre{m/r} Gespraechspartner{in}? *(Skala 0...10)*

Would you move closer to the person you are talking with? *(0-to-10 scale)*

<J3>
Sprechen Sie weniger? *(Skala 0...10)*

Do you talk less? *(0-to-10 scale)*

<J4>
Gebrauchen Sie anstelle von Sprechen mehr die Koerpersprache? *(Skala 0...10)*

Do you use body language to communicate instead of talking? *(0-to-10 scale)*

<J5>
Ist anspruchsvolle Unterhaltung schwieriger, d. h., muessen Sie manchmal wegen der Geraeuschsituation die Tiefe Ihres Gespraechs vermindern? (*Skala 0...10*)

Would you reduce the 'depth' of conversation because of the sound level? *(0-to-10 scale)*

<J-#> *IMC* *SIM*   What strategies are you using to deal with communication difficulties?

Responses of those who have a problem:

Talk louder
Usings signs, body language
Move closer to other person
Block out music
Talking about less intense subjects
Avoid loudest areas in the restaurant or pub
Talk less, wait till leave
Talking not at all
Don't know

<J6>
Alles in allem - in welchem Ausmass aendern Sie Ihr Verhalten, um an diesem Ort hier kommunizieren zu koennen? (*Skala 0...10*)

Altogether - to what degree would you say you actually change your behaviour in order to communicate in this venue? *(0-to-10 scale)*