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A right to the sonic city? - discourses and practices around sound and noise seen through the *kulturljudzon*

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Abstract

Since the sensory turn in the 1980s and 90s, increasing focus has been put upon the non-visual senses within spatial theory and research. One analytical lens that has emerged is that of the soundscape, through which sounds are understood as a natural and inherent part of space and place-making within the urban. Intertwined in this understanding of sound is the tension between sound and noise and the debated definitions and understandings of noise. This thesis examines how sounds and noises are institutionally defined, understood, and regulated in a Swedish context. This was done through a discourse analysis of governmentally and municipally published material, as well as a case study of a kulturljudzon in Sofielund, Malmö, in which implications of the kulturljudzon in relation to how sound and noise are understood were reviewed and analyzed. As background, the thesis accounts for previous research on sound and the city, as well as historical and contemporary soundscapes of Malmö in general and Sofielund in particular. The thesis develops a theoretical framework that combines sound and noise theory with the right to the city towards a “right to the sonic city”, through a dualism of “the right to make sound” and “the right not to hear noise”. Research methods used were a critical discourse analysis (CDA) based on Carol Bacchi’s WPR approach and a qualitative content analysis of documents pertaining to the kulturljudzon in Sofielund. Results from the CDA included that sound is predominantly problematized through a technocratic discourse of noise, exposure and health risk, while omitting perspectives pertaining to the soundscape and the social and spatial production of acoustic value. Results from the qualitative content analysis in relation to the case study were that the kulturljudzon in Sofielund is generally an effective de-noisefying tool for the affected space and sound-making actors within it, but that it is institutionally understood as a relatively peripheral spatial exception to the technocratic discourse and regulations set by governmental institutions. Discussion of the results revolved around interpreting the institutional discourse from a soundscape perspective, arguing for an increased integration of participatory voices, social implications, and context-dependent understandings of noise in institutional sound theory and regulation. Conclusions drawn by the thesis included that the kulturljudzon could be considered a policy with potential to diversify the technocratic discourse within urban sound policy in Swedish governmental and municipal institutions, but one that is currently isolated in its application and scope. Potential further research venues identified mainly revolved around moving beyond the purely institutional focus into the everyday experience of how sounds and noises are interpreted and regulated.

Key words: kulturljudzon, sound, noise, soundscape, sensory turn, WPR approach, critical discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis

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1. Introduction

Since the sensory turn in the 1980s and 90s, increasing focus has been put upon the senses in relation to space within geographical research (Pocock, 1989). An increasingly popular component of these sensory approaches has been that of sound, namely what is known as soundscapes and soundscape ecology. Urban soundscapes are shaped by what is sometimes interchangeably referred to as “sound” and “noise”, however, whether a sound is interpreted as a neutral sound or as an inherently negative noise can be a very subjective judgement to make, and the definition of noise is debated within sound research (Liu et al., 2022).

A contemporary situation in which these discourses around urban sound and noise has shaped urban space is the case of the *kulturljudzon* in Sofielund, Malmö. A *kulturljudzon* can briefly be described as a designated area in which new housing may not be built and existing housing is expected to tolerate louder sounds for the benefit of allowing for a higher degree of cultural sound presence and expression within the area (Malmö stad, 2021). Since its introduction in Malmö in 2021, Gothenburg’s municipality also introduced a *kulturljudzon* in the industrial area of Ringön in 2025, and there have been political proposals for similar initiatives in Stockholm’s municipality (Göteborgs stad, 2025; Motion 2025/714). The *kulturljudzon* is, as such, a growing phenomenon that is spreading in Swedish planning policy as a way of handling conflicting acoustic interests and the sound-noise-tension (Foroughanfar, 2022).

1.1. Aim

This thesis aims to be an analytical piece exploring the nature of how urban sounds are defined and governed. While its method has a focus on a Swedish and Malmö context, as well as a case study taken from Malmö, it generally aims to use this as an example rather than being a distinct and specific study on Malmö particularly.

This thesis is neither testing a hypothesis nor attempting to judge any particular policies or cases. Rather, it is and should be viewed as an exploratory and analytical piece on how sounds are interpreted, defined and understood by governmental and municipal institutions, and how this may affect policies on and experiences of urban, particularly cultural, sounds.

1.1.1. Purpose and delimitations

The purpose of this research is multifold. Firstly, it aims to further develop theoretical understandings of how sounds are understood and governed through an integrated framework of previous theories on sound and noise as well as the right to the city. In this, a purpose is to explore ways in which power relations and cultural predispositions shape how different types of sound are regarded and regulated. Additionally, it seeks to review how the general concept as well as the specific application of the *kulturljudzon* in

Malmö interacts with these dynamics of urban sound, and whether the kulturljudzon could be considered an effective, at least partial, solution to tensions around practices pertaining to urban sound.

A few delimitations have been made to the scope, theme and methodology of this thesis for the sake of limited time and keeping a clear focus. While a citizen's or everyday life perspective on the issues of sound and noise handled in this thesis could have been an interesting and beneficial complement to the institutional focus, the choice was made to keep a mainly institutional focus. Reasons for this include time and scope considerations, but chiefly to keep a clear thread between the theory and methodology of the thesis.

1.2. Research questions

Based on the named aims, purposes, themes and concepts, this paper seeks to answer the following two research questions:

- 1) *Within urban soundscapes, how are sounds and noises institutionally interpreted and understood?*

and

- 2) *How do different institutions define and operationalize the concurrent concepts of making sounds and hearing noises?*

2. Background

As a background to the topic, approach and case study, this thesis accounts for the emergence of a sonic-spatial focus within the geographic discipline as well as the history of Malmö as a sonic city and of the kulturljudzon in Sofielund as a sonic place. Among the reasons for the choice of Malmö and the kulturljudzon as a case study for this topic is the background of Malmö as an industrial and cultural city. A brief historical review of Malmö as a sonic city was also made, with the precaution that comprehensive accounts of sonic observations or sonic data pre-1900 is scarce (Müller, 2012).

2.1. Research on sound and the city

Academic research on urban sound is to be considered a fairly contemporary field, as urban studies over the past three decades have increasingly moved beyond a predominantly visual understanding of cities (Pocock, 1989). Traditionally, urban research focused on that which could be seen, such as architecture, urban form, landscapes, maps, and surveillance. Beginning in the 1990s and 2000s, however, scholars argued that cities are experienced through all senses. This shift is sometimes referred to as the sensory revolution, the sensorial turn, or the sensory turn (Howes, 2021; Omrani, 2023). The sensory turn emerged from fields such as anthropology,

geography, sociology, and cultural studies. Scholars like David Howes and Paul Rodaway challenged the dominance of vision in social research (Howes, 2021; Rodaway, 2002). They argued that everyday urban life is fundamentally multisensory: people navigate cities through sound, smell, touch, movement, and embodied experience as much as through sight. The sensory turn therefore sought to understand how sensory experiences shape social relations, identity, memory, power, and place-making. Rather than treating the city as a visual object, it conceptualized the city as a lived and embodied environment. Within this broader sensory turn, sound became a major focus of research. Scholars argued that urban sound is not merely a side-effect of an activity but an important component of how cities are produced, experienced, and governed (Rodaway, 2002; Schafer, 1977).

An early influential figure within sound research was R. Murray Schafer, whose concept of the soundscape described the acoustic environment as a meaningful cultural and ecological phenomena (Schafer, 1977). Stemming from Schafer's soundscape concept, researchers began studying how sounds communicate and connect to place-making, social life, power relations, and contemporary urban policy. (Wissmann, 2016; Kato, 2009).

Contemporary research increasingly argues that cities should move from a purely noise-reduction approach toward a broader understanding of soundscapes and urban acoustic diversity (Brambilla & Maffei, 2010; Kato, 2009; Radicchi et al., 2021). The notion that even abrasive sounds may have a necessary place in urban environments and should in some contexts be protected and prioritized has arisen in some writings on urban sound (Foroughanfar, 2022). It has been argued that cultural districts, nightlife economies, and creative industries depend on the presence of sound production (Garcia Ruiz & South, 2019). Consequently, some cities now recognize sound as a cultural resource rather than simply an environmental problem. In this, the example of Norra Grängesbergsgatan and Sofielund in Malmö becomes particularly relevant. The establishment of a cultural sound zone reflects a sonic urbanist perspective: rather than suppressing sound-producing activities, planning policy acknowledges music, cultural production, and urban vibrancy as valuable elements of the city's acoustic environment (Foroughanfar, 2022).

2.2. Malmö as a sonic city

In essence, Malmö's sonic history traces a shift from pedestrian and maritime acoustics to soundscapes saturated by industrial noise, towards a contemporary condition where sound is institutionally curated, politicized, and aestheticized (Holgersen, 2015; Wissman, 2016). In this, the city has transformed into both a medium and instrument of sonic experience.

2.2.1. Historical soundscapes

Urban soundscapes ought to be seen as simultaneously culturally mediated, technologically shaped, and historically contingent (Yablon, 2007); hence, the historical context is important to understanding the sonic qualities of an urban area such as Malmö. While accounts of sonic observations or sonic data pre-1900 is very scarce, especially so for Malmö, the spatial, cultural and industrial development of the city can offer some understanding of its sonic qualities (Müller, 2012). In 19th century Malmö, street level soundscapes were often centered around domestic biophonies (sounds produced by organisms as opposed to technology) such as sounds from markets, livestock and pedestrians, with less mechanical sounds (Garrioch, 2003; Schafer, 1977). The importance of the industrializing port activities also likely had a considerable impact on Malmö soundscapes of the past, with work related to fishing and maritime trade being of great importance to Malmö's industrialization (Holgersen, 2015). During the early to mid-1900s, the soundscapes of Malmö like many other developing cities were largely transformed through the expansion and mechanization of transport infrastructures, with automobiles, trams and railways making traffic sound the dominant factor (Wissman, 2016).

2.2.2. Contemporary soundscapes

The modern history of Malmö as a sonic city is rooted in its past as an industrial port city; Malmö today is often referred to as a “post-industrial” city (Holgersen, 2015). This development has in several ways affected Malmö as a sonic city. Different projects in which the development of Malmö as a sonic city has been emphasized have been introduced; one way in which the city has distinguished itself in the last ten years is through the concept of the *kulturljudzon*.

2.3. Case study: *Kulturljudzon* in Sofielund and Norra Grängesbergsgatan

The *kulturljudzon* in Malmö is a spatially defined area in Sofielund, centred around Norra Grängesbergsgatan, established in 2021 as Sweden's first cultural sound zone (Malmö stad, 2021). It had the stated purpose to facilitate and protect cultural and creative activities such as music venues, nightclubs, rehearsal spaces, workshops, and other associations by allowing for higher sound levels than would normally be permitted in urban areas. Consisting of an area of a few blocks (see Figure 1), the zone is mostly composed of formerly active or current used industrial buildings, such as factories, garages, and storage facilities (Malmö stad, n.d).

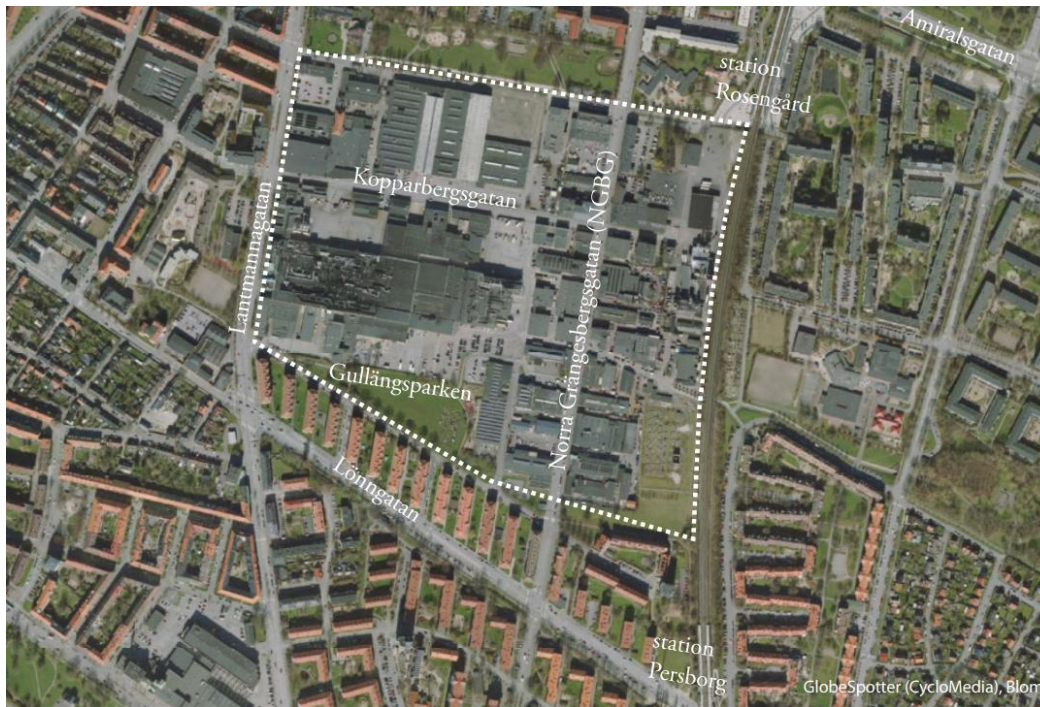


Figure 1. Map showing the delineated area of the kulturljudzon in Sofielund (Malmö stad, 2021).

From an urban-planning perspective, the kulturljudzon represents an attempt to institutionalize and preserve an existing cultural soundscape rather than treating noise solely as an environmental problem. By prioritizing sound-making cultural and industrial activities over residential development in parts of Sofielund, the municipality seeks to prevent residential encroachment from displacing activities that generate sound. The zone can therefore be understood as a form of sound-based spatial planning, in which sound and the soundscape can be seen as a legitimate component of urban identity and cultural production (Foroughanfar, 2022).

The initiative emerged partly from the grassroots cultural development surrounding the NGBG festival and the area's long-established mixture of industry, associations and alternative cultural activities in cooperation with Malmö's municipality and BID Sofielund, a partnership association composed of property owners, businesses and other associations within the area (Malmö stad, 2023a). Thus, the kulturljudzon illustrates what can be considered a broader shift from understanding urban sound primarily as pollution to being controlled towards recognizing sound as a social, cultural and spatial resource (Atkinson, 2007).



Figure 2. Aerial photograph of Sofielund's area of operation (Malmö stad, 2021).

2.3.1. History of the area: the industrial and criminal

Aligning with the structural and cultural development of Malmö from industrial to post-industrial, Sofielund has a past, and to a fair extent a present, as an industrial area (Malmö stad, 2024). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Sofielund emerged as part of Malmö's industrial growth. The expansion of the manufacturing sector and construction of nearby rail networks created demand for industrial buildings and housing for employed workers. By the 1930s, Norra Grängesbergsgatan had become the main artery of the newly established Sofielund industrial district. Its location near the railway network made it attractive for factories, warehouses, workshops, and logistics businesses (Jensen & Righard, 2023).

The area reflected dominant economic and spatial trends of the early to mid-twentieth century: clear functional separation between industry, housing, and transportation. Manufacturing firms occupied large industrial buildings in and around Norra Grängesbergsgatan, while surrounding neighborhoods housed industrial workers (Jensen & Righard, 2023). The district's street names (see Figure 2), many derived from Swedish industrial or mining towns such as Kopparberg and Uddeholm, symbolized its connection to national industrial development (Malmö stad, 2024). From an urban economic perspective, Sofielund functioned as a productive landscape integrated into Malmö's industrial economy.

Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating during the 1980s and 1990s, Malmö underwent profound economic restructuring (Holgersen, 2015). Shipbuilding and manufacturing

declined, and the city transitioned toward services, knowledge industries, and finance (Holgersen, 2015). Municipal accounts describe how left behind industrial premises became associated with illegal clubs, informal businesses, and neglected housing properties, contributing to perceptions of Sofielund as an unsafe and non-secure area of the city (Jensen & Righard, 2023; Malmö stad, 2024).

2.3.2. Cultural area

The cultural significance of Norra Grängesbergsgatan and Sofielund predates the establishment of the kulturljudzon by some time. Because industrial rents remained relatively low, artists, musicians, activists, migrant entrepreneurs, and creative organizations were able to establish themselves in former industrial buildings (Malmö stad, 2024). Rehearsal studios, artist workshops, music venues, educational organizations, and cultural associations gradually began to cluster along Norra Grängesbergsgatan during the 2000s and 2010s (Malmö stad, 2024). Laleh Foroughanfar's (2022) doctoral research describes the street as a "street of associations," highlighting how migrants, entrepreneurs, artists, and activists collectively reproduced urban life through everyday practices rather than formal planning interventions. This phase can be interpreted through theories of bottom-up urban regeneration, in which low rents attracted experimental and in other areas unwelcome activities, vacant industrial premises were shaped into space for cultural expression, and diverse social groups shared the same infrastructure, creating informal networks that eventually began to generate new economic opportunities (Foroughanfar, 2022). The result of this bottom-up regeneration of a left behind area should thus not be seen as a conventional arts district, but as a hybrid environment where car repair shops, migrant businesses, cultural venues, and creative industries coexist.

By the 2010s-2020s, Malmö municipality in correspondence with local actors began to recognize the Sofielund and Norra Grängesbergsgatan area as a cultural cluster with economic assets (Foroughanfar, 2022). In 2016, the NGBG association was founded with support from Malmö municipality and local property owners (Möller, 2021). The same year, the first edition of the NGBG Gatufest, a DIY music festival that has grown exponentially in the last ten years, took place (Malmö stad, 2024). The area was formally defined as a kulturljudzon in 2021 (Malmö stad, n.d).

3. Theoretical framework – “a right to the sonic city”

The theoretical framework for this thesis is constructed by a combination of the right to the city and the concepts of sounds and noises, making for the concepts of “the right to make sound” and “the right to not have to hear noise”, and especially the tension and conflict between these concepts.

3.1. Sound and noise

Within discussions of urban sound, the dichotomy and tension between “sound” and “noise”, two terms which describe different ways in which the auditory is viewed and experienced, is often brought up. While a sound is most often a neutral description of any sort of auditory vibration, a noise is inherently negative, unwanted and often perceived and unnecessary as well as possibly harmful (Foroughanfar & Möller, 2025). Bell et al. (2001) delve deeper into what makes a sound a noise; moving on from the most basic definition of noise as an “unwanted sound”, they claim that noise is heavily dependent on environment.

Within a Swedish culture and language context, the distinction and tension between the two terms becomes abundantly clear, in how there is “ljud” [sound] and “oljud” [noise, literal translation: “*non-sound*”]. There is also the term “buller”, which may be used interchangeably with the term noise, but more explicitly refers to sounds that can be harmful to mind and body (Socialstyrelsen, 2025). While noises are defined as sounds, they are also a significant *other* based on cultural, social and spatial dimensions: Foroughanfar & Möller (2025) make the connection to Douglas’ (1966) notion of dirt as “matter out of place” and in the same vein refer to noises as “sounds out of place”. In this sense, sounds, when they have been securely identified as unwanted noise, become something that is to be removed from the space in which they are noisy: either by silencing them, or relocating the cause of the noise into another space in which it is no longer considered noise. Pickering & Rice (2017) see noise as something inherently spatial: “noise [...] is the by-product of ‘a systematic classification and ordering of sounds,’ and there is therefore no such thing as ‘absolute noise’ because no sound is noisy outside of the particular classificatory system in which it does not fit. Sounds are not noisy in themselves, but can become noise if they occur in a place where they are not supposed to be”. Sound, on the other hand, is a more open and neutral description of the auditory, lacking the same concrete spatial characteristics (Foroughanfar & Möller, 2025).

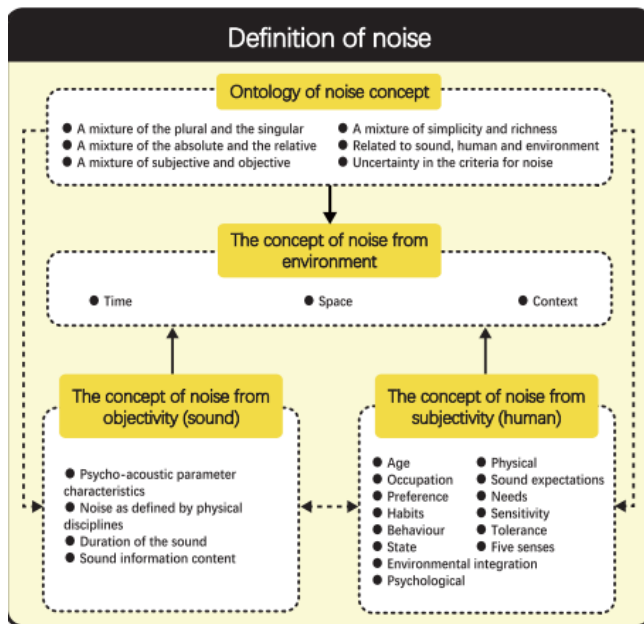


Figure 3. Structural links between the categories of challenges, definitions, opportunities, and actions pertaining to noise. Taken from Liu et al., (2022).

On a more deeply analytical level of defining noise, Liu et al. (2022) divide the noise into “objectivity (sound)” and “subjectivity (human)” in addition to the concept of noise from environment (see Figure 3). This definition of noise also builds upon Pickering & Rice’s (2017) definition of noise as a spatially dependent phenomenon, widening it into the concept of noise from environment, which includes time as context as environmental factors making the “noise”. Liu et al. (2022) widens this context to not only environmental factors in purely spatial terms, but also time and what they refer to as “context”. This context refers to the different factors that together make the concepts of noise from both human (subjective) and purely sonic (objective) factors (see Figure 3). Attempting to apply this understanding of what makes sounds into noises to institutional policy would run the risk of being too narrow; hence, the theoretical framework of this thesis has taken these understandings of noise and applied them into the broader concept of the right to the city.

3.2. The right to the city

The right to the city, as one of the most well-known and applied theoretical concepts within human geography, can be applied in a multitude of ways (Mitchell, 2003). The concept of the “right to the city” was first articulated by Lefebvre in his 1967 book *Le Droit à la Ville* (Lefebvre, 1967; King, 2019). Lefebvre argued that urban space is not merely a physical container for social life but is socially produced through political, economic, and cultural processes (Lefebvre, 1967). The right to the city therefore entails more than access to urban resources or economic privileges. Rather, it should be seen as a right for communities to take part in reshaping the processes of urbanization themselves. For Lefebvre, this right has two interrelated dimensions: participation and

appropriation (Purcell, 2014). Participation refers to the right of inhabitants to take part centrally in decision-making processes that produce urban space. Appropriation concerns the right to physically access, occupy, and use urban spaces in ways that prioritize lived experience over commodified functions (King, 2019; Purcell, 2014). Later scholars, notably David Harvey, expanded the concept, framing it as a collective right to remake the city in accordance with social justice; Harvey (2015, 2017) emphasizes that since urbanization absorbs surplus capital and shapes social relations, struggles over the city are fundamentally struggles over political-economic power.

3.3. “The right to make sound” and “the right to not hear noise”

Although originally formulated with emphasis on urban space, the right to the city may also be productively extended to the sensory dimensions of urban life such as sound. Often, this has been spoken of in terms of democratizing sound or the urban soundscape: Kopljar et al. (2024) and Patch (2009) discuss sound in terms of the “democratisation of standards for soundscapes” and the “sound of democracy”. Urban soundscapes are socially produced in similar ways as physical spaces: they can reflect power relations, economic standpoints, and regulatory discourses. Construction, traffic, commercial music, and how “noise” is policed all demonstrate how sound is governed and unevenly distributed. Applying the right to the city to sound involves recognizing that acoustic environments are part of the urban commons. Like how the right to the city has many times been applied in practices of participatory uses and understanding of space, the same regarding sound would entail involving residents in decisions about noise regulation, zoning, festival permits, nightlife policies, and infrastructural design (Atkinson, 2007). Appropriation would involve the right to produce sound through protest, music-making, street performance, and everyday sociability without disproportionate suppression, especially for marginalized communities whose sonic practices may be discriminated against or criminalized (Canton, 2024). Moreover, sound can serve as a site of contestation over urban identity and belonging. For example, disputes over amplified music, religious calls, or street gatherings often reflect deeper struggles over who has the right to be audible in the city. A “right to the sonic city” would therefore advocate equitable acoustic conditions: reducing harmful noise burdens in disadvantaged neighborhoods while protecting cultural and political expressions from exclusionary regulation (Patch, 2009; Kopljar et al., 2024).

In this way, extending the right to the city to sound foregrounds the multisensory production of urban space. It reframes acoustic governance as a question of spatial justice and emphasizes that the democratic transformation of cities must include not only who occupies space, but also who and what is heard and not heard within it. Herein lies the most central theoretical frame of this thesis, that is, the tense relationship between two perceived sonic “rights”: the right to make sound and the right not to hear noise. Neil Smith (2003), one of the more prominent writers on the right to the city,

emphasizes the “who gets what, where, and why and who loses where?”; while the fight for sonic space within an urban soundscape doesn’t necessarily need to be seen as a zero-sum game, the duo of the right to make sound and the right not to hear noise does lend itself well to be viewed as a distinct dualism. In the context of the kulturljudzon, this dualism may be interpreted as almost explicitly spatially defined: within the kulturljudzon, the right to make sound is prioritized and protected, while in the parts of the city outside of this designated area, the right not to hear noise is instead prioritized and protected.

Additionally, since noise and sound are institutionally defined, but also culturally relative and individually experienced, it is not only a matter of spatial context that defines what sounds are noises and where, but also what actor is making the judgement of whether a sound is an acceptable sound or an unacceptable noise. Therein, the essence of the tension and foundation for issues and conflicts in regard to sounds and noises are not between the sounds or even who is making them, but between the institutions, cultural understandings and individual preferences that govern the interpretation of the sonic as a sound or a noise. The specific perspective and angle on this tension that the theory and methodology of this thesis targets is that of the institutional versus the cultural and individual. Through analyzing the ways in which governmental institutions have defined, controlled and operationalized noises and the discourse around it, this thesis seeks to find and define what assumptions, ideals, and possible discrepancies are present in Malmö’s sound legislation and agency. How and based on what have governmental institutions established universal guidelines for something as subjective and relative as which of the things we hear are considered okay and which aren’t?

4. Methodology & research design

As the research design approaching the process around discourses and practices regarding urban sound in Malmö, a chiefly qualitative methodology was developed. On the most general level, the goal was to decipher the governance and agency around sound through the lens of the theoretical framework around sound, noise and the right to the city. Firstly, a critical discourse analysis was made of municipal and government documents regarding sound and noise, to deepen understanding of the discourse around different types of sound and how it has developed. Documents chosen outline the agency and process through which sound experienced as noise is treated and handled institutionally, i.e. the process of noise complaints. Here, the approach and motive were to look for how different types of sounds are 1) described, and 2) handled, controlled and limited. Secondly, a qualitative content analysis was also made of documents that focused on the case study of the kulturljudzon in Sofielund. With this, the aim was to get a more local and in-practice perspective on urban soundscapes as a

complement to the more overarching institutional perspective brought from the discourse analysis, as well as to analyze how the kulturljudzon and its underlying ideals relate to the institutional understandings of sound and noise.

4.1. Document analysis

The first method utilized was that of a document analysis. It was used to create an understanding of how the establishment of the kulturljudzon fits into the history and culture around sound in the city. The documents chosen for the document analysis were chiefly those that entail the kulturljudzon, from the area before the project was introduced, how the project has been constructed and applied, and what the future of the project might imply. Additionally, the document analysis sought to identify the implications of the kulturljudzon in relation to institutional understandings of sound and noise.

Table 1. Documents selected for document analysis.

Document name [translation]	Writer/source	Year of publication
Sofielunds Verksamhetsområde 2040 [Sofielund's area of operation 2040]	Malmö Stad	2021
Stadsutvecklingzoner [City development zones]	Malmö stad & Vinnova	2020

4.1.1. Qualitative content analysis

For the document analysis, a qualitative content analysis methodology was utilized. The approach taken was based on Mayring (2014). This entails a systematic approach analyzing textual material while retaining the interpretive strengths of qualitative research. It combines qualitative interpretation with selected quantitative elements, such as systematic categorization and, where appropriate, counting of categories (Mayring, 2014). This approach was chosen because of its alignment with the aims of the kulturljudzon case study, namely, to uncover how the institutional understandings and regulations of sound and noise relate to the establishment and effects of the kulturljudzon.

4.2. Discourse analysis

Secondly, this thesis made use of a discourse analysis of different municipal and state documents to attempt to uncover how sound is portrayed and treated from an institutional perspective. These are documents that outline the process and agency regarding sound regulation and governance in Malmö and Sweden. The choice was made to take this approach to account for what institutional discourses and underlying

ideals shape how sound is governed. As opposed to the kulturljudzon specific documents chosen for document analysis, the documents that are subject to discourse analysis more general to how sound is defined, categorized and regulated within Malmö and Swedish institutions.

4.2.1. WPR approach

Methodologically, the discourse analysis is based on the “What’s the Problem Represented to be” (WPR) approach as developed by Carol Bacchi (2009) and built upon by Rönnblom & Edwards (2025). After following the contextual steps of problematization, context-building, and identification of proposals, the seven steps of the WPR approach were applied as follows:

Table 2. The seven questions of the WPR approach, based on Bacchi, (2009) and Hickman (2026).

Question or process	Approach
Q1. What is the “problem” represented to be in a specific policy or policies?	Central framing of the issue
Q2. What assumptions are underlying in this representation of the “problem”?	Epistemological & ontological assumptions (“knowledges”)
Q3. How did this representation of the “problem” arise?	Genealogical analysis (historical emergence)
Q4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?	Searching for silences, omissions, alternative framings
Q5. What effects does this representation produce?	Looking for effects on: - discourse - subjects (identities) - lived experiences - objectification
Q6. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced and defended?	Looking for practices, institutions, and power relations
Process 7. Self-problematization of the analysis	Apply the same critique to your own assumptions and analysis

4.3. Methodological standpoints

Lastly, a few methodological standpoints should be taken, considered, and reflected upon. These include my positionality and personal engagement in the theme and place of research, research ethics, as well as methodological limitations of the thesis. In alignment with Graham (2018) and the need for explicit moral positioning when conducting critical discourse analyses and similarly moralistic approaches, the choice was made to include a direct first-person narrative in particularly the positionality section.

4.3.1. Positionality

As someone who has had a degree of personal involvement and engagement with the *kulturljudzon* as a “cause” of sound (or noise), I recognize that my position within the theme might not be the same as other hearers of sound. Having been a part-time musician for close to ten years, I to an extent have a need and desire to make loud sounds on a regular basis, and sometimes publicly.

In both direct and indirect personal experiences, I have sensed the tension and conflicts between different understandings of and preferences for (cultural) sound within the urban. As a live musician, the act of making loud sounds is something that I’m passionate about and has been a part of my weekly routine for many years. Bands that I’ve been part of have used rehearsal spaces, recording studios, and live performances within the *kulturljudzon* in Sofielund; I’ve also had some engagement with organizing events in the area that revolve around music and (often loud) sounds in public space. On an anecdotal level, I have noticed some of the impacts of institutionalizing sounds. The exploratory approach that I’ve taken in this thesis is to some extent based in these direct and indirect experiences and engagements, since they have given me a sense of curiosity regarding how and why (cultural) sound is governed within the urban. Within this is also an exploration of the *kulturljudzon*, both as an audio-spatial concept and the way in which it has been applied in Sofielund. I’ve personally been struggling for a few years with my own thoughts on the *kulturljudzon* in theory as well as in practice in Sofielund. On one hand, the idea of giving creative expression and loud sounds a designated space where it is prioritized was something I appreciated, as well as the idea that artistic cooperation and interaction would bloom within this space. On the other hand, something about the concept of the *kulturljudzon* limiting sounds to an institutionally predefined, fairly small, and relatively peripheral area somehow also rubbed me the wrong way. When it came to the NGBG-festival, for example, I felt that as the event grew in popularity and level of organization, some of the genuine and DIY essence was disappearing. Last time I visited the festival, the presence of a distinctive curfew where all power, light and amplified sound was instantly cut at midnight served as a reminder that even if the sound is “freer”, it does have controlled and regulated limits.

4.3.2. Research ethics

Ethical considerations regarding this thesis’ choice of methodology chiefly concerned the normative positionality in the approach taken within the CDA. Document analysis is often described as a method that requires fewer ethical considerations than many others, chiefly because of the researcher’s relative passivity in the analysis (Morgan, 2022; Cardno, 2018). Nevertheless, the four core principles of ethical research (respect for a person’s autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice) are often kept as a general guideline, which this thesis also attempted to (Wiedicke, 2023). Graham (2018)

argues that critical discourse analysis is “an unavoidably moralistic pursuit with explicit aims of beneficially transforming social and political systems to make them more equal and democratic”. Based on this assessment and Burke’s (1966) abstract perspectives on language as action, he argues that for a critical discourse analysis to be performed in an ethically proper way, the analyst must make their own moral position clear in regard to what they are analyzing as well as why, how, and to what end (Graham, 2018). In accordance with Graham (2018) as well as other well-cited writings on the ethics of a critical discourse analysis, this thesis has attempted to clearly state its methodological positionality and morality: with that standpoint chiefly being a critical of how urban cultural sounds, are regulated and judged in a manner inconsistent with other sounds within segments of Swedish regulation, policy and practice (Gorup, 2020).

5. Results & analysis

As for presenting results of this research, the choice was made to incorporate results and analysis into one comprehensive section of the thesis, going method by method at first, and then incorporating these findings into an overarching analytical part. This was done for a few reasons; firstly, the methodology chosen in both the qualitative content analysis and the CDA is dependent on categorizations of content. Viewing these categories as data, they become both results and analysis simultaneously. Secondly, portraying and analyzing overarching discourses, problem representations and understandings of concepts requires a fairly high degree of abstraction, for which a combined presentation of results and analysis was found to be the clearest and most effective.

5.1. Qualitative content analysis

The document analysis rendered most importantly an understanding of the kulturljudzon as a case study, how it came to be, how it functions, and how the establishment of the kulturljudzon may relate to overarching theory and empiricism on urban sound and noise. As per the methodology of Mayring (2014) as outlined in chapter 4.1.1., five distinct but related categories of how sound is understood within the kulturljudzon were derived from the chosen documents. These five categories were named as 1) sound/noise as a disturbance and risk, 2) sound as an asset of urban life, 3) residential quietness versus the right to make sound, 4) sound as a fragmented institutional and legal problem, and 5) from “noise” to “cultural sound”.

5.1.1. Category 1: Sound/noise as a disturbance and risk

The clearest institutional construction in Malmö stad & Vinnova (2020) is the understanding of unwanted sound as “buller”, i.e. an environmental disturbance requiring regulation, investigation and mitigation. The publication repeatedly frames sound through the language of health protection, disturbance, complaints and legal

responsibility. Increasing urban density is understood as producing more potential conflicts because residential areas increasingly coexist with restaurants, nightlife, sports, cultural activities and other sound-producing activities. The document explicitly identifies the contradiction between the desire for a lively city and residents' expectations of a quiet residential environment. On the other hand, Malmö stad (2021) opens for the notion that the interpretations of some sounds as noises in fact are dependent on space, time and other context.

5.1.2. Category 2: Sound as an asset of urban life

At the same time, Malmö stad & Vinnova (2020) contains a second, somewhat contradictory understanding of sound, in how sound can constitute evidence of a successful and lively city. The document repeatedly connects restaurants, nightlife, sport and cultural activity with concepts such as the “city life”, attractiveness, social interaction, safety and economic development. Increased activity inevitably produces sound, and the document questions whether this sound should necessarily be treated as a problem. This is particularly evident in the distinction between ordinary urban *sorl* (translated as “murmur” or “buzz”) and problematic noise. Café and restaurant sound in the streetscape are described as desirable because they contribute to making the city lively and attractive for consumers and visitors. Similarly, Malmö stad (2021) heavily emphasizes the economic and cultural weight of sound (or noise) producing activity within the *kulturljudzon*.

5.1.3. Category 3: Residential quietness versus the right to make sound

A particularly important theme in relation to this paper's theoretical approach is the conflict and tension between two competing conceptions of urban rights; on one side is the exposed resident's expectation of a quiet environment, on the other is the collective interest in having restaurants, nightlife, sport, culture and public activity within the city. Malmö stad & Vinnova (2020) explicitly discusses whether residents should simply accept some noise because they live in a city center, treating the sound-noise tension as a planning dilemma produced by densification and the ideal of the mixed city. Malmö stad (2021) understands this dilemma through the *kulturljudzon* itself, changing the question from “how much sound can residents reasonably be expected to tolerate?” towards “where in the city should sound-producing activities be prioritized?” Instead of attempting to make every part of the city simultaneously compatible with every activity, the presented idea is that the *kulturljudzon* introduces spatial differentiation, in which certain places become more tolerant of sound-producing cultural and industrial activities than others.

5.1.4. Category 4: Sound as a fragmented institutional and legal problem

Both documents present the responsibility for noise-making among many different actors and policies, including environmental supervision, building permits, detailed planning, planning programmes, political strategies, municipal measures, and legislation. In this, urban noise is problematized as a phenomenon in which it is hard to pin down responsibility. Malmö stad (2021) motivate the kulturljudzon partly as a solution to the fragmentation of sound regulation and responsibility in relation to cultural sound, as well as a place for unified identity and place-making around sound-making.

5.1.5. Category 5: From “noise” to “cultural sound”

In Malmö stad (2021), sound is explicitly incorporated into the future identity of the kulturljudzon. The plan's vision is not merely to tolerate existing noise but to maintain and develop a place where industrial, cultural and leisure activities can coexist. The plan describes the kulturljudzon as an established and self-evident component of future planning. Malmö stad & Vinnova (2020) present cultural sound as a potential resource for building place identity, urban development and cultural production. Still, the distinction between noise and cultural sound remains conditional; not all loud sounds necessarily become culturally legitimate, and only within certain spatial perimeters. Therefore, the category illustrates how institutions actively classify and assign different values to different urban sounds, with the kulturljudzon functioning as a mechanism through which certain forms of loudness, chiefly those with importance to consumption, industry, and economic development, can be legitimized.

5.2. Critical discourse analysis

A few different institutional publications and other digital media were chosen as material for the critical discourse analysis. The source of these documents were all different governmental instances or institutions that in some way exert control and influence over either the sound discourse or practical policy on a general Swedish level or on a specific Malmö level. These are the following:

Table 3. Documents selected for discourse analysis.

Document name [translation]	Source (writer)	Year of publication
Om ljud och buller [Regarding sound and noise]	Folkhälsomyndigheten	2019
Ljudnivåer på restauranger och krogar [Sound levels at restaurants and bars]	Malmö stad	2024
Rätt ljudnivå vid evenemang [The right level of sound during events]	Malmö stad	2023
Beskrivning av ljud och buller [Description of sound and noise]	Boverket	2024
Ljud och akustik [Sound and acoustics]	Arbetsmiljöverket	2025
Musik och höga ljudnivåer - praktiska riktlinjer för musik- och underhållningsbranschen [Music and high levels of sound – practical guidelines for the music and entertainment business]	Arbetsmiljöverket (Johansson)	2009
Buller. Höga ljudnivåer och buller inomhus [Noise. High levels of sound and noise indoors]	Socialstyrelsen	2008

The analysis was structured and conducted in a manner that seeks to provide an aggregative account of the different pieces of material, using the questions provided in the WPR approach to structure the analysis into seven shorter sub-chapters.

5.2.1. Summary of analysis material

The publication *Om ljud och buller* was published by the Public Health Agency of Sweden in 2019 but also updated in 2025. It provides both conceptual and technical knowledge bases for understanding sound, noise, its perception, propagation, and measurement. The publication is primarily intended to support municipal environmental and health protection authorities in their supervision under the Swedish Environmental Code but also serves as a guideline and reference for practitioners and other actors concerned with acoustic environments (Folkhälsomyndigheten, 2025). Much of governmental and municipal sound definitions and regulations are based on this publication among others by the Swedish agency of public health. Malmö stad (2023b, 2024) are two briefer municipal web pages that account for local sound regulations and responsibilities at restaurants/bars and sound-making events; they both refer to Folkhälsomyndigheten (2025) as the source for the sound limits and regulations. Boverket (2024) is also a web page outlining definitions of and terms relating to sound, noise, and how they are measured. The page is published by the the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning, and as such has a focus on noise in relation to housing specifically. Arbetsmiljöverket (2025) is another web page, this time published by the regulatory governmental organ Swedish Work Environment Authority. This page is less sonically technical, instead focusing on methods for noise reduction in the workplace through acoustic workspace design and limiting noise from both technical equipment and human sounds (Arbetsmiljöverket, 2025). Johansson (2009) is a report also published by the Swedish Work Environment Authority, but with a specific focus on practical guidelines for noise harm reduction in the music and entertainment industry. Lastly, Socialstyrelsen (2008) is a lengthier report on policy and harm reduction relating to sound and noise, published by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare. Like Folkhälsomyndigheten (2019), it accounts for theoretical definitions of sound and noise and provides guidelines for assessing, measuring, and regulating noise within the framework of Swedish environmental and public-health legislation (Socialstyrelsen, 2008).

5.2.2. What is the “problem” represented to be?

While different publications provide different perspectives and problematizations on sound and noise, there are a few overarching ways in which the “problem” of noise is represented. The sonic city is represented primarily as a problem of exposure to unwanted or excessively loud sound that may cause health problems, disturbance, reduced well-being or impaired functioning, and which therefore needs to be measured, controlled and regulated by responsible actors and institutions. The discourse does not merely represent regulating sound, but it also distributes responsibility for regulating sound. Folkhälsomyndigheten (2019) presents the problem of noise as something that can be identified, quantified and managed through technical expertise.

The material also has a distinct focus on problematizing sound (noise) from an explicit public health position. Arbetsmiljöverket (2025) outlines and problematizes noise as a potentially harmful aspect of the workplace, while Boverket (2024) applies a similar problematization of sound in the home.

5.2.3. What are the assumptions are underlying in this representation of the “problem”?

Perhaps the most clearly recurring underlying assumption in these representations of the sound-noise problem is that of a technocratic epistemology. This is often based on the notion that sound can be objectively measured, and that improved acoustic measurement on a technical level thus is the solution to the noise problem. While Folkhälsomyndigheten (2019) recognizes the complexity of what makes sound understood as noise, the primary response is that of developing measurement techniques. This approach rests on the assumption that if noise can be characterized at a sufficiently accurate level, it can also be objectively assessed. Boverket (2024) explicitly illustrates that sound is measured in decibels and that A-weighting attempts to make measurements correspond to human hearing. Arbetsmiljöverket’s 2009 report on the music-industry goes further, constructing a quantitative relationship between sound level and exposure time (Johansson, 2009). Although the policy discourse acknowledges the subjective and contextual character of acoustic experience, this subjectivity is largely translated back into increasingly sophisticated technical measurement categories.

Secondly, a frequent assumption in the problem representation is the notion that prevention is preferable to reaction. Arbetsmiljöverket (2025) as well as Malmö stad (2023b, 2024) underline the need for placing responsibility for noise reduction on a preventive level as opposed to a reactive one. There are also important assumptions about governance. It is often assumed that sonic problems can and should be addressed directly through expert knowledge, measurement standards and institutional intervention. Looking at this assumption in Foucauldian terms, knowledge about sound simultaneously becomes a means of governing environments and populations.

5.2.4. How did the representation of the “problem” arise?

The representation of the noise problem is largely based on the institutionalization of noise as an issue of environmental health. The standardization and scientification of sound as well as the historical institutionalization of noise has upheld and reproduced this representation. This has been shaped by scientific research, public health concerns, occupational regulation and planning practices, and likely underpinned by a Swedish tradition of high trust in and dependence on governmental agencies and their research and regulations (Rothstein, 2018).

5.2.5. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?

Perhaps the most glaring omission in the material would be the social production of noise, and the issue of “who gets to decide what is and what isn’t noise”. Technocratic epistemologies and the focus on the purely acoustic qualities of sound leave the social dimensions and dynamics of urban sound production as something irrelevant to the problem represented. Another issue which is not developed upon is that of (spatial) inequalities in acoustic environments.

5.2.6. What effects does this representation produce?

As per Bacchi (2009) and Bacchi & Goodwin (2025), the effects of the representation are divided into discursive, subjectifying, and lived effects. Discursive effects of these representations of noise largely revolve around technocratic language use, and the omission of social vocabulary in the broadest sense. The representation of the noise problem produces subjectification effects that were identified as different subject positions. The subjects were divided into four distinct categories:

- 1) The exposed resident
- 2) The producer of noise
- 3) The (technocratic) expert
- 4) The regulator

The exposed resident is characterized as the vulnerable recipient of noise, particularly in their home or workplace, but to an extent also in public space. This category would be those that the harm reduction discourse seeks to protect. The producer of noise is held as the actor responsible for noise reduction, whether that be a business or a resident. The technocratic expert represents the main authority on sound, with harm reduction as its main (and sometimes only) goal in the matter. Finally, the regulator represents the institutions that publish and oversee the application of the regulatory framework of noise. While this categorization into subject positions is a generalization in itself, it also speaks for the generalizing elements of the discourse and problem representation in the institutional documents in question. Additionally, it uncovers some of the power relations in play within sound regulation, in which the regulator is the sole participatory decision maker on sound regulation, albeit dependent on the health-focused research of the technocratic expert. These regulations can be understood as being made *for* (but not with) the best of the exposed resident, as well as *against* (but not with) the producer of noise, who is most often also the actor with the responsibility of reducing sounds to non-noise levels.

Lastly, the lived effects produced by the problem representation once again rely on the understanding of noise. The clearest direct effect of the representation of all sounds of a certain acoustic character as harmful noise regardless of social, spatial, or other context is that much of urban sound itself runs the risk of becoming feared, and if

possible, avoided entirely. While some of the material, namely Socialstyrelsen (2008) and Johansson (2009) do recognize the subjectivity and spatiotemporal nature of noise in their definition and understandings of the concept, sounds of high volume, frequency and length are portrayed as something that is to be removed as opposed to spatially altered and reimagined.

5.2.7. How and where has this representation of the problem been produced and defended?

This representation of the problem is largely self-reinforced by different institutions and organs of the Swedish state and networks of technocratic expertise. Both structurally and in language, much of the definition and regulation refers back to Folkhälsomyndigheten (2025) and other publications by the Swedish agency of public health. Additionally, this is defended through scientific standardization and set standards for noise harm reduction, generally produced by the same organs.

5.2.8. Self-problematization of the analysis

Lastly, the “seventh process” of the WPR approach was applied through self-problematization of the analysis and its own assumptions. Beginning with what problem the analysis itself has represented, it can quite clearly be deduced that this would be that the institutional focus within sound-noise-policy is excessively dominated by a technocratic and risk-oriented understanding of urban sound, as opposed to a more pluralistic understanding in which more qualitative interpretations of sound are included.

This representation also rests on a few assumptions, namely that soundscape-oriented approaches are inherently preferred and necessary as well as an underlying fetishization of urban sound. Noise is well-documented as a very real and growing health hazard among urban populations, and it is important not to let the critique of a measured and harm-reduction focus in understandings of sound stand in the way of protecting public health. On top of this, the analysis runs the risk of assuming that increased participation in sound policy through an increased soundscape focus, such as in the kulturljudzon project, would necessarily lead to a deregulatory practice and a “freer” urban soundscape; participatory voices could just as well prefer a higher degree of regulation and limitation of sounds.

6. Discussion

The most important finding from the qualitative content analysis is that the *kulturljudzon* represents a shift in the institutional ontology of urban sound. Across Swedish public authorities, sound is predominantly problematized through a discourse of noise, exposure and health risk. Although the documents acknowledge that acoustic experience is contextual and that the same sound may be desirable in one situation and disturbing in another, the dominant response is to translate this complexity into measurable variables such as sound level, frequency, duration and exposure. This produces a technocratic and regulatory understanding of the acoustic environment in which sound becomes an object to be measured, managed and controlled. At the same time, the documents distribute responsibility among residents, businesses, event organizers, employers, planners and individuals, thereby transforming acoustic governance into both institutional regulation and self-regulation. What this representation leaves comparatively unproblematic is the social and spatial production of acoustic value: who defines which sounds are desirable, whose sounds are tolerated, whose complaints are legitimized, and how different acoustic environments contribute to urban identity, cultural life and spatial inequality. In the context of the sensory turn and sonic-city research, the limitation of this discourse is therefore not its reliance on acoustic measurement per se, but the privileging of measurement as the primary means through which the acoustic environment becomes knowable and governable. A soundscape-oriented approach would broaden the problem representation from the management of harmful noise towards the production of meaningful, diverse and socially equitable acoustic environments.

The *kulturljudzon* is but only one case of how institutions have attempted to ease the tension between the right to make sounds and the right to hear them through a planned localization of cultural sounds in an attempt to “de-noiseify” them. I am sure that there are many other ways the sound-noise tension has been dealt with in other urban areas that I do not know of or would be able to understand in the same way, especially since the way we understand sounds is culturally relative and socially constructed.

Bringing together the results and findings from the qualitative content analysis and the critical discourse analysis, an image of a seemingly successful remedy to an established tension begins to form. As the results from the qualitative content analysis. The results of research also showed a few of the shortcomings of the approach that the thesis took to the subject. A “people’s” or “everyday” perspective is something that would likely be necessary in developing a more comprehensive understanding of both the urban sound-noise tension in general and the *kulturljudzon* case study in particular. The theoretical framework, which is partly built on the right to the city and the multisensory production of urban space, could in several ways have been applied well to a methodology that has a focus on participation and the voice of the people, rather

than the purely institutional focus that this thesis has taken. An hour-long semi-structured interview with two representatives of an actor involved in the establishment of the kulturljudzon was conducted during the research process, but the decision was made to omit the interview from the final thesis for a few reasons. Perhaps the main reason for this was time constraints – the interview was conducted late in the process, and the data was heavy and arduous to process. Much of the interview content also strayed from the specific subject of urban sound, with much of the discussion staying on a more general level of the specific Sofielund area rather than of the kulturljudzon's implications for urban sound specifically. Nevertheless, interviews could have been a fruitful method of data collection for going beyond the fairly narrow institutional focus of the thesis, also strengthening the connection between theory and methodology.

A methodological shortcoming of the critical discourse analysis in particular are the inherent generalizations and simplifications that come when attempting to curate an overarching discourse from many different sources and instances of material. The choice to structure the analysis of all the material categorically by the questions of Bacchi's WPR approach rather than analyzing each of the institutional documents by themselves likely lead to some level of oversimplification and lack of depth into each of the pieces of material. On the other hand, it could be argued that this shortcoming lies in the nature of the method rather than in the way in which it was applied in this thesis, as the venture of developing a comprehensive discourse to critically analyze has a level of inherent generalization (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2018; Graham, 2018).

7. Conclusions

Reaching back towards the main research questions,

- 1) Within urban soundscapes, how are sounds and noises institutionally interpreted and understood?

and

- 2) How do different institutions define and operationalize the concurrent concepts of making sounds and hearing noises?

the research design was able to answer the question in some respects but not all. The critical discourse analysis uncovered a largely technocratic understanding of sound among Swedish institutions, in sounds are primarily understood as potential noises for their inherent loudness, health risks, and disturbance. The problem representation of sound as noise largely lacked cultural and spatiotemporal components in their definitions, understandings and representations of noise within the urban. The qualitative content analysis and case study of the kulturljudzon proved to largely represent a shift in the institutional ontology of urban sound, in which cultural and

spatiotemporal components of sound as well as a re-evaluation of sound-making was present. However, the understandings of sound that rests below the kulturljudzon and its motivations rests upon certain limiting assumptions regarding sound and sound-makers' presence in the city; mainly the notion that cultural sound is mainly valued for economically developmental associations and the notion that noise is reimagined as cultural sound only within institutionally predisposed spaces.

Attempting to procure an exhaustive account of the entire range of sounds and how they are experienced and institutionalized would be an arduous, complex, and nearly impossible task. I therefore, once again, would like to stress that what this thesis has attempted to work towards is a finite look into what I would see as a ubiquitous issue of how sounds are heard, made, and viewed, but especially governed and controlled within our "sonic cities". The kulturljudzon could be considered a policy with potential to diversify the technocratic discourse within urban sound policy in Swedish governmental and municipal institutions, but one that is currently limited in its application and scope. Potential further research venues within the theme would concern institutional focus into the everyday experience of how sounds and noises are interpreted and regulated. The theoretical and conceptual framework constructed as well as the resulting analysis of Swedish institutional sound discourse could lend itself well to be applied to many different research venues pertaining to urban sound.

The kulturljudzon as a spatial approach to handling the sound-noise tension remains an interesting venue of further research, both in terms of the application in Sofielund and future applications and interpretations in Sweden and elsewhere. While the sound-noise tension is likely to remain as long as there are spatiocultural differences within sonic cities, the way and the extent to which this tension is constructed and understood by institutions will likely continue to develop along with the increased academic attention to urban sound.

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