

Noise, Restrictions, and the Live Music Sector: A Case Study of the Musical Soundscape of San Antonio

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLBl4HsdJTk>

Abstract

As high-density urban living becomes more common in larger cities, many live music venues are under increasing pressure to restrict noise levels. Efforts to renew cities' sound ordinances have proved to be difficult. This is due to heated conflict between businesses, who argue existing rules are too restrictive, and nearby residents, who complain that loud venues hurt their quality of life. To test those assumptions, the proposed research intends to investigate noise levels experienced by patrons at entertainment venues and festivals of various sizes and capacities (n~70) across the city of San Antonio, Texas. In addition, it aims to understand what is being done to protect venues and patrons alike. To the knowledge of the author this would be the first city-wide noise levels study conducted in the live music sector. At stake are distinct perceptions of noise, the uniqueness of the city, and the nature of public space.

To meet the goals of this study, the methodology used is threefold. First, an Extech digital datalogging sound level meter is used to capture detailed noise level ranges inside and outside of about seventy concert venues across San Antonio. Data published is aggregated and thus, anonymous. Second, the data collected provides the means to create a heatmap using the ArcGIS software. Finally, venue owners/operators as well as city officials are interviewed to assess what policies and proactive means are employed if any to protect both venues and audience members.

This research has implication across a wide range of fields that include but is not limited to cultural policies, sound studies, law and economics, music consumption, public health, cultural geography, urban development, and the live music sector at large. For example, the lack of disclosure laws on product choices in terms of noise levels at venues in the live music sector is an issue that could have a significant

impact on ticket sales and customer choice.

Keywords: noise, live music sector, musical soundscape, sound studies, noise restrictions, San Antonio

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Founder and Coordinator of Music Biz Day, the largest free music biz expo in Texas. Dr. Renard joined UTSA as part of the University's Goldstar Initiative, which supports its recruitment and retention of world-class faculty members. He has the unique background of someone who has taught business courses in business schools and music courses in music departments, and then used this experience to develop music business courses. Dr. Renard is Assistant Director of the startup incubator CITE (Center of Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship). He is also a touring and recording artist, violinist, violist, active conductor, and the founder and arranger of the Grammy-Nominated Bohemian Quartet. Dr. Renard holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA) from the University of Connecticut as well as a Doctorate in International Business (DBA) from Southern New Hampshire University. Previously held collegiate appointments include Colby College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Connecticut Storrs, Providence College, Eastern Connecticut State University, Southern New Hampshire University, and the University of California at San Diego.



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