



TG07 SENSES & SOCIETY

International Sociological Association

Newsletter Issue 8

Summer 2015

Contents

- **Editorial Note**
- **ISA Forum, Vienna 2016**
- **Publication Highlights**
- **Announcements**

Editorial Note

Dear Friends,

It is with pleasure that I bring to you the 8th issue of T07 Senses and Society newsletter. In this issue you will find details for the forthcoming International Sociological Association Forum scheduled to take place in July 2016 in Vienna. We invite you to submit your abstract to one of our 7 panels and look forward to meeting in Vienna next year.

You will also find information about recent publications in sensory studies, as well as other announcements with regard to the sensory studies website, and a workshop on food studies organized by TG07.

As always, I welcome any feedback and suggestions that you may have for the newsletter and hope you enjoy reading the latest updates in sensory scholarship.

Yours,

Kelvin Low

President/Newsletter Editor, TG07

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[TG07 Senses and Society website](#)

THIRD ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

The next major event organised by the ISA and at which TG07 will be participating is the ISA Forum. This meeting will be held from 10-14 July 2016, in Vienna.

TG07 has been allocated a total of 8 sessions, which includes a business meeting session for organisational matters. The **call for individual abstracts is now opened till 30th September 2015.**

Please take a look at the session write-ups in the following pages and submit your abstract through the following website:

<https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/forum2016/cfp.cgi>

We look forward to a fruitful and engaging ISA Forum in Austria, 2016!

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

I. Artistic Practices and the Senses

Session Organizer(s) Florence FIGOLS, Concordia University,
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Session in Spanish, French, English

This session invites papers that explore the relationship between artistic practices and the interplay of the senses, stressing the role of the arts as a dynamic field for social integration, interactions and transformation.

Artistic practices are linked with sensory exploration and representation of our relation with the world and others. They enhance multi-sensorial experiences to foster the continuity of traditions, to promote new propositions challenging sensory paradigms and/or to encourage sensual relations amongst different cultures.

How do aesthetic practices contribute to the sensory formation of a specific community? Do those practices, through the engagement of the senses, reinforce or blur social borders?

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10 - 14, 2016
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I. Artistic Practices and the Senses

How can the dynamics of perception, doing or attending artworks, promote social interactions and create new possibilities for social change?

Artistic propositions - including rituals, activism, installations and new technologies - partake to reactivate and redefine individual and collective identities, challenging the local and the global, the past, the present and the future, in our “mobile” world.

By sharing multi-sensory experiences, how can these practices reconfigure notion of identities and encourage alternative ways to integrate other perceptions and intercultural collaborations? What are the sensual relations between the artistic proposition and the context/environment of presentation? How can the dislocation and relocation of aesthetic practices create new cross-cultural spaces to propose alternative ways for the “distribution of the sensible”?

This session welcomes diverse approaches at the intersection of the arts, sociology and the senses - from scholars and practitioners - to encourage cross-pollination of sensory knowledge, through interdisciplinary and multi-cultural exchanges.

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

II. Beyond the Material Turn? Sensory Interrogations in Religion and Spirituality

Session Organizer(s)

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Session in English

Material and textual cultures, and the practices revolving around such cultural artefacts have become essential components for our analysis of religion and spirituality. We propose to build upon and extend this approach through the incorporation of the sensorial dimension in our understanding and engagement with the sacred. As an organised way of knowing, the senses constitute important pathways to not simply access and communicate with a pre-existing holiness but as ways to actually define and indeed constitute the sacred itself. Such personal and collective sensorial experiences do authoritatively provide legitimacy and conviction to religious beliefs and practices.

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



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More fundamentally, they serve to make manifest sacredness and potency and render them immediate as well as intimate .

How can the study and representation of the senses strengthen our understanding of the meanings ascribed to religion and spirituality and their links to broader social relations and social institutions in our societies? How can these forms and practices act as potent social intermediaries for us to analyse the reproduction, contestation and negotiation of multiple social, collective and moral identities? How can we connect the study of sensory and embodied experiences with notions of power, domination and resistance in both historical and contemporary contexts? We invite empirical, theoretical and/or methodological submissions to discuss the evocative, immersive and sensuously textured character of religious and spiritual objects, spaces, rituals, rites of passage, performances, communities and behaviours, and how such sensory engagements with the sacred organise and configure our social, economic and political lives.

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10 – 14, 2016
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III. City Scents: Food, Sensory Knowledge and Transnationalism in the Urban Everyday

Session Organizer(s)

Jean DURUZ, University of South Australia, Australia,
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Session in English

This session draws on sociological analyses and social theory, together with insights from cultural geography, cultural studies and postcolonial theory, to analyse the significance of food and the senses for re-shaping social imaginaries in twenty-first century global cities. Through the microcosm of food production, consumption and food sharing, papers will reflect on the power of the senses for mapping meanings of the everyday in urban contexts. Framing this analysis is the haunting image of the postmodern/postcolonial city – Sandercock’s “mongrel” city – reflecting complex patterns of migration and displacement; circuits of people and commodities within and beyond its boundaries; negotiations with difference, alienation and inclusivity.

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III. City Scents: Food, Sensory Knowledge and Transnationalism in the Urban Everyday

Our focus is particularly on the movement of people, and their food to, from and within these cities, and on the ways food's sensory capital allows transnational spaces of identity-formation. At the same time, this acquired transnational sensory knowledge is deeply rooted in the specifics of the everyday – food's familiar tastes, scents, colours, textures, as well as its challenging unfamiliar ones. Questions might include: how do people carry food memories with them – in the nose, on the lips and tongue? Does “dislocation of self from place ... actually heighten one's [sensory] self-awareness”, as Low and Kalekin-Fishman suggest? How can food's sensory landscapes facilitate cultural exchange, for example across borders of nation and ethnicity? Above all, what are the practical and analytical implications of sensory transnationalism (along with Nava's “visceral cosmopolitanism”), for social transformation in global cities – for living, as Ang says, “together-in-difference”?

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THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

IV. Exploring Sensescapes of Home: Smell, Touch and Taste

Session Organizer(s)

Petr GIBAS, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic, petr.gibas@soc.cas.cz

Session in English

Home is complex and complicated, stems from everyday practices and polyrhythmias of (co)habitation, is infused with memories and emotions, consists of things and objects, and spans space/time. We consider smells, tastes, and touch to be important sensory qualities of home in its complexity, on both the actual and imaginary levels: processing of food, cleanliness, ambiances (and identities) as well as the experience related to them, particular smells (including bodily ones), tastes, surfaces and textures or absence thereof – to name just a few – are of extreme importance for becoming at home, taking care of it, mourning for it, imagining it and striving for it.

For this regular session, we invite scholars interested in the sensory dimension of home, and particularly in the sensescapes of smell, touch and taste and their interconnections.

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THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



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VIENNA, AUSTRIA

IV. Exploring Sensescapes of Home: Smell, Touch and Taste

Despite recent growth of interest in these “other” senses they still deserve greater scrutiny. The three senses, distinct as they are yet interconnected, have strong bearings on memory, emotionality and identity and as such are important for explorations of home, its materiality, imaginaries as well as politics and gendered/ethnicised/age-related practices.

We invite papers on:

Research of how the three senses are employed in production and consumption of home;

Explorations of smell/touch/tastescapes of home and the ways they contribute to the emotionality of feeling at home and the ambiguities/contingencies of home;

Methodological issues related to the research of smell/taste/touchscapes (of and at home) including ethnographic, experimental and (critical) analytical methods.

THIRD ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

V. Pleasing Possibilities: New Perspectives on Pleasure

Session Organizer(s)

Susanna TRNKA, University of Auckland, New Zealand,
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Sharyn DAVIES, University of Indonesia, Indonesia,
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Session in English

The recent phenomenal growth of studies of the senses has turned analytical attention to a wide range of experiential phenomena. We now have a range of studies of the historical, cultural and social dimensions of taste, odour, vision, colour, pain, proprioception, and the variously defined “sixth sense,” to name a few. As yet, however, pleasure remains an under-explored domain in the social sciences. A range of other disciplines, from biology and neuroscience to psychology and marketing, explore the pursuit of pleasure as a motivator in human (and animal) behaviour, often, however, adopting perspectives on pleasure as uni-dimensional and delinked from specific historical, social and cultural contexts.

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THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



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V. Pleasing Possibilities: New Perspectives on Pleasure

This panel throws open the question of how to theorize the place of pleasure in social and cultural life. We invite scholars to consider a broad range of areas in which pleasure, its pursuit and avoidance, and the ability to achieve or deny it are central facets of experience. Possible thematic areas include: aesthetics (music, poetry, etc.); entertainment (humour and comedy, reality TV, soaps, gaming); food; physical exertion (sport, dance, sports); discipline (education, dieting, body sculpting); spirituality (meditation, yoga); pain as pleasure (tattoos, piercing); rest and relaxation; fantasy and daydreaming; cognitive pleasures (problem solving; chess; crosswords and other puzzles); sex and intimacy; chemical pleasure (drugs, smoking, alcohol); sociality; anticipation and fulfilment. The panel is particularly keen to include papers that will enable a wide range of theoretical perspectives on sensations of pleasure.

THIRD ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

VI. Psychonautism in Contemporary Arts and Societies: A Socio-History of a Sensory Experience

Session Organizer(s)

Alexandre MARCHANT, Université Paris X Nanterre, France,
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Session in English

Psychoactive drugs taking, especially when it comes to hallucinogens but not only, is always a question of alteration of the senses: through heroin injection flashes, LSD mystical trips, ecstasies provoked by chemical drugs... One of the main functions of drugs is actually to explore the depth of the mind and to reach an upper level of reality, according to Timothy Leary's advocacies in his *Politics of Ecstasy* (1968), meanwhile "psychonautism" is a word popularized by the German writer Ernst Jünger.

This panel will address several issues about this kind of experience. How can be analyzed the roles of the senses (sight, hearing, touch) in the depiction of the altered or parallel universes created by drugs ?

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THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



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VIENNA, AUSTRIA

VI. Psychonautism in Contemporary Arts and Societies: A Socio-History of a Sensory Experience

From a semiotic point of view, what are the signs, visual forms or landscapes, synesthetic sensations associated with these experiences for creating an new sensory and symbolic imaginary ? Who are the figures of “psychonautism” and how did they advocate or not the chemical enlargement of the doors of perception (chemists like Albert Hoffmann or Alexander Schulgin, writers like Antonin Artaud or Henri Michaux) ? In a historical and sociological perspectives, in what way drugs have modified the perception of the contemporary world, being nowadays an irreducible part of popular cultures ?

To answer these questions, contributions about the contemporary period (19th or 20th century) are expected meanwhile there is no restriction of cultural or geographical frames. Papers should address the field of sociology, history, anthropology or any interdisciplinary perspective in social sciences.

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THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

VII. Senses, Society, and Struggles for a Better World

Session Organizer(s)

Andrea GLAUSER, Universität Luzern, Switzerland,
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Michael JONAS, Institute for Advanced Studies, Austria,
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Session in English

This session studies the roles that senses play in social protests and movements for a better world. Sensory perceptions are indisputably fundamental for the coordination of social life, for when humans interact, use artifacts, and encounter animals, sensory experiences widely steer their actions. Since such experiences are to a large extent culturally and socially prefigured, any understanding of them also reflects power relations in society. Against this background, this session focuses on how social groups and protest movements negotiate specific sensory experiences. In what ways do protestors try to change—in the truest sense of the word—established ways of seeing, listening, and feeling?

THIRD ISA FORUM OF SOCIOLOGY

THE FUTURES WE WANT: GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY AND
THE STRUGGLES FOR A BETTER WORLD



JULY 10-14, 2016
VIENNA, AUSTRIA

VII. Senses, Society, and Struggles for a Better World

What sensorial strategies are used to disturb routines on the one hand and, on the other, make groups' and movements' claims heard? How are the senses used to strengthen the impact of certain interventions and campaigns? The aim of this session is to gain a better understanding of the diverse ways in which the senses are involved in social struggles. It welcomes papers that examine the sensorial dimensions of specific protests and/or discuss the complex relationships among senses, society, and social struggles from theoretical perspectives.

Publication Highlights

‘A/Effective connections: Mobility, technology and well-being’

Emma Felton

Emotion, Space and Society
13: 9-15 (2014)



This article investigates the significance of internet communication technologies for mediating affect in ways that help promote feelings of well-being among recently arrived migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CALD) in Australia. It is based on a qualitative study that focuses on the internet's communicative capabilities for maintaining kinship ties in homeland countries, and for forging new connections in the host city of Brisbane during the early re-settlement period. Through the experience of ‘presence’ and affective communities, it emphasizes the ways in which visually mediated interaction helps to combat feelings of social isolation and loneliness. The study finds that internet use is creating new forms of sociality among migrants and plays a key role in the re-settlement period. It highlights the importance of publically available computers and training for migrants.

Publication Highlights

This paper explores a new way of designing and experimenting with the city. How are we to conceptualize the changes in contemporary cities on the basis of their ambiances? What about the sensory and emotional production of urban territories? What is at stake when our aim is no longer to design space but also to install an atmosphere? The focus is exploring five ambiance operating modes in the province of urban design: establishing the sensory as a field of action, composing with affective tonalities, giving consistency to urban situations, maintaining spaces over time and playing with imperceptible transformations. Each of these operating modes can account for how a physical environment manages to become a lived ambiance, how a world of built forms manages to become a world of sensory atmospheres.



**'The backstage of urban ambiances:
When atmospheres pervade everyday
experience.'**

Jean-Paul Thibaud

Emotion, Space and Society 15: 39-46 (2015)

Publication Highlights

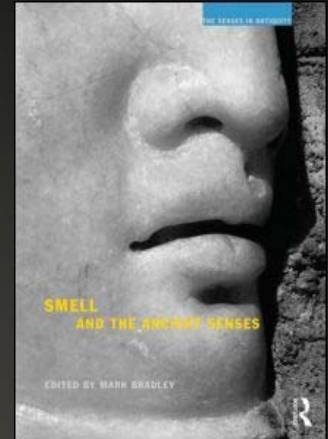
Smell and the Ancient Senses

Routledge (2015)

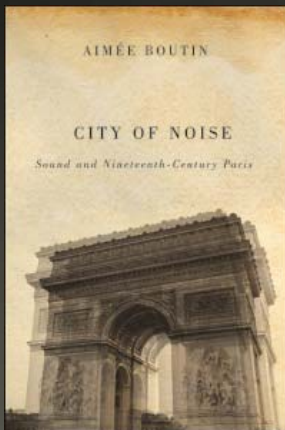
Edited by Mark Bradley

From flowers and perfumes to urban sanitation and personal hygiene, smell—a sense that is simultaneously sublime and animalistic—has played a pivotal role in western culture and thought. Greek and Roman writers and thinkers lost no opportunity to connect the smells that bombarded their senses to the social, political and cultural status of the individuals and environments that they encountered: godly incense and burning sacrifices, seductive scents, aromatic cuisines, stinking bodies, pungent farmyards and festering back-streets.

The cultural study of smell has largely focused on pollution, transgression and propriety, but the olfactory sense came into play in a wide range of domains and activities: ancient medicine and philosophy, religion, botany and natural history, erotic literature, urban planning, dining, satire and comedy—where odours, aromas, scents and stench were rich and versatile components of the ancient sensorium. *Smell and the Ancient Senses* explores and probes the ways that the olfactory sense can contribute to our perceptions of ancient life, behaviour, identity and morality.



Publication Highlights



City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris

Aimée Boutin

University of Illinois Press (2015)



Beloved as the city of light, nineteenth-century Paris sparked the acclaim and odium with its distinctive soundscapes. Street vendors bellowed songs known as the *Cris de Paris* that had been associated with their trades since the Middle Ages. *Flâneurs*-writers, fascinated with the city's underside, recorded much about what they heard.

Aimée Boutin tours the sonic space that orchestrated the different, often conflicting, sound cultures that defined Paris's street ambience. Mining accounts from guidebooks to verse, Boutin braids literary, cultural, and social history to reconstruct a lost auditory environment. As Boutin shows, the din of the *Cris* contrasted economic abundance with the disparities of the capital, old and new traditions, and the vibrancy of street commerce with an increasing bourgeois demand for quiet. In time, peddlers who provided the soundtrack for Paris's narrow streets yielded to modernity, and the fading songs of the *Cris* became a dirge for the passing of old ways.

Announcements

Sensory Studies Website

<http://www.sensorystudies.org/>

Sensory studies arises at the conjuncture (and within) the fields of anthropology • sociology • history • archeology • geography • communications • religion • philosophy • literature art history • museology • film • mixed media • performance • phenomenology • disability • aesthetics • architecture • urbanism • design

Sensory Studies can also be divided along sensory lines into, for example, visual culture, auditory culture (or sound studies), smell culture, taste culture and the culture of touch, not to mention the sixth sense (however it might be defined)

This website is an informative platform for sensory scholars and those interested in the social life of the senses. It features various details on publications, syllabi, events, and a directory of sensory researchers. Do visit the site to find out more.



Announcements

Food & the Global Asian City Workshop 8-9 April 2015



With support from the NUS-FASS Cities Cluster and the ODPRT, our group, TG07 organized a workshop on food studies with participants from NYU, University of Toronto, University of South Australia and others to share their current research on food and foodways. Prof. Vineeta Sinha from NUS delivered a keynote address titled 'Mapping Singapore's Culinary Landscape: Is Anyone Cooking?'

The various papers that were presented over the 2-day workshop engaged with the following core queries:

1. How do people perceive their positioning in the urban social order through their culinary practices, particularly amid the urban manifestations of global political-economic restructuring and sociocultural change?
2. How do the politics and sensescapes of gastronomy relate to the transformation and redevelopment of urban spaces? How is modern urban life shaped by immigration and migratory foodways?
3. How are processes related to food and foodways, senses and urban change intertwined?

Announcements

Food & the Global Asian City Workshop 8-9 April 2015



Krishnendu Ray from NYU presenting his paper on 'Disreputable Cuisine: Street Food, Middle Class Hegemony, and Cultures of Masculinity.'



Workshop dinner for participants, panel chairs, and organisers

Announcements

We invite book proposals to the interdisciplinary *Social Sciences in Asia* Monograph Series. It publishes original materials and the revised editions of special issues of the *Asian Journal of Social Science*. The *Social Sciences in Asia* Monograph Series welcomes submissions from specialists on any facet of Asia, including sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, economists, geographers, and historians.

The *Social Sciences in Asia* Monograph Series was the initiative of the editorial team of the *Asian Journal of Social Science* at the Department of Sociology, National University of Singapore. It was initially the Asian Social Science Series, with Brill and the Times Academic Press co-publishing the first three volumes between 2001 and 2002. In 2003, the Series became Social Sciences in Asia and henceforth carries only the Brill imprint.

www.brill.nl/publications/social-sciences-asia

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