



# Senses and Society

## Thematic Group newsletter

### XX ISA World Congress of Sociology



**Resurgent Authoritarianism:**  
*Sociology of New Entanglements of Religions, Politics, and Economies*

Melbourne, Australia | June 25-July 1, 2023  
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre  
[www.isa-sociology.org](http://www.isa-sociology.org)



**The XX ISA World Congress of Sociology will be in Melbourne, June 25 - July 1, 2023.** The theme is 'Resurgent Authoritarianism: The Sociology of New Entanglements of Religions, Politics, and Economies'. Undoubtedly some of us will meet there. For those who had submitted a paper for the cancelled TG07 sessions for the previous 2021 congress in Porto Alegre, we encourage you to resubmit your papers. For those who proposed paper sessions, we hope you will resubmit session proposals, too. For more details about the conference, see the [ISA World Congress website](http://www.isa-sociology.org)

Here are the relevant deadlines:

- July 1-September 30, 2022: Abstracts submission
- December 2, 2022: Notifications of acceptance
- March 22, 2023: Registration deadline for participants

Therefore, if you wish to submit abstracts for TG07 please do so by the deadline of September 30, 2022.

## Translating Sensory Experience

Inspired by the postcolonial project of decentering previously dominant or hierarchical power structures, this methodological panel calls for a broad engagement with recentering of the senses in academic knowledge production and dissemination. The panel aims to explore novel practice-based methods for engaging with sensory experience and translating the senses into and out of various knowledge media or formats. Indicative practices may translate sensory experience into text; translate from narrative into experimental or performative formats; extend methods for recording to new methods for disseminating sensory experience; and innovate existing and new adaptive technologies that expand sensory experiences. Decentering postcolonial power structures and recentering the senses may also involve stepping beyond interaction to emplace the senses in the lived environment and more-than-human lifeworld, such as relocating mundane sensory experiences of the climate and seasons away from a rigid universalizing seasonal calendar and recovery of the senses and diversity of sensations from records of human experience of the natural or built environment, including but not limited to official historical papers, audio visual recordings, personal diaries and biographical narratives, oral histories, digital records and social media content about performances and multi-sensory experiential events. The panel seeks methodologically rich contributions that draw on postcolonialism and sensory studies to propose novel ways to challenge the dominance of traditional or conventional formats for knowledge production and dissemination, such as a standard 15-20 minute narrative conference paper or 6,000-7,000 word narrative research publication scripted in formal academic language. Please share any audio visual requirements in your proposal.

### Session Organizers

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## Excursions in Sensory Studies: Teaching, Doing, Writing

In the field of sensory scholarship, scholars have been scrutinising and analysing sensory experience, sensory models and symbolism in relation to social actors of particular groups or cultures, and their sensory ways of being. In the process, we also consider our own sensory knowhow and learning as scholars and teachers. How are sensory data procured and articulated through various means and modes of communication and writing? How can we teach about the deployment of the fieldworker's and teacher's senses and body as a living, physical, sensing and experiencing agent that is deeply enmeshed in everyday and intimate encounters? How can we attend to the question of sensory experience by accounting for the relationships between bodies, minds and the sensory of in the context of the classroom? How do we carry out and teach sensory ethnographic research that accounts for the manifold ways where multisensoriality is integral both to the lives of people who participate in our research and to how we ethnographers practise our craft? The panel invites papers that deliberate upon the craft, writing, teaching and doing of sensory research to encompass debates on researcher and teacher positionality, pedagogy, curriculum design, ethics and writing.

### Session Organizer

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## Experiencing Silence and Expanded Time; Other Sensory Pathways and Knowledge

In this contemporary era of acceleration and proliferation of information we are immersed in a world of continuous interruptions and sensory over-stimulation. To cultivate other spaces in order to disconnect from our daily habitus has become a challenge; silence and time are now considered as rare and luxurious. In counterpoint we can witness the emergence and the integration of “slow” practices in different professional fields and everyday life. How can we attend and experience spaces of silence and attention, expanding the feeling of time as potentialities to others sensory and perceptive pathways to work from? This session wants to highlight the senses embedded in contemporary or traditional practices in contrast with a world infused by speed and data as well as diverse approaches operating in counterpoint to hegemonic ways of doing and sensing. How can we create new sensory relations and intensities involving specific qualities of attention? How can we expand our sensory experience to remap notions of “in depth quality” versus quantity in terms of sensory information? How does slowing down involve new “ways of doing” while opening up new insights and possible transformation? We invite participants interested in sharing their engagement in practices and studies ranging from the everyday life to embodied and artistic approaches, including ecological, trans-cultural and trans-disciplinary perspectives; on the potentialities of the senses as generator of states of presence, perceptions, imagination, “ways of being” while interacting with others, the “more-than-human” and/or our surroundings in order to unfold new sensory experiences and knowledge.

### Session Organizers

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## The Political Life of Sensation

While sensory scholarship has burgeoned over time to address such domains of social scientific inquiry including materialities, art, religion, food and foodways among others, the political life of sensation remains a fairly underdeveloped area of sensory research, having only recently gained some traction in analyses of everyday political realms and encounters. This panel aims to bring together discussions on how the senses relate to varying political dimensions in social life. It locates the nexus of the senses, power, and politics across a range of topics comprising, inter alia, manifold statecraft and political behavior, political systems and biopolitics, citizenship and democracy, protest and demonstrations, and belonging, in illuminating the importance of studying the senses as political, and politics as sensorial. How are sounds deployed as a mechanism of political power? How do social actors engage with the senses in contexts of war, violence, and conflict? How is political propaganda intertwined with sensory expressions of power and identity? By focusing on select sensory modalities and experience, as well as the sensorium in whole, the panel bridges the political and the sensible and attempts to challenge the assumed binary of which the former connotes reason and the rational, and where the latter is connected to the emotional and the affective.

### Session Organizer

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## The Sense of Data and the Data of Sense: Bodies, Technologies, Spaces

How are bodily sensations, movements, and emotion displays entering into the digital surveillance economy? Since Andrejevic and Burdon's 2015 paper on the 'sensor society', with its warning of the "growing array of networked digital devices" that "passively collect enormous amounts of data" (2015:19), we are becoming accustomed to a tide of revelations concerning the darker side of digital surveillance and the 'Quantified Self' movement. The technical infrastructure that facilitates the monitoring of bodies encompasses the spaces of work, leisure, and the home, and includes embedded sensors, geolocation tracking, and face recognition technologies. In parallel with so-called 'smart cities', with their allure of convenience and control for citizens, are stealthier and potentially coercive forms of surveillance such as infra-red monitoring of consumer behaviors in stores and malls, the surveillance of physiological indicators of stress and productivity in offices, and the tracking of workers' bodily movements within factories, warehouses, and distribution centers (e.g. Altenreid's *The Digital Factory*, 2022).

What is the future of work and play as we increasingly reside within larger ecologies of sensors, and robotic and autonomous systems? What historical forces and developments have allowed these infrastructures to flourish?

The panel welcomes papers that engage either conceptually or empirically with the intersection of technologies, senses, and spaces. Areas might include: sensor societies; Zuboff and surveillance capitalism; bodies and interfaces; human-robot interactions; 'aesthetic' encounters; Smart cities and architectures; the 'Quantified Self' (QS) movement, and the availability of biometric data collection in everyday life (e.g. FitBit, Nike+, Strava, Apple Health).

### Session Organizer

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## **Call for Contributions to a Special Issue on Race and Multimodality**

Special Issue of the journal *Multimodality and Society* on Race and Multimodality

Edited by Sachi Sekimoto and Christopher Brown

For publication in late 2023

As a social and affective force, race appears in multiple forms and manifestations (Alcoff, 2006; Saldanha, 2007; Sekimoto & Brown, 2020; Stoeber, 2016). Race constitutes the relations of power enmeshed in multiple spheres and intersecting modes of social engagement (Ahmed, 2012; Browne, 2015; Kondo, 2018; Sullivan, 2015). This special issue explores the intersection between race and multimodality to provide multimodal accounts of how race emerges, travels, sticks, and morphs to assume its social presence, meaning, and power in various contexts.

This special issue approaches multimodality through “a wide variety of visual, aural, embodied, material, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments, and insight on the relationships between these” (Jewitt, Adami, Archer, Björkqvall, Lim, 2021, pp. 3-4). We encourage contributors to consider issues of race and racism with a focus on the relationships and interactions between bodily, environmental, technological, sensorial, and material modes of communication.

How is race a multimodal construction? How is race constructed and reproduced within the multimodal machinery of modern societies? How does multimodal scholarship contribute not only to the understanding of the communicative materialization of race, but on how to intervene and fight against racism as well? Multimodality as a field of inquiry presents a possibility of calling attention to—and drawing presence of—elements and dimensions that are unnamed or unrecognized, including the experiences of racism and the subtle and habitual ways of marginalization and oppression. The interdisciplinary and international nature of multimodal scholarship presents a promise of unveiling how racism functions in everyday life beyond the conventional views of race as purely visual and symbolic.

We invite a broad range of innovative submissions that engage the possibilities offered by multimodal perspectives. Contributors may approach multimodality from a variety of theoretical and methodological traditions. Possible topics may include, but not limited to:

- The role of multimodality in constructing race and communicating racism
- Multimodal analysis of racialized experiences, racism, or being a racial minority
- Multimodality and anti-racism/anti-racist pedagogy
- Race as situated in the somatic work of sensing and embodiment
- Sensations, feelings, and affect of historically marginalized populations
- Critiquing, expanding, or advancing multimodal theories, concepts, and methods in the context of critical race studies
- Sensory ethnography on race
- Multimodal articulations of racialized experiences via sound, image, dance, protest, etc.
- Race as it intersects with spatiality or temporality
- Racialized touch, pain, sound, movement, or taste
- Racialized design and technology
- Multimodal construction of racist discourses, stereotypes, or hate speech
- Multimodality and whiteness or coloniality
- Multimodality and experience of alterity or otherness
- More-than-representational approaches to race and racism

Submissions can be in one of three different format types: Original Research Papers, with a theoretical, methodological and/or empirical focus (6-8,000 words); Multimodal Sensations, short innovative multimodal pieces that extend the notion of the visual essays (4-8 pages); or Practitioner Reflections which engage with the ideas, practices and concerns of practitioners (e.g. designers, activists, artists, educators, performers) working in fields where multimodal tools and practices are central (1-2,000 words).

Initial expressions of interest in the form of an abstract of 250-500 words and a short author bio should be sent to both [sachi.sekimoto@mnsu.edu](mailto:sachi.sekimoto@mnsu.edu) and [christopher.brown@mnsu.edu](mailto:christopher.brown@mnsu.edu) by September 30, 2022.

Papers will initially be reviewed by the editors, and if accepted for review, they will go through double blind peer-review. Author guidance is available on the journal information page of the Multimodality and Society website <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/MAS>