



Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism (North American Religions)

By Isaac Weiner

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For six months in 2004, controversy raged in Hamtramck, Michigan, as residents debated a proposed amendment that would exempt the adhan, or Islamic call to prayer, from the city's anti-noise ordinance. The call to prayer functioned as a flashpoint in disputes about the integration of Muslims into this historically Polish-Catholic community. No one openly contested Muslims' right to worship in their mosques, but many neighbors framed their resistance around what they regarded as the inappropriate public pronouncement of Islamic presence, an announcement that audibly intruded upon their public space.

Throughout U.S. history, complaints about religion as noise have proven useful both for restraining religious dissent and for circumscribing religion's boundaries more generally. At the same time, religious individuals and groups rarely have kept quiet. They have insisted on their right to practice religion out loud, implicitly advancing alternative understandings of religion and its place in the modern world.

In *Religion Out Loud*, Isaac Weiner takes such sonic disputes seriously. Weaving the story of religious "noise" through multiple historical eras and diverse religious communities, he convincingly demonstrates that religious pluralism has never been solely a matter of competing values, truth claims, or moral doctrines, but of different *styles* of public practice, of fundamentally different ways of using body and space—and that these differences ultimately have expressed very different conceptions of religion itself. Weiner's innovative work encourages scholars to pay much greater attention to the publicly contested sensory cultures of American religious life.

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Editorial Review

Review

"*Religion Out Loud* is one of the most consistent books in cultural studies. Though the focus of Weiner's book is the United States, the issues around noisy religious practices are universal. Hence, this book is an obligatory reference for scholars and an exemplary academic performance for cultural studies on any region."-*2014 Yearbook for Traditional Music*

"*Offers a brilliantly researched and intellectually nuanced account of the sounds of religion in the United States and the legal standing of religious noise over time A fascinating and immensely valuable contribution to the scholarship of sensory studies, public religion, secularism, sonic technologies, and material practice. In sum: a pleasure to read and to ponder.*"-Sally M. Promey, Yale University

"[A]n innovative study that generates fresh perspectives on venerable themes, including the shifting shape of Protestant power and efforts of religious newcomers to find a home in the United States. Weiner's analysis is theoretically rich."-*Journal of American Ethnic History*

"The impressively young scholar Isaac Weiner uses this inherently public identity of sound to analyse various interpretations of religion and religion's role in shared space His sonic take on the public role of religion is a refreshing alternative to a number of studies that rush to theological and political conclusions at the detriment of respectable scholarship."-*International Journal of Public Theology*

"Each of these controversies is subjected to careful analysis, and Weiner concludes with a reaffirmation of the significance of sound in religion. This is a valuable study for everyone interested in understanding religion in the US."

-*Choice*

"*Religion Out Loud* advances the study of the materiality of religions in a substantial way by showing how important the investigation of sound is for understanding the history of religions in the United States. . . . Fascinating, resourceful, and thoughtful from beginning to end. This book belongs in all kinds of courses because it demonstrates how to do cultural history, study the senses and modernity, and compare religious traditions in the concrete registers of daily life. We will never hear sacred noise in the same way again."- David Morgan, Duke University

"Isaac Weiner's fascinating book, *Religion Out Loud*, takes as its starting point that 'religion' consists not simply of systems of substantive content, moral claims, and theological arguments, but rather is fundamentally constituted by the expressive practices that enact such systems, and a recognition that such practices involve, in most cases, acts of public sounding A valuable and important work."-*Anthropological Quarterly*

"Weiner remakes the religious history of the senses as legal history. The regulation of religious sounds has created a tangle in American jurisprudence, ensnaring everything from the pealing bells of Episcopalians to the loudspeakers of Jehovah's Witnesses to the calls to prayer of immigrant Muslims. With deftness and discerning insight, Weiner reveals the politics involved in defining noisy religion as public nuisance."-Leigh Eric Schmidt, Washington University in St. Louis

"Investigates the ways in which American law sought to regulate the increasingly pluralistic religious soundscape of American cities."-Richard Kent Evans, LA Review of Books

"Weiner's engaging writing style, careful explanation of case studies, and important critique of the orthodoxies of religious pluralism will likely make this book appealing to students and scholars for years to come." -*Religion in American History*

"Isaac Weiner recovers a fascinating series of aural disputes and weaves them into 'a political history of religious sound' that argues that competing constructions of 'noise' illumine the extent and limits of America religious pluralism as it has developed over time *Religion Out Loud* is an innovative study that generates fresh perspectives on venerable themes, including the shifting shape of Protestant power and the efforts of religious newcomers to find a home in the United States."-*The Journal of American History*

"[A]n engaging exploration of religious sound, and the controversies it creates, throughout US history. . . . Religion Out Loud is a tremendous piece of scholarship, rich in archival material and accessibly written. It encourages us to attend to the materiality of religion and it will certainly stand as a notable contribution to the fields of US religious history, religion and law, sound and media studies, and beyond."-Reviews of Religious Research

"Weiner has made a great contribution to the debates on public space and religious pluralism, offering a rich history of religious landscapes in the United States."-Material Religion

About the Author

Isaac Weiner is Assistant Professor of Religion and Culture in the Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Valerie Israel:

Information is provisions for anyone to get better life, information currently can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a concern. What people must be consider if those information which is inside former life are challenging be find than now is taking seriously which one is acceptable to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you buy it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen within you if you take *Religion Out Loud: Religious Sound, Public Space, and American Pluralism (North American Religions)* as your daily resource information.

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