In-Between Soundscapes of Vancouver: The newcomer's acoustic experience of a city with a sensory repertoire of another place

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The 'in-betweenness' of a newcomer, which derives from being familiar with multiple sensuous geographies and living through diverse cultural regimes, creates for them an almost experimental situation. Their lack of habitual memory and 'soundscape competence' (Truax 2001) of the new city is full of creative potentials in terms of acoustic experience and expression. In order to explore the dynamics of such contexts in their richness, we need to develop sensorily rich methods of inquiry. In this regard, the field of soundscape studies has been offering performative methods for sensory methodologies including ethnography. On the other hand, by incorporating a sensory ethnographic process, we can also address some issues like cultural and social sensitivity within the field of soundscape composition. I drew upon methods such as the soundwalk and sound diary, which were turned into performative expressions by employing approaches to a soundscape composition and developing a collaborative and process-oriented sound installation. In this paper, I will be discussing the recent sonic ethnographic and artistic projects I developed in Vancouver,[1] and how these projects can contribute to our understanding of cultural soundscapes.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the age of globalisation and information, the scope and the speed of interactions between people, places and cultures have intensified. We are living in an unprecedented world of mobility and migration. This generates new forms of sense experiences, and complicates our bodies and identities. The understanding of place as constituted by embodiment, movement and memory has recently been emphasised. Therefore, studying cultures, geographies, places or communities requires an integration of one's sensory experiences into the inquiry (Howes 2005). This is parallel to the growing interest in the notion of embodiment and sensory methodologies within numerous fields including psychology, anthropology, geography and urban studies. In this regard, the analysis of everyday life in diverse cultural contexts offers many areas to explore.

Even though the experience of a new city or culture full of foreign habits is multisensory, my focus is on how a newcomer with a sensory repertoire of another place aurally experiences a new city and builds relationships to sounds and places in a new context. Here, the newcomer refers to anyone who has recently moved to a new urban space from another place. I am interested in exploring the complexities which arise for the newcomer in exploring and expressing her or his own embodied experience in sensory and performative ways since it cannot always be articulated at the level of language, yet it still shapes her or his experiences. In this regard, embodiment is understood as a process of reproducing oneself within a constant negotiation between past patterns and present experience (Allegranti 2011). This becomes more significant in terms of transcultural contexts where sensory experiences, which are already complicated by being in-between geographies, cultures and sensoriums, require new forms of expression (Marks 2000).

The growing interest in sensory methodologies has revealed itself within recent urban and migration studies, too. The rich connections between senses, memories and imaginations are explored as they enable people who are on the move to connect with themselves, others and the environment in creative ways and negotiate their conditions and identities through sensory strategies. Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006) indicate the importance of corporeal bodies and sensory memories as an 'affective vehicle' through which people sense places, and construct sensory and emotional geographies. However, such a focus never precludes taking into account the patterns of concentration, exclusion and disconnection, and the power structures and discourses of

[1]I developed my first ethnographic project and further research with the guidance of Dr. Barry Truax and my installation project with the guidance of Malcolm Levy during my ongoing studies at Simon Fraser University. The installation was presented at the Centre for Digital Media, Vancouver in April 2013. I would like to thank all the participants who made the projects possible discussed in this paper, especially Amber Choo, Maria Fedorova, Aaron May and Pascale Théorêt-Groulx for their contributions to the installation project. Finally, I also would like to thank members of the Transforming Pain Research Group at Simon Fraser University for their support and guidance.

mobility in creating both movement and stasis in today's world (Sheller and Urry 2006).

2. NEW UNDERSTANDING OF PLACE AND ACOUSTIC SPACE

Rethinking our sensuous relations with the world leads us to re-conceptualisations of the sense of place. The understanding of place has been evolving into a new concept that is constituted by the bodily explorations of a place through the notions of embodiment, emplacement, movement and memory (Schine 2013). Theorists and researchers from various disciplines emphasise the sensuous interrelationship of body, mind and environment that challenges the understanding of place as static (Rodaway 1994). Rather, as Edward S. Casey (1987), Doreen Massey (2005) and Tim Ingold (2011) suggest, it is described as an event – as a sphere of 'contemporaneous plurality' (in Massey's terms), which produces diverse interactions and relations. Such an understanding posits place's fluidity, constantly changing nature and gathering togetherness. As Ingold puts it, places do not exist so much as they 'occur' (Ingold 2011).

In this regard, studies and artistic projects that draw upon one's acoustic experience of a place have revealed how places 'gather' or 'occur' (Norman 2012). Edmund Carpenter's concept of acoustic space (Carpenter and McLuhan 1960) points out how sound reveals the physical structure and dynamics of the environment in which it is created. For Steven Feld (1996), place – as space-time – can always be grounded in an acoustic dimension since space indexes the distribution of sounds and time indexes the motion of sounds. As sounds are heard while moving, locating or placing, the acoustic space is temporalised. There is always a visceral, somatic, aspect of sound. Therefore, movement becomes an essential concept, as Truax and Barrett argue (2011: 1204–5): 'For anything to sound, there must be movement, and that movement, if it produces audible sounds, interacts with the physical space and is perceived as sound that is inextricably combined with spatial information. … sound creates acoustic space, as well as our sense of time, rather than space and time being "containers" for sound. Or as Tim Ingold suggests, we do not hear sound, we hear "in sound" '.

On the other hand, both Casey (1987) and Feld (1996) argue that while in or through a given place, the body imports its own emplaced past into its present experience. As Feld puts it, sense of place refers to 'the relation of sensation to emplacement, the experiential and expressive ways places are known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over and the multiple ways places are metonymically and metaphorically tied to identities' (1996: 11).

3. ACOUSTIC EXPERIENCE OF PLACE AND URBAN SPACE

In order to explore how places are constituted acoustically, I draw upon the notion of soundscape (Schafer 1977), which puts an emphasis on how the sonic environment is perceived and understood by the individual or the community. A soundscape is shaped by both conscious and subliminal perceptions of the listener and so its analysis is also based on the sensory, perceptual and cognitive processes underlying her or his understanding of the sonic environment (Truax 2001). Therefore, it is a theoretically and methodologically subjective and listener-centred approach (Truax and Barrett 2011).

On the other hand, based on the communicational model (Truax 2001), which incorporates both material and sensual aspects of sonic environments, it is a triadic relationship between the listener, sounds and the environment, where sound plays a mediating role between the listener and the environment. The model emphasises the interlocking behaviours of these elements as 'a system of relationships, not isolated entities' (Truax 2001: xviii) Sonic environments are perceived, experienced and interpreted by the individual and the community in constantly changing ways. Therefore, soundscapes can shape and transform one's experience of the city and everyday life in complex ways. The physical, informational or emotive properties of sound may invoke intimate or intense relationships between people and places. For instance, the music coming from street musicians, local stores and coffee shops in a neighbourhood might facilitate a sense of belonging to a community (Smith 1993).

Furthermore, from the phenomenological approach within sonic studies, Jean-François Augoyard and Henry Torgue (2005) offer several concepts, such as 'sound effects' or 'ambiances' that can be integrated into our understanding of acoustic experience in an urban context. Sonic effects are methodological and analytical concepts that represent complex urban sonic situations. According to Paquette (2004), 'the sound effect [Augoyard and Torgue 2005] describes a particular sound perception as a result of specific physical conditions (nature of source, acoustics, morphology of the environment, etc.), social and cultural contexts, and a subjective perception mechanism' (Paquette 2004: 11).

There are some applied works (Smith 1993; Paquette 2004) that have explored sonic environments within urban contexts; how they shape, reveal and are transformed by routines and rhythms of everyday and social life. Christopher J. Smith's research (1993), in the context of Vancouver, demonstrates that people become familiar with the variety of sounds within the city or neighbourhood based on their individual contexts and make sense of

the continually changing acoustic worlds around them. Furthermore, the temporal nature of sound provides a connection between the past, present and future, giving self and places a sense of continuity. More recently, David Paquette (2004) investigated a neighbourhood in Vancouver to study the relations between listeners and soundscapes through diverse methods of inquiry. Both projects unfolded the close link between one's history (and that of the community) and everyday activities or routines, as well as the qualities or experiences of that particular soundscape.

4. THE CONVERGENCE OF SOUNDSCAPE STUDIES AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Even though various methodologies have been recently explored, the problem of methodology is frequently mentioned in the literature within diverse fields, including ethnography, referring to the difficulties in expressing, analysing or representing complex sensory experiences. It is often described as a difficulty of transcribing one set of sensations into another language and it seems to require an 'experimental, explorative and expressive' language or method (Paterson 2009: 785). As a sensory ethnographer, Sarah Pink encourages us to integrate other ways of knowing (such as Feld's 'acoustemology' (1996)), remembering, and imagining into academic practice, especially into ethnographic research. As she refers to David MacDougall, 'we may need a ''language'' closer to the multidimensionality of the subject itself … a language operating in visual, aural, temporal and tactile domains' (Pink 2009: 99). In this regard, James Clifford (1986) argued for more expressive and performative ethnographic practices beyond textual, objective and distancing mediums and methods. As Veit Erlmann (2004) emphasises, such a quest for aural ethnography is about gaining a deeper understanding of how people know, communicate with and relate to each other through aural experience.

Based on these concerns, there is a growing interest in exploring the epistemological basis of sonic studies and reconstructing sonic methodologies accordingly (Cobussen, Schulze and Meelberg 2013; Truax 2013). In this regard, the field of soundscape studies has been offering useful ideas and performative methods for sensory methodologies. The World Soundscape Project (WSP) offered early examples of acoustically exploring communities and places by being concerned with noise issues and disappearing soundscapes (and acoustic communities) due to a period of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation. Therefore, we can say that the research and the methodologies developed by WSP had a social purpose from the beginning (Voorvelt 1997).

Throughout the years, WSP and other research groups have applied various methodologies in diverse settings that indicate the close link between those methodologies and ethnographic process. For instance, WSP's *Five Village Soundscapes* project (Davis, Schafer and Truax 1977) was completed by the team as detailed soundscape analyses and narrative accounts of five European villages, and its extension and follow-up study called *Acoustic Environments in Change* (Järviluoma, Kytö, Truax, Uimonen and Vikman 2009) revisited the former WSP villages in order to observe both continuities and changes over time. These were successful examples of how interdisciplinary ethnographic methodologies could be applied in the field. For instance, *Acoustic Environments in Change* explored ethnographic research methods around memory, nostalgia and social remembering (e.g. 'memory walks') (Schine 2013).

On the other hand, the fact that the soundscape composition is rooted in the close ties between acoustic ecology and soundscape studies (Westerkamp 2002) supports the idea that it can be a complementary component for ethnographic work. Soundscape composition evolved from the documentation of 'found' soundscapes by the World Soundscape Project. As Truax puts it (1996, 2001, 2008, 2012), it can be described as a context-based composition where knowledge of specific contexts shapes the composer's work and invokes the listener's knowledge of those contexts within the presence of recognisable environmental sounds, and at the intersection of the listener's associations, memories and imaginations related to that place. Therefore, it brings an approach to the issues of representing the real, which is more abstracted in comparison to the conventional documentary approach. It may even lead to virtual soundscapes, by compositional manipulation, with an intention to 'invoke the implicit aspects of soundscape perception, including the inner world of memory, metaphor and symbolism' (Truax 2012: 195). Therefore, it can reveal people's sensory experiences and mental worlds in more expressive and relational ways. It unfolds the place coloured by the subjective worlds of the experiencer within physical, emotional, social and cultural dynamics. On the other hand, it aims at enhancing our awareness of listening and understanding of the context. Hildegard Westerkamp (2002: 52) describes soundscape composition as 'the artistic, sonic transmission of meanings about place, time, environment and listening perception'.

Since a soundscape composition can create a dynamic, reflective and expressive dialogue between the listener/community, the composer/researcher and the environment/place, its potential collaboration with fields such as acoustic ecology (Westerkamp 2002; Schine and Crompton 2012) and ethnography (Drever 2002; Gershon 2013; Patch 2013) have already been

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emphasised. Furthermore, some projects experimented with creating a platform for collaborative techniques for soundscape composition (e.g. Gregg Wagstaff's Touring Exhibition of Sound Environments (TESE) in the Isles of Harris and Lewis in northern Scotland (Drever 2002)), including multimedia applications through participatory design strategies and interactive arts (Chapman 2009; Freeman, DiSalvo, Nitsche and Garrett 2011; Harries 2013).

However, there are some issues which have also been discussed in the literature: the issue of the listener's ability to recognise the sounds or to explore the meanings that simultaneously play out at multiple levels; the issue of the relationship between the composer, the composition and the context from which the sounds are taken; and the issue of how to present such works to the audience/listeners. In response, we can say that various applied research techniques and artistic performances have revealed different perspectives regarding the dynamics of soundscape composition, such as Barry Truax's virtual soundscapes (Truax 2012). The potentials of these practices as a method of inquiry and as an artistic performance have already been highlighted in the literature (Paquette and McCartney 2012). On one hand, there are more artistic projects (such as 'Zagreb Everywhere' (2001), which was a collaboration between Gordana Crnkovic, Victor Ingrassia and David Hahn), where a place is explored and presented through the combination of soundscape composition with projected visual images and live read narration. Some of these explorations oppose the stereotypical representation of the place and its history by shaping the process of field recording and composing based on personal history and particular experience of the place (Hahn 2002). On the other hand, some recent works/projects developed around the notions of participation, co-creation and interpretation with a motivation to create an open and active engagement of the participants across times and spaces (Harries 2013; Hill 2013). Such multimedia environments enable artists to explore a place, a memory or a story and to share their own experiences and meanings, at the intersections with collective experiences, histories and memories, in their complexity, richness and locality. All these examples can be situated along the line of current discussions regarding the convergence of art and anthropology (e.g. Schneider & Wright 2013)

According to Gershon (2013), sonic ethnography has been defined as a response to the recent calls for sounded anthropology. John Levack Drever (2002) also points out the convergence between soundscape studies, more specifically soundscape composition, and recent ethnographic research, since they both attempt to develop a holistic understanding of 'sensuous experience and creation of outward response to that experience from the inside' (2002: 24). We need to rethink the ethnographic process in order to incorporate sensoriality and relationality of the experience, practice and knowledge of both researchers and participants (Pink 2009). Therefore, bringing the literature and practice of sensory ethnography and sonic studies together would widen the scope and the depth of both fields. As Pink experimented with visual tools and media, soundscape studies, especially if we consider its roots, can offer much to the sensory approaches to ethnographic practice. We can explore alternative methods that reveal the potentials of sound and listening, within the richness of our always-relational embodied cognition, as a way of knowing, understanding and expressing.

5. IN-BETWEEN SOUNDSCAPES OF VANCOUVER

By 'in-between soundscapes of Vancouver' I refer to how people living in transcultural settings create and experience diverse soundscapes and acoustic communities of Vancouver. In-betweenness derives from living through transcultural contexts, which contain experiences of being familiar with multiple sensuous geographies and living between two or more cultural regimes. Therefore, it creates an almost experimental situation where bodies, places and identities are enacted and negotiated through sensory acts and may become at odds with the dominant imaginary of place or culture as they are complicated by being in between histories, cultures and sensoriums (Marks 2000; Manning 2003). As Laura U. Marks beautifully describes, a meeting of cultures generates new forms of sense experience and new ways of embodying our relation with the world (2000: 23).

As Shilling (2008, 15–17) argues, when someone moves to a new city/environment, the newcomer's habitual memories, routines or rhythms of actions can be shattered by new experiences, including acoustic ones. Previous successful habits may clash, and a mismatch emerges between what the newcomer expects and what she or he experiences in the actual physical environment. Their lack of habitual memory and 'soundscape competence' (Truax 2001) of the city creates various complex situations for them. For instance, novel and unexpected sounds may inform the newcomer in unusual ways, or trigger their 'imaginatively hearing' (Ihde 2007). Consequently, this may transform their listening attention and modes. Don Ihde's concept of 'auditory imagination' (2007) emphasises how we recall or imaginatively fantasise sounds.The field of psychology offers some empirical findings for underlying cognitive processes of 'auditory imagination'. Evocative power of sounds can unfold through priming, which occurs based on types or qualities of sounds (e.g. their timbre, pitch). According to Timothy L. Hubbard (2010), a wide range of data also confirms

that auditory imagery interferes with the detection of an auditory stimulus but facilitates its discrimination or identification (2010: 321); how this occurs is highly dependent on the expectancies of the person (2010: 322). Furthermore, as Augoyard and Torgue (2005) outline, there are some 'sonic effects' specifically related to the complexity of aural perception and memory, such as anamnesis and phonomnesis. Similar to Ihde's auditory imagination, they refer to the voluntary or involuntary evocation of memories and associations by an aural experience.

Such experiences are common to all people; however, they play a significant role in transcultural contexts, since people's perspectives of life, city, self, their own migration biographies and sense of belonging can be transformed through their aural experience and remembering. As Marks suggests (2000), when people move to a new place, they bring sensory repertoire in their bodies and practices, and may perceive the new environment in different ways from its older inhabitants. In such a context, we can explore both how such a situation actually has an impact on the newcomer's perception of the soundscapes and relationship to the city, and, more importantly, how the newcomer can access and express her or his experiences in more performative and relational ways. Furthermore, we can also ask what such an impact tells about soundscapes and acoustic communities of that particular city.

6. FIRST FIELDWORK: SOUNDWALK AND SOUND DIARY AS PERFORMATIVE METHODS OF INQUIRY

The first fieldwork study for the 'In-Between Soundscapes of Vancouver' project investigated the newcomer's acoustic experience of the new city with their sensory repertoire of another place and their lack of soundscape competence. In this sense, I drew upon the triadic communicational model (Truax 2011), which analyses the listener, sound and the environment as a system and a process. In this regard, a newcomer's experience can be situated 'in between'; it can explore 'the fresh ear' of the observer in a sense that the newcomer is less habituated with a large number of sounds and listens to them with more attentive modes rather than background listening in comparison to the long-term inhabitants (Paquette 2004). On the other hand, in comparison to the foreign observer, residents have some level of 'soundscape competence' (Truax 2001) by being familiar with the soundscape and having constructed relations and attachments to some of the soundscapes in Vancouver. This is also why it is important to analyse this transitional period with the communicational model that deals with it as a dynamic system and process.

Since participants find it difficult to reflect on the everyday experience of sonic environments, a researcher needs particular techniques designed to trigger sonic awareness (Paquette 2004). In this regard, Andra McCartney explores and highlights the potential of walking and soundwalking as a sensory and performative research practice, and explores the issues of agency and improvisation, the role of participants and other models of soundwalking through her current work of *The Soundwalking Interactions Research-Creation Project*.[2] Both walking and soundwalking are found as methods of inquiry in a wide range of fields of study from geography to philosophy (Paquette and McCartney 2012). Another exemplary work, Heikki Uimonen's 'recorded listening walk method' (2011: 256), which draws upon Steven Feld and Donald Breinneis's call for doing 'ethnography *in* sound' (2004), has members of the community listen to, record and edit environmental sounds. This allows a collaborative documentation of sounds based on the cooperation between researchers and those who live within the soundscape being studied.

Based on these explorations, in my first applied project, which could be described as a sensory ethnographic fieldwork, I employed the practices of the soundwalk and sound diary as methods complementary to each other. First, since I wanted to focus on their everyday routines or rhythms, I asked the participants to choose a location or route that was significant for them or which they were familiar with for the soundwalk. Then, I organised an improvised one-to-one soundwalk with each participant, led by her or him, and a discussion session after the soundwalk. Later, for sound diaries, I provided my participants with a sound recorder for a week so that they could record the sounds they felt to be significant or somehow meaningful, and then I did follow-up interviews about their particular experiences with the sound diary and recorded sounds. All the fieldwork was done in early spring, from mid-March to mid-April 2012, in Vancouver. I had four participants who fitted the notion of a newcomer. Three of them came from Europe (Britain, France and Spain) and one of them was from Mexico. The group consisted of two female and two male participants. Their ages varied between 20 and 27. They collected a variety of sounds, including sounds of nature, industry, transportation, streets, markets, night life and their daily life setting such as home or school/workplace, as well as their accented English or own language in conversations with friends.

6.1. Reflections

Parallel to the previous applied projects, it can be said that the acoustic experience of the city, which people

[2]http://soundwalkinginteractions.wordpress.com/about/

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have a different awareness of, has an impact on their everyday moods and 'the feel' of certain neighbourhoods of the city. For several possible reasons, the newcomer reports enjoying the parts of the city or the soundscapes where they encounter people and 'things going on', such as East Hastings, Chinatown or Granville Street in Vancouver. They usually enjoyed sounds of markets, crowded streets and the coming spring. As one of the participants said, 'Vancouver can be a very interior city in the wintertime that houses are sonically isolated where the sounds are hidden in the buildings'. All of them mentioned how the quietness of the streets made them feel isolated. In this sense, we can say that we see a preference for spaces with human-scale activity, perhaps because they sound 'familiar' somehow and active enough to make the newcomer feel less isolated. Such an observation was interesting since it revealed that the soundscapes they enjoyed the most might not fit the 'ideal' soundscapes that people are usually expected to enjoy (e.g. quiet suburbs or tranquil nature). Therefore, it shows once again that the people's engagement in and interpretation of the soundscapes depend on their specific contexts including social activities, life conditions, daily moods and embodied memory. It was interesting to see how they listened to the soundscapes in more attentive and creative ways, as they attempted to recognise the source of a sound or when they encountered an unexpected soundscape. For instance, all of the participants paid attention to the quality of the soundscape where natural and industrial/machinery sounds intertwine, and mentioned it as one of the characteristics of Vancouver; the contrast between silent and noisy soundscapes seemed to appear suddenly and thus was felt strongly. At the same time, their way of judging the qualities of a sonic environment was usually shaped by their preconditioned expectations and the sensory repertoire they brought with them. For instance, all of the participants used statements like 'it feels more like/similar to the city I come from' in describing the qualities of a soundscape in Vancouver.

Moreover, they also had different acoustic experiences (and awareness) of the sounds they had been previously familiar with through the comparison between places. For instance, the participant coming from Madrid told me that she never noticed the noise of ventilation systems as much as she did in Vancouver, since the university campus on Burnaby Mountain, where she was staying, was quieter than Madrid downtown. She also added that she was curious about noticing the aural presence of ventilation systems in Madrid upon her return. Based on their comments, it was revealed that they would also listen to and acoustically experience their home cities in new ways when they would return home. On the other hand, the newcomer's lack of soundscape competence is usually an opening to other worlds such as one of my participant enjoying the sounds of industry in Vancouver. However, it can sometimes misguide or disorient them, such as one of the participants experiencing confusion about the sound of a train passing by down the valley; she couldn't recognise it as the sound of a train, which was a keynote sound for other neighbours in the area.

However, this example leads us to another important observation. The newcomer's acoustic experiences had been transformed through their interactions with the city. They became familiar with the variety of sounds within the city, based on their individual contexts (e.g. where they live, work, hang out), and progressively made sense of the acoustic worlds around them. This confirms that the newcomer's experience of soundscapes is transformed through time. All my participants mentioned how they felt strange about several sounds when they first arrived (e.g. sounds of rain hitting the window, or noisier home settings), but how they got used to them, and sometimes reinterpreted them as a sensory strategy to deal with their loneliness or any condition related to being away from their loved ones and home.

In this regard, the communicational model helped me to analyse this transitional period of the newcomer. In terms of methodology, the soundwalk and sound diary worked very well as complementary methods to one another. The participants enjoyed both methods throughout the project. As the participants mentioned, they explored everyday sounds in a new city that they wouldn't pay attention to if they were doing this in their home city. They also enjoyed the practice of soundwalking as a way of sharing silences and rhythms with someone, and the embodied bond we built through it worked very well for promoting communication between us. They mentioned that they found walking and listening to sounds in silence as a relaxing activity. In this regard, being a newcomer myself helped me to build this bond between us, through which I could reflect on their experience in its richness as much as possible.

Finally, in my first applied project, the participants consisted of a specific group of people with certain ages and interests. Therefore, it cannot tell much about the experience of other communities or groups of immigrants, so looking at the experience of people with different backgrounds would be an interesting extension. On the other hand, research on the newcomer's acoustic experience of a new city also needs to consider how the newcomer engages in the city as a member of the acoustic community, both as a listener and a sound maker.

7. SECOND FIELDWORK: SOUNDSCAPE COMPOSITION AS A COMPONENT OF AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PROCESS

After the first applied project, I decided that my ethnographic 'data' needed to be completed with further 'sounded' work, in terms of what Steven Feld and Donald Brenneis (2004) refer to by arguing for using sound as primary medium for ethnographic research including listening, recording, editing and representation; for a research *in* sound rather than merely *on* sound. Therefore, my interest was not only exploration of the newcomer's aural experience of the city itself, but also how she or he can express it through aural mediums. This motivated me to come up with an idea for an installation through which I could create a performative environment for documenting or sharing a sensory ethnographic process and the materials that emerge from it. In this regard, I drew upon the methods developed within soundscape studies including soundwalk, sound diary and soundscape composition.

Soundscape composition, as complementary to the practices of soundwalking and the sound diary, has the potential to be a means to explore and reflect embodied transcultural experience, since it is composed at the intersection of perception, contextual knowledge, and personal or collective memory and imagination. It is already a construction of experiences across times and spaces from the perspective of both the composer and the listener. Furthermore, it is significant to explore how it can play out when it becomes more relational and responsive through the interaction between multiple participants and materials (Harries 2013). Therefore, I sought to create a platform for co-creation through which perceptions and narratives could be transformed by the interactions across times and spaces, and in the presence of others. This involved creating an 'event' that would be open to new relationships, and simultaneous individuation of places (whether a neighbourhood of Vancouver or the installation space) and narratives in a constant process.

This was a collaborative installation where the process and co-creation were more important than the final material. For the fieldwork/recording (including the soundwalk and sound diary), I contacted four additional newcomers who had recently moved to Vancouver for their studies from other places including the USA, Russia and other Canadian regions. However, this time, there was an additional task/role for the participants; I informed them that I would use the sound clips they recorded as part of their sound diary as a feature within a sound installation. In addition, I also asked them to take pictures in the places where they recorded sounds related to their acoustic experience of the place, so that their images would be coloured by their aural experiences and processes of meaning-making. Furthermore, the participants could bring objects from the sites of their field recording, which were usually their everyday settings. I took pictures of the objects they brought while working in the installation site in order to present them along with the pictures the participants took. Thus, the participants would be a part of this installation project, which was designed as a collaborative process, throughout its various stages (from soundwalking to field recording; from bringing objects/photographs from the field to brainstorming about the installation space).

Interestingly, in comparison to the first project, such a role transformed the participants' engagement in the tasks by allowing their voices and bodily or symbolic explorations of the places to creatively appear in the recordings. As a result, they came up with a wide range of interesting sound materials to be used in the installation. Their participation in acoustic environments as a listener, as a sound recordist (with a short training in field recording) and as a sound maker became more apparent in the sound recordings of the participants, such as a recording of a participant talking to a custom officer at the border (Sound example 1) or a recording of a participant singing a German version of a song while the recording of the song in Russian was playing in the background (Sound example 2). Both recordings revealed that the participants prepared for recording these specific sounds as a creative expression of themselves or their everyday life. They creatively thought about where, what and how they could make and record sounds.

For the installation, I used the sound materials that they collected with minimal editing (organising the length of the sound clips and adding short silences between clips) and processing (only cleaning some noises and changing sound levels). Furthermore, I used programming (MaxMSP) in order to play sound clips randomly, but each loudspeaker played only one set of sound clips belonging to a specific participant. In this way, four participants are presented as four different narratives in a dialogue within the installation space through four distinct speakers located at each corner of the square-shaped space (Figure 1).

This means that each loudspeaker represented one specific participant by presenting the sounds and pictures she or he brought from the field. The four speakers were simultaneously playing sound clips with various lengths and silent breaks. Therefore, each narrative was telling its stories in a dialogue with others. However, since the lengths of sound clips were different and some level of randomness was integrated, complex dialogues between speakers/narratives emerged throughout the installation. It felt like

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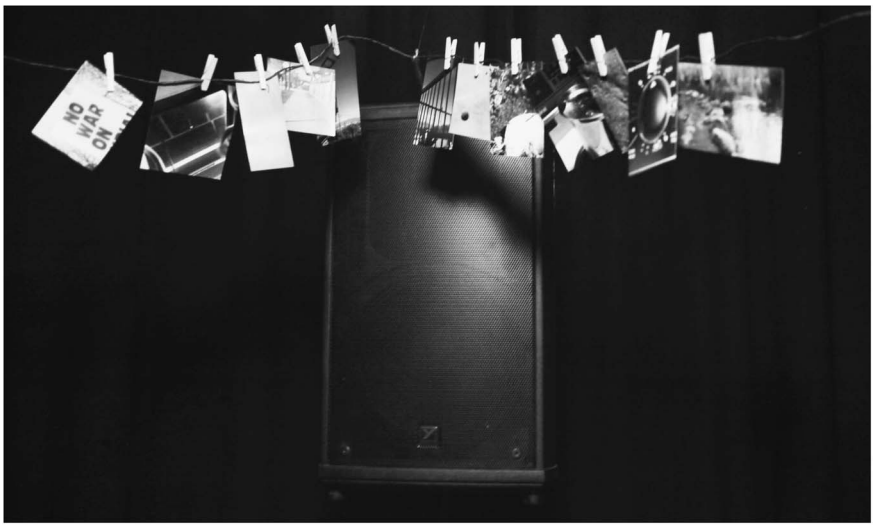

Figure 1. Speaker used in the In-Between Soundscapes of Vancouver project, with pictures the participants brought from the field.

the speakers were having conversations; sometimes one speaker dominated the space with its strong sonic qualities, or sometimes they spoke at the same time. Therefore, each participant has a unique experience of the installation. It was a strong expression of transcultural context by revealing its quality of multiplicity, richness and in-betweenness in an embodied way through the effect created by four speakers and movement of the participants within a closed installation space (Sound example 3).

Installation participants could listen to the sonic environment by changing positions with respect to the speakers, which were set at head height. Therefore, movement of the installation participants was encouraged through the rich dialogues between speakers. Based on their changing sensations, perceptions and memory associations triggered by the dynamic sonic environment, they could alter the location of the images hanging over the speakers. Such a dynamic and open narrative structure (sounds and pictures) could inform the installation participants both about the context of the environments where the sounds were taken and about the participants in indirect ways. I approached the installation as a process and left greater room for appropriation by the participants as I decided to use the sound clips recorded by the fieldwork participants and let the installation participants change the locations of the images, which were revealing contextual backgrounds of the sounds in concrete or imaginative ways. Thus, both groups of participants had a chance to engage with materials (whether sounds or pictures) in embodied, visceral ways. This was part of my attempt to build meaningful interaction and affective communication between different groups of participants across times and spaces.

7.1. Reflections

The installation expressed the richness and diversity of cultural-scapes of Vancouver, and the transcultural experience itself, by embracing the multiplicity of acoustic experiences and expressions of a group of newcomers coming from various cultural and geographical backgrounds within one acoustic space. The conversations between speakers/narratives emphasised this multiplicity and in-betweenness, similar to the newcomer's experience. Each narrative (as constituted by sounds and pictures) was coloured by their physical, personal, social and cultural worlds. Their accented voices or the sounds of the activities they performed during their field recording (e.g. eating, walking, singing, talking, riding on bus, cutting papers, listening to music, sitting in lectures, crossing the border) revealed a lot about the participants.They acoustically shared very intimate settings of their life; for instance, they recorded sounds while they were having a shower or having a conversation with a friend. The process revealed their everyday life, which could not be isolated from their transcultural experience, since it was always meshed with their living conditions, sensory memories and familiarity with cityscapes (of Vancouver). Thus, the narrative, sounds and pictures they brought together reflect these dynamics of their life; what kind of an environment they live or study/work in, and what kind of activities they engage in, shape the content of the recordings and images.

In this regard, developing a collaborative, process-oriented and performative setting for doing and sharing sensory ethnographic fieldwork revealed its potential in our project. I drew upon methods such as the soundwalk and sound diary, which were turned

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into performative expressions through the employment of approaches to soundscape composition from the beginning of the research. As emphasised before (Drever 2002), bringing ethnographic work and soundscape composition together can mutually enrich both fields. Approaches to soundscape composition can enable the researcher or the participants to explore and express their experiences in more local, rich and performative ways. At the same time, by incorporating the theory and practice of sensory ethnography into the soundscape composition process, we can address issues of cultural or social sensitivity. The relationships between the composer, the place and the context where the sounds are taken from for the composition, and how this plays out in the field or in the studio/installation, are crucial for the dynamics of soundscape composition. One may ask how well the composer knows the place so that she or he can record and process sounds in a balanced way in terms of maintaining a meaningful relation with the place or the culture (Westerkamp 2002). The fieldwork with participants, and the collaborative process of building a sonic installation from their fieldwork experience and materials, revealed a potential for a newer understanding of that relationship. In our project, the hybrid roles emerged as the participants became listeners, soundwalkers, fieldwork participants and composers (in the sense that they created sonic environments for their recordings, and they participated in building the sonic environment for the installation). By assuming multiple roles, the participants acquired new skills (such as different modes of listening, soundwalking and sound recording) and awareness.

In this regard, it is important to add that we are not merely approaching participants' experiences and perceptions simply as givens waiting for us to extract or signify them. Instead, we acknowledge that people can access, express or transform their experiences in unique ways through these performative ways of inquiry. As Ingold (2011) argues (regarding developing a 'dwelling perspective'), humans produce or compose things as a process of working with materials within the currents of their activities and 'the specific relational contexts of their practical engagement with their surroundings' (Ingold 2011: 10). Therefore, we cannot assume that people only transcribe pre-existing forms onto an initially formless material. Instead, through performative methodologies, we can reveal what unfolds as people explore and express their embodied experiences through engaging with materials in novel ways (e.g. taking pictures based on their listening to the environment (Figure 2; Sound example 4). The composition of the image seem to be parallel to that of the recording, the sound of wind chimes in the foreground, and the city sounds, such as the sound of ambulance passing by, in the background.

However, I would like to add that the event-like nature of the installation complicates the connections and meanings presented by the narrative since each installation participant had a particular experience of the sounds and pictures during their stay within the installation space (for instance, they might see the picture but could not hear the sounds associated with the picture). Interestingly, this is parallel to describing the process of composing a piece of soundscape composition like a journey that 'circumscribes the relationship, the conversation between composer and sound sources' (McCartney 2002). Westerkamp (2002) emphasises that soundscape compositions 'emerge', since they can only be pre-planned to a limited extent within a relational dialogue between the composer and the sound materials/soundscapes. On the other hand, as Westerkamp and McCartney highlight, our choices (which sound material to record or to compose) are always shaped by our cultural, social and political backgrounds, including our past experiences with various soundscapes and our present life conditions. Therefore, with these qualities, soundscape composition can offer us new approaches and methods for ethnographic fieldwork, especially within the transcultural context. As Marks (2000) says, there is potential for artistic and political experimentation and invention in a transcultural

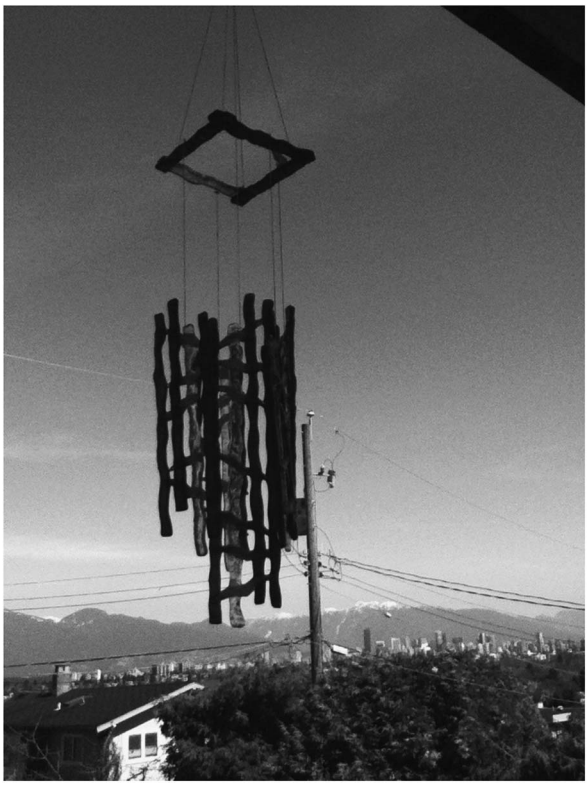

Figure 2. Windchime and the city: participant's photograph from the In-Between Soundscapes of Vancouver project.

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context that may allow new forms of expression to emerge. I believe that such methods are rich enough to offer a great deal to the ethnographic work.

In this regard, the context of newcomer brings interesting dynamics to these relations. The in-betweenness of a newcomer, as a listener and a sound maker, revealed itself in creative ways throughout the process, as they explored, experienced and recorded sounds of Vancouver. They offered a unique approach to studying and recording a soundscape, as they created an interesting link between local and global, since their experiences and identities are constituted and expressed within this in-betweenness. For instance, the recording of their accented English and crossing the border revealed their transcultural realities.

Finally, I would like to emphasise the importance of a collaborative and process-oriented approach to soundscape composition. Such an approach, which enables people to voice their experiences in relation to or in the presence of others, reflects the multiplicity and relationality of different levels of meaning. Therefore, it can address issues regarding the dialogue between the composer and the soundscape/place in novel ways. More collaborative platforms for creating soundscape composition which create a more balanced dialogue between participants and cultures can be helpful in diverse settings from ethnographic to educational.

8. CONCLUSION

The focus of my applied projects is not only the acoustic experience of a newcomer, but also how this creates contexts where we can explore the soundscapes and the relationships between listener, sounds and environment in complex ways. Therefore, it is not only a subject matter for urban or migration studies, but it can also benefit various projects within soundscape studies in terms of both theory and practice. Furthermore, the convergence of soundscape studies and ethnography should be emphasised once again. Diverse approaches to the soundwalk, sound diary and soundscape composition can be integrated into ethnographic research. One's methods or concepts can solve the other's problem, or at least bring a novel perspective. This may also address some issues regarding the dynamics and potentials of these methods. As we mentioned, but could not fully analyse in this paper, this leads us to some epistemological and artistic discussions, which would mutually enrich both fields. The newcomer's transcultural experience of urban space is one of the contexts that promote such interdisciplinary studies. In return, we can gain more insight into their experience and sense of place in today's globalised world on the move and, at the same time, into the theory and methods of sonic studies and ethnography.

Supplementary material

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1355771814000065

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