

OFFICIAL REGULATIONS AND PERCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF BELL RINGING*

*Mojca Kovačič*¹

Institute of Ethnomusicology, Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian
Academy of Sciences and Arts, Ljubljana

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ABSTRACT:

Through the analytical approach of studying official and perception-related discourse on bell ringing I accentuate the complexity of aspects that the sound of church bell presents in contemporary society. I point out the misleading officially defined level of noise nuisance and reveal how, when and why bell ringing is perceived as a positive or negative part of the acoustic environment. The study argues for a holistic approach to the noise nuisance issues, still much underestimated in the official discourse, that co-create our everyday soundscape.

KEYWORDS: Ljubljana, soundscape, church bells, ringing, noise, acoustic environment

Sounds that are part of our everyday soundscape change on account of changes in our society. Early soundscape researchers regarded industrialization as the turning point between the “old” and the “modern” soundscape (Schaffer 1977; Truax 1984; Thompson 2002), and many theories, methods, research disciplines, and sound art musicians have dealt with the observation, preservation, protection, or restoration of certain sounds. The “technological crescendo of the modern city” (Thompson 2002: 2) has given some sounds, mainly those regarded as “natural” or “traditional,” hierarchical priority in the value system of the collective perception of soundscape.

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¹ mojca.kovacic@zrc-sazu.si

Even though the evaluation or ranking of specific sounds is a variable process and correlated to social, political, historical, economic, personal, and other factors, some sounds seem to be identified as more positive than others. Some of these sounds are integrated in everyday public life in such a way that no one questions their presence and place in the overall sonic environment. But when their audible necessity starts to be questioned, one can correlate this process with changes in society.

One such sound is the ringing of church bells. The church clock chiming and the bell ringing of Roman Catholic churches is an everyday occurrence in people's lives in Slovenia, and, although it is strongly associated with religion (as a public, aural form of religious expression), it affects – either directly or indirectly – everyone within range of the sound. In the past, this sound created a variety of meanings (cf. Makarovič 1995; Kovačič 2006), defined the acoustic boundaries of space and its rhythm (Lefebvre 2004), and contributed to the construction of local territorial identities (Corbin 2004: 184–204). These meanings have changed significantly in the modern world, in which the social processes of industrialization, globalization, and mobility have affected people's perception of time and space, as well as their relation to religiosity.

This article explores the position of bell ringing in official, Church, and public discourse in Slovenia. I argue that since World War II, a significant change in the role of church bells in public discourse began in tandem with the prominent political and economic changes and urbanization of public space. These changes can be defined as ecological, ideological, and aesthetic and are examined as reflected in official policy, media discourse, and people's relationship with the sound and the institution that manages the sound of bell ringing.

This study is spatially connected to public urban space. The sources used for the study are: legal environmental and ecclesiastical documentation, media representations of bell ringing, and web discussions and comments.² The official discourse is presented in the article from the position of the Church, the state and the city. Through official and public stances towards bell ringing, I show the complexity of aspects that the sound of church bells presents in contemporary society. In doing so, I highlight the contribution of such research when dealing with culturally conditioned sounds in space and time, and I also emphasize the importance of perception-related research for the future creation of urban public sound policies. This is why I begin the article with the issue of environmental policy towards the sound, which a variety of soundscape researchers have recently stressed.

SOUNDSCAPE BETWEEN LEGISLATION AND HUMAN PERCEPTION

For a long time, environmental policies treated sounds as massive unwanted noise that ought to be turned off or set to a lower volume, and only recently have they started paying more attention to other aspects of sound, including its impact on the quality of life and human health. "Reducing sound level is not always feasible and

² While my recent paper "Akustemologija zvonjenja" [Acoustemology of Bell Ringing] (Kovačič 2016: 53–63) in the Slovenian language already partly discussed public perception, I use some summarized previous research findings to juxtapose with the human perception of bell ringing.

cost-effective, and more importantly, will not necessarily lead to improved quality of life and people's satisfaction" (Kang et al. 2013: 8). This is why many researchers are trying to incorporate the soundscape concept as a set of relations between the ear, the listener, the sound environment, and society into these policies.³ But national institutions responsible for the regulation and control of acoustic space in the city (i.e., environmental inspections, municipal regulations) still focus strongly on the numbers that define the limits and allowed values of sound intensity in a particular environment. Their decisions based on this particular sound parameter contribute to shaping our quality of life and wellbeing, while other parameters (cultural, social, historical, perceptual, musical...) are still neglected.

Soundscape researchers emphasize in particular that soundscape is not a physically measurable category, but an environment of sounds "perceived and understood by the individual, or by society" (Truax 1999). Mainly in the last two decades, researchers from different backgrounds, such as geography, acoustic design, architecture, music, anthropology, and psychoacoustics (see Feld 1996; Truax 2001; Thompson 2002; Schulte-Fortkamp and Dubois 2006; Soares et al. 2012) have highlighted the importance of qualitative scientific approaches to soundscape, while focusing on the interaction of sound, space, people, and the environment. Some studies, especially those conducted by researchers in the field of psychology and health, focus only on the perception of soundscape and have set up various theoretical models to explore the perception of sound (Lercher and Schulte-Fortkamp 2003: 2815–2824; Schulte-Fortkamp and Fiebig 2006: 875–880; Zhang and Kang 2007: 68–86; Axelsson, Nilsson, and Berglund 2010: 2836–2846)⁴. Swedish researchers demonstrated on the basis of empirical research that "informational properties of soundscapes, i.e. categories of sounds are better predictors of perceived soundscape quality than acoustic measures of the soundscape, such as the equivalent sound-pressure level" (Axelsson, Nilsson, Berglund 2010: 2837). Even though many soundscape studies have proved that a merely quantitative approach "does not necessarily lead to better acoustic comfort in urban areas" (de Ruiter 2005), the impact of such studies on law, urban policy, and urban design in the world is still small. We can cite the most influential soundscape research on environmental policy – the "COST action" (European strategy for financial supporting of networking of researchers) *Soundscape of European Cities and Landscape*, in which 18 European countries and 7 partners outside Europe emphasized the need to integrate social science in environmental noise policy in order to improve the quality of life (Kang et al. 2013: 3). In COST action, Brigitte Schulte-Fortkamp and Peter Lercher propose a specific methodological model for research, one based on a triangulation approach combining: a) narrative, interviews,

3 One of the results was that the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 12913-1:2014) provided the definition and conceptual framework of soundscape.

4 The research field of health and psychoacoustics emphasizes the importance of non-physical aspects of sound perception as noise, such as: associations that sound evokes, individual sensitivity and personal characteristics, past experiences, the necessity of noise, expectations of noise, the activity of the listener, the season of the year, the period of the day, and the type of space (Bilban 2005: 11).

and workshops; b) a questionnaire survey; and c) sound analyses (Schulte-Fortkamp 2013: 122).

In Slovenia, soundscape studies are still a relatively new concept, and their implementation in a variety of working, professional, educational, and research fields is underdeveloped.⁵ Governmental policy and urban directives governing the scope of improving the quality of life understand the soundscape exclusively in terms of noise reduction and focus on specific sources of noise, mainly industrial, traffic noise and the s.c. devices (machinery, recreational devices, restaurants and bars) (UL 105/05). Since the current legislation does not understand bell ringing as a possible source of noise, no institution is responsible for taking into account bell-ringing's disruptive influence on people. Nevertheless, in the last two decades, public discourse has focused intensely on bell ringing as a sound that triggers physical and psychological disturbance in people's perception. This points out on discrepancy between legislative and perception-related understanding of noise that should not be neglected.

BELL RINGING: TRANSFORMATION FROM SOUND TO PUBLIC NOISE

Before moving to the Slovenian case, I will briefly present the state of the art of international scholarship on bell ringing. Bell ringing is mentioned in studies discussing sounds in public space, but still often in a romanticized way that stresses a historical perspective on the role of bells in society (see Truax 1984: 76; Schafer 1994: 53–56 and 60–62; Fisher 2014). Bell ringing is also discussed in terms of its role in the discourse of power relations, where religious sounds (such as bell ringing or the muezzin call) appear as the appropriate mechanism for political and territorial control of space (Alain Corbin 1998; 2004; Goodman 2010; Hayden in Walker 2013). Bohlman (2013: 205–223) briefly places bell ringing in the context of the permeability of religious sounding in post-secular Europe space. He shows how “cosmopolitan coexistence” (Born: 62) of religious plurality is being reflected by tolerance towards certain religious sounds. In his book *Religion Out Loud* (2014), Isaak Weiner gives the greatest attention to bell ringing

⁵ In 2016, I sought a variety of experts and researchers who could join us for a one-day symposium titled “Sound Ecology of Ljubljana”. The result was quite modest, which reveals the underdevelopment of soundscape research in Slovenia. The symposium was attended by experts who use sound measurement methodology in their approach to noise pollution (Janez Drev, Andrej Piltaver). Other topics presented were an archeological approach to computer modeling of past soundscapes (Dimitrij Mlekuž), the importance of a positive soundscape and quiet areas for health (Sonja Jeram), and the importance of understanding the principles of auditory perception in ethnomusicological research (Drago Kunej). As a byproduct of anthropological research on drivers in an international context, the impact of traffic, city infrastructure, and driving habits on city soundscape was presented (Dan Podjed); representatives of the society Društvo za ENO glasbo showed how they fight for the city sound ecology and how the institutions responsible react to their actions (Bojan Cvetrežnik, Janez Križaj); and empirical research was used to demonstrate how multisensory perception influences aural perception (Mirko Čudina). The organizers of the conference presented our role and work to date in the international project *City Sonic Ecologies: Urban Soundscapes of Bern, Ljubljana and Belgrade* (Ana Hofman, Mojca Kovačič).

so far and explores (in sonic disputes) how the opposition of communities and individuals to public religious sounding expresses protest against the institutional power that manages this sounding. Weiner's study of religious sounds clearly shows Christianity's loss of power and dominance over American society, as well as the increasing religious plurality reflected in the contemporary soundscape of American cities.

While the historical presence⁶ of bell ringing in Slovenia is difficult to depict exactly, since most historical church bells have not been preserved, we can assume that bell ringing flourished with the construction of the first independent bell towers, i.e., from the 17th century on (Makarovič 1995: 64). The Catholic Church encouraged and engaged in church bell ringing, which became its main signaling device and symbolic object and gave it a strong position in folk tradition. Many folklore tales, beliefs, and myths indicate the apotropaic function of the church bell. Folklore and old and even contemporary literature document people's strong emotional attachment to bell ringing (Kovačič 2006: 105–116). Bell chiming – the traditional musical practice using church bells – became widely popular and was even declared a national specialty and promoted as a very old Slovenian custom. In sum, the sound of the bell acquired many different meanings: it is the sound of a religious institution, the sound of tradition, the sound of history, the sound of faith, glory, and happiness, the sound of the time, prayer, mourning, music, and, most recently, of noise.

In 1940, the Catholic Church expressed its intention to adjust the sounds of bell ringing in the city. Article 413 of the *Code of Ljubljana Archdiocese* (Rožman 1940) provides special instructions for bell ringing in Ljubljana. The differentiation between bell ringing in Ljubljana and in rural places was reflected mainly in the reduction of the duration and frequency of bell ringing (ibid., 144). The *Code* was issued immediately before World War II, so the instructions were not implemented because of the situation during and after the war. However, the *Code* is a document of the time that testifies to the intention to adjust religious sounds to the urban soundscape. We can only guess whether such restrictions reflected people's physical need for a quieter environment or the clerical-liberal struggles that already split the social, cultural, and political life of Slovenians in the 19th century.

The Regional Archive of Nova Gorica keeps a document testifying that on the day of the end of World War II, 9 March 1945, the official authorities in the city of Vipava declared that all bells had to sound in all the churches in the valley from 9 to 10 a.m. (Kovačič 2012: 87). If in this case the bells signaled important events and symbolized national joy, the situation completely changed after the war.

The postwar period was characterized by a strict atmosphere hostile to clericalism in the newly created state of Yugoslavia. The political principle of the separation of Church and State, along with general intolerance of religious expression in public life, affected official legal relations to the public expression of religion, which included bell ringing. Bell ringing came to symbolize an unwanted ideology and people's superstition. State policy began regulating the sounding of bells all over the country, as well as the religious authority as owners of "religious noise" (Weiner 2014: 8).

6 Individual data on historical bells and bell founders, as well as individual preserved bells, bear witness that the first bells were already being rung in the 14th century (see Ambrožič 1993).

Official regulations such as the *Decree on Public Order and Peace* of 1953 (UL 1953) included directives with special paragraphs dedicated to church bell ringing for individual Slovenian cities. At that time, bell ringing was limited mostly to regular religious services and could last only from 1 to 5 minutes (in Ljubljana 3 minutes). Much traditional bell ringing connected to Christian rites or folk customs was banned: ringing for funerals, the traditional Angelus ringing three times a day, ringing in the evening and at dawn, etc., and all decrees explicitly prohibited the tradition of bell chiming for Church holidays. All exceptions from these determinations had to be registered and permitted by the Department of Internal Affairs, or in other words – the police. A priest who violated the Decree's regulations could be fined or sentenced to prison. According to what Ljubljana's priests and sextons told me in conversation, the decree's limitations for bell ringing were strictly respected by "both sides" in the first postwar decade, but later control was more relaxed.⁷ Bell chimers also testified that the regulations were mostly disregarded in the countryside, where political control over the Church and folk beliefs was weaker (Kovačič 2012: 81–92).

BELL RINGING AND POST-SOCIALIST NOISE POLICY LEGISLATION

For a long time bell ringing was subject to the legislation on public order and peace and was not addressed independently. It is also the case that the EU did not start implementing noise abatement in legislation until 1993. At first, noise abatement was part of the Fifth Environmental Action Program and subsequently independently treated in the Green Paper on future noise policy (1996) (Adams et al. 2006: 2387). The latter document and the environmental noise directive issued in 2002 (Directive 2002/49/EC) were the basis for implementing international standards of noise abatement.

Many European Union member states integrated these guidelines and standards in their laws and regulations, and the same happened in Slovenia. In 1993, the standardization and harmonization of international regulations in the field of acoustics fell within the purview of the technical committee called Building Physics of the Office for Standards and Metrology, and in 2002, an independent technical committee SIST/TC AKU Acoustics was established. The committee monitors changes in EU standardization and translates the EU's legislative documents into Slovenian. But it is the Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia (ARSO) that then prepares and issues national noise regulation policies. Mirko Čudina, a member of the technical committee SIST/TC AKU and president of the professional association, the Society for Acoustics, criticizes the ARSO for not following and for even misinterpreting the committee's guidelines, as well as for not including the general and professional public in the preparation of national regulation policies (Čudina 2013: 334). Below, I describe how Slovenia's "coordination" with European legislation affected bell ringing and what consequences this has had in society.

The documentation of sound control policy shows the shape of official tole-

7 When reviewing the archives of the parish of the city of Mengeš, I discovered that the tensest correspondence between the Church and city authorities took place up until 1956.

rance of sound and consequently defines the boundary between pleasant sound and noise. This is done by quantitatively monitoring environmental sound levels in decibels. Thus, the official documents issued in the first years of Slovenia's independence also determine the sources of sounds that are disturbing when they exceed certain measurable limits. In 1995, the *Decree on noise in the natural and living environment* was issued. It contained an article listing "bell ringing and other fixed audio devices" (UL 45/1995, 3rd article) among other sources of noise (pubs using audio devices, opened or covered construction sites, sports shooting sites, facilities for sports and other public events, etc.). In 2002, Slovenia started to coordinate its legislation on the limit values of environmental noise with EU directives, and in 2006, a new decree on noise (UL 105/05) was passed. In the new decree, bells were no longer listed among the sources of noise (as they are also not listed in EU directive), and this was the main reason for the polemical public discussions that developed in the years after the adoption of this decree. The public has noticed the change and expressed its opinions, mainly disapproval, in blogs, web forums, comments on newspaper articles, and online public debates about church bell ringing. The official institutions addressed by the public and the media responded in different ways. After a certain period of clumsy response, those defending the change in the decree (the police, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning) coordinated their responses in a unique form:

The sound of the ringing of church bell is therefore equal to a sound produced by other musical instruments; the composition of frequencies is consistent with the tones of the music scale, which for humans is not unwanted or disturbing, just as the sounds of musical instruments are not normally undesirable or disruptive (s. n. 2010).

The website of the Inspectorate for the Environment and Spatial Planning has a section called *Questions and Answers*. Despite the title, public questions are not given anywhere; instead, the inspectorate gives explanations on three sources of noise, and one can guess that these sources are those the public complains the most about: noise at public meetings and events, noise from restaurants and events with sound devices, and the ringing of church bells. This clearly indicates the importance of bell ringing as part of the overall urban noise nuisance. The inspectorate explains that, because of official legislation, bell ringing cannot be treated as a source of noise; that bell ringing is brief and usually does not exceed the critical limits determined for residential areas; and that it is not harmful for health.

Anomalies in the aforementioned institutional answers are obvious and challenge both experts and researchers. Below, I will demonstrate them with some examples. Organology defines the church bell as a percussion instrument, but the musical instrument is defined also by its use and function. When people express themselves musically on church bells, bell ringing functions as music (i.e., bell chiming), but when bells are used to signal certain events or the time, bell ringing functions as an acoustic signaling device. In this sense bell ringing does not differ from other devices that legislation treats as sources of noise and control their excessive burden on the environment. On the other hand, even if bell ringing is perceived as music as indicated in the answer of officials, certain laws and regu-

lations control broadcasting and musical performances in public space. Another disputable aspect is the acoustic specifics of bell ringing. By acoustical definition, bell ringing is an impulse sound. Mirko Čudina points out that the level of impulse noise is now estimated as an annual average (not daily, as before), so the environment is now depicted as less burdened by impulse noise than before (Čudina 2013: 398-401). The average annual bell ringing levels are no longer exceeded and cannot be regulated by law. The relation of bell ringing to human health, wellbeing, and quality of life cannot be neglected either, and is here represented by next examples. Swiss researchers conducted a study of the impact of bell ringing in 2001 and proved that bell ringing affects health even at low volumes, such as chiming the hours at night. A group of people who lived near the church were connected to an EEG device at night, and the study showed that clock chiming frequently led to sleep disturbances. And sleep disturbances affect human health (Brink et al. 2011: 5210-5220). The Slovenian National Institute for Public Health published a professional opinion that bell ringing does not directly affect people's health, but can cause strong agitation. And precisely because officials neglect this aspect and people have no possibility to complain, this agitation can be increased. This certainly reinforces the fact that the "annoyances that bell ringing presents for people's health and well-being of people depend not only on the sound volume, but on a number of circumstances, conditions, and the state of the individual" (s. n. 2014).

BELL RINGING AS AN EXPRESSION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

After the sound of bells was exempted from the regulation of noise, Church authorities rarely publicly defended their stance on bell ringing. Their responses mainly parallel the aforementioned answers from the responsible official institutions, i.e., that bell ringing is music, that the regulations are in accordance with EU directives on noise, and that bell ringing is the expression of constitutionally guaranteed religious freedom. But public pressures were nevertheless strong and required clearer responses and actions from the Catholic Church.

In 2013, bell ringing was the subject of discussion at the Slovenian Bishops' Conference, and for the first time, the Church authorities discussed bell ringing and its inclusion in modern society. As a result, the bishops issued guidelines for bell ringing that mainly justify the current situation and do not seek solutions and compromises between the conflicting sides. The only proposal in the direction of compromise was: "In an environment where there are tensions and disagreements between the ecclesial community and society because of the use of church bells, the priests are ordered to discuss the problems and to try to find a consensus" (Glavan 2013). Bell ringing in the urban environment is particularly addressed in a special paragraph calling for some changes in cities and in concentrated residential areas, such as volume reduction. But no further instructions are given, and since the volume of bell ringing cannot be lowered by pressing a button, such instructions seem insufficient. The guidelines also emphasize the importance of the audibility of bell ringing in the religious, social, and cultural context: religious recognition, the function of marking the time of day, and calling people to mass. The concluding sentence highlights the constitutional right to sounding bells within a religious context: "Interference with the ringing of

church bells or their silencing will always be interference with religious freedom and the individual's affiliation with the Church" (ibid.).

Constitutionally defined religious freedom is often invoked in debates on sounding within the religious context, and is interpreted in various ways. On the one hand, bell ringing expresses religious freedom (for Catholics), but on the other hand, a part of society argues that bell ringing's dominance in the acoustic space suppresses religious plurality. Secular society argues that bell ringing violates the personal freedom to live in secular acoustic space.

The official discourse closed discussion with regard to religious freedom and the ringing of bells already in 2010, when the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia had to assess the compatibility of some acts of the Religious Freedom Act with constitutional provisions. Its assessment referring to the use of church bells is based on Article 7 of the Constitution and on the Religious Freedom Act and reads: "An individual's marking of his profession of or implementation of religion does not confront another individual with religious beliefs in such a way that it interferes with the latter's negative religious freedom. So also visible or audible marking of religious monuments (e.g., a view of a church or mosque, a religious procession, a believer in religious clothing, the singing of the muezzin or the sound of church bells) is also not a forced confrontation with religion from which the state must protect the individual" (Tratnik 2010: 48-49).

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF BELL RINGING: BEYOND THE DISCOURSE OF NOISE

Finally I present few examples that show how bell ringing exceeds the discourse of noise and so supports the thesis of the necessity of complex treatment of sound. Controversies about bell ringing in media discourse were strongest from 2003 to 2015, testifying to the fact that bell ringing is one of the most omnipresent sound sources, which aroused the attention of the general public. The first publicized event that began the controversy was the "soft terrorism" action of silencing the bells of the cathedral in Koper. In 2013, Marko Breclj, a famous Slovenian musician, political activist, and former municipal councilor, covered the clappers of church bells with carpets on the day before the important Catholic Feast of the Assumption. The bells did not ring, many people were outraged, and Breclj's action launched his public correspondence with ecclesiastical institutions. Wider public and media response to the event immediately showed that the problem of bell ringing goes beyond discourse on noise and enters the field of the political polarization of Slovene society. This was exacerbated after 2006, when bells were excluded from regulations on sources of noise. Since the ruling party at that time was the Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), publicly characterized as a right-wing and pro-clerical party, many people interpreted the change of the regulation as an abuse of political power. In that year, Marko Breclj performed the same action again in the same church. Here are excerpts from his statements after the two actions:

We wanted to say that clericalism is a fundamental Slovenian eco-problem. We showed that silencing the loud bells of Koper is a solvable technical issue (Tanackovič 2003).

In cooperation with renowned Slovenian technical physicists, we would prepare and conduct the partial muting of oversized bells that will preserve the richness of the sound. At the same time, we are ready to inform the Slovenian public on the progress of exemplary and people-friendly adjustments of the volume of ritual sounds in Koper, as well as to proclaim our good intentions to the youth and exhausted residents of the city (Valenčič 2009).

Both statements show how Breclj shifts the context of his action from ideological activism against the Church to action against noise nuisance. A review of responses from the public in the media discourse shows that the physical disturbance of bell ringing was the prime topic. However, broader aspects of the perception of bell ringing are sometimes hidden in the text, and most frequently the original debate on the sonic disturbance of bell ringing turns into a purely political or ideological debate that dates back to the time after World War II, showing how the communist past is embedded in the present perception of space: "Xenophobes would like to silence the voice of the Church, which is steadily here, even if they had to slaughter us again as they did in 1945" (Alič 2013).

My recent study of the citizens' response to the possible future manifestation of the sound of Muslim calls to prayer in Ljubljana shows that tolerance for the sounds of *ezan* often stems from opposition to bell ringing. A broader debate on bell ringing and noise is very often developed in the same forum. This indicates the new dimension bell ringing has in society: its demonstration of religion's dominant position in the acoustic space touches on power relations and raises questions about religious plurality (Kovačič 2016: 25-38).

Another aspect should be mentioned – the sharing of public space in secular society and the penetration of sound into private space, as seen in the following comment:

Who was first in this place, you or the church? If you don't want to listen to it, move away; otherwise, thank your parents for moving here. It is the same as when somebody moves to the countryside and then cries because of the smell of the manure (s.n. 2011).

As Georgina Born and other authors of the book *Music, Sound and Space: Transformations of Public and Private Experience* (2003) indicate in many examples of other sounds, religious sound contests and redraws boundaries between the public and private and demarcates or questions existing territorial boundaries.

CONCLUSION

The study of the role of bell ringing in the contemporary urban soundscape shows different aspects of religious sound: how political and religious legislation regulates the existence of the sound; how the sound itself energizes power relations in society, when and why it is perceived as acceptable or unacceptable; which experiential and contextual knowledge is evoked when listening to religious sounds; when and why these sounds are used or understood as a communicative act or ideological tool.

The presented official control over bell ringing shows how the position, role, and function of religious sounding changed through time, as well as how public perception of bell ringing is shaped today. The fact that people began complaining greatly about bell ringing in the last decade could be explained in different ways: public awareness of noise and of the impact of sonic disturbance on health and wellbeing is increasing; the situation reflects the socio-political and ideological friction in society; the situation presents the increased public awareness over the right to co-shape public soundscape. Finally people's response because of the lost possibility of complaining is also important. When bell ringing became "desirable music" in the official discourse after 2006, and thus ineligible for official sanctioning, some people felt anger and helplessness. It is obvious that these people never established a musical-aesthetic relationship to bell ringing, as implied by official policy. This also indicates that noise annoyance is not a question of decibels at all. Statistically, not even a third of the complaints about noise address its acoustic properties (Jeram et al. 2013: 12). Thus, I assume that the ignorance of Church and state authorities on this problem greatly fueled the complainers' agitation. The international team of public health researchers recently underscored the need for a system of public complaints on environmental noise for two reasons: to improve the understanding of public noise annoyance and to improve the health and wellbeing of citizens directly. "The importance of having the possibility to complain was highlighted in a study that showed a reduction in blood pressure after the usage of a noise-complaint line" (ibid.; see also: Popescu et al. 2010: 237-244 and 2013: 205-210).

An increasing number of studies today argue for the need for a holistic approach to the noise nuisance issue. This study, too, shows the complexity of sound in modern society. It also demonstrates that the purely acoustic approach that is still part of all official regulation of the sonic environment can be inadequate, misleading, or even wrong. On a wider level, this shows the benefits that can accrue from connecting the humanities and social sciences with the technical sciences, such as acoustics.

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Мојца Ковачич

ЗВАНИЧНИ ПРОПИСИ И ЛИЧНИ ДОЖИВЉАЈ ЗВОЊАВЕ ЦРКВЕНИХ ЗВОНА

(САЖЕТАК)

У Словенији, након Другог светског рата, убрзана индустријализација у градским и приградским срединама значајно је променила њихово звучање. Појавили су се многи нови звуци, неки су се изгубили или су гурнути у позадину, неки су изгубили своје значење, постали неважни или нежељени. Расправа коју овде презентујем на тему звоњаве црквених звона и њиховог положаја у савременом друштву инспирисала ме на ново промишљање о значењу звоњаве у простору и времену. Ако је звук црквених звона био један од централних звукова акустичног простора и људских живота у преиндустријском добу, ово се у потоњим деценијама значајно променило, посебно када је звук звона постао део дискурса о буци у јавном простору.

Промена у доживљају звоњаве црквених звона првобитно је била резултат политичке контроле над звуком. Време за црквену звоњавау било је ограничено, контролисано, или у потпуности забрањено, а власти су путем прописа о реду и миру у јавном простору контролисале сонорност религијске провенијенције. Но, упркос званичним прописима, десакрализација простора била је најочигледнија у урбаним центрима и није у истој мери афектовала руралне средине. У доба социјализма, звоњава је била регулисана на државном нивоу, а жалбе на ниво јачине звука биле су веома ретке и нису биле јавно изражаване, док је у постсоцијалистичком раздобљу приметан пораст

тензија, што се рефлектовало и у медијском дискурсу. Постепено је ниво буке проузрокован звоњавом постао значајан проблем. Могуће је пратити бројне дискусије на форумима, блоговима, коментарима испод новинских чланака, затим, такозване „мирне терористичке” акције усмерене ка утишавању звоњаве, окупљања по селима (и за и против звоњаве), пресуду Уставног Суда у корист црквене звоњаве, као и промене у законима који се односе на регулацију буке. Све ово усмерава нас ка фундаменталним проблемима које разматрам у овом чланку, а то су: проблем границе између пријатног звука и буке, продирање религијског звука у секуларни простор, односно, јавног звука у приватни простор. У овом тексту презентујем званични – градски, државни и црквени дискурс о звоњави звона од Другог светског рата до данас, док, са друге стране, наводим поједине примере како људи перципирају звоњаву. Користећи пример звоњаве црквених звона, истичем потребу за холистичким приступом решавању проблема звучног загађења.

Кључне речи: Љубљана, звучни пејзаж, црквена звона, звоњава, бука, звучно окружје