

**Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Management Learning***

**The Senses in Management Research and Education**

**Deadline for submissions: 1 December 2020**

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Moral: we must say “no” to everything in which the senses believeth [...] And above all, away with the *body*, this wretched *idée fixe* of the senses, infected with all the faults of logic that exist...

– Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of Idols*

Can the study of organization and management, which has typically given primacy to language, overcome its “contempt for the body” (Nietzsche, 1896)? Might it be that our emphasis on language prevents us from producing genuinely new knowledge, as “[t]hose things for which we find words, are things we have already overcome” (Nietzsche, 1911: 81)? Exploring the ways in which researchers and organizational members alike can gain knowledge otherwise than through the mediation of language, this special issue investigates how the senses (smell, touch, sight, hearing, and taste) may offer a different access to realities of organization, organizing and management.

One only needs to realize that interviews are the default data-gathering technique, or that writing is the main vehicle for academic knowledge, in order to see that language is the default setting both as a research method and as a privileged activity members engage in as part of their work life (Alvesson and Ashcraft, 2012; Van Maanen, 1995). There is a growing concern that this logocentrism (Derrida, 1976) has led researchers to disregard the fundamentally aesthetic, sensory and affective constitution of organizational realities, which are difficult to communicate through language (Beyes, 2017; Fotaki et al., 2017; Strati, 2007; Warren, 2008; Zundel, 2013). Within management and organization studies, an understanding of cultural norms, threats and opportunities, and partners’ interests, is increasingly achieved through workshops and other activities that mobilize more than just language, relying on embodiment, visuality and aesthetics (Paroutis et al., 2015; Rusted, 1999). This concern is part of a larger return to the senses in social and cultural theories (Reckwitz, 2017).

There is, then, a growing awareness that organizations cannot be reduced to disincarnate language alone, as they also materialize through bodies, architecture, documents and a host of other ‘things’ (e.g. Ashcraft et al., 2009; Beyes et al., 2020). Learning about an organization, thus, is also learning about colour, space, movement, atmospheres and odours, to name a few. Knowing in organizational contexts, for instance, is fundamentally achieved through the senses, as the body “attunes” to the work expected of it (Willems, 2018), and may be better accounted for through an aesthetic sensibility than through conventional explanations (Strati, 2007; Valtonen et al., 2017). Furthermore, the spaces for management education and learning produce their own sensory

qualities (Michels and Beyes, 2016). Therefore, tuning in to bodily capacities and sensory phenomena can allow researchers and organizational members to learn in ways that have been mostly suppressed by, and thus remain “foreign” to, management research and education thus far.

Besides calling for methodological contributions that suggest how we can “sense more” in the practice of research, this special issue also invites contributions offering a different perspective on the senses. As such, we hope to enter ongoing debates on the role of the senses and embodiment in knowledge production in the social sciences at large and the study of organization and management in particular (e.g. Ingold, 2011; Le Breton, 2006; Noland, 2009). Having been described as “hybrid” and as bringing together a “plenum of agencies”, organizations and institutional environments are spaces for *sense-making par excellence* (Castor and Cooren, 2006; Cooren, 2006). As such, they provide unique opportunities to study the role of the senses in the constitution of social collectives in general. Topics for papers could include:

- The sensuous and embodied aspects of touch (Brewis and Williams, 2019; Hancock et al., 2015), taste (see Probyn, 1999), and smell (Canniford et al., 2018; Islam et al., 2016) in organizational contexts.
- The reconceptualization of sight and hearing *as senses*, for instance by considering noise and music, or lighting and color, at work (Beyes, 2017; Styhre, 2013).
- The multi-sensory, atmospheric constitution of organizing (Jørgensen and Holt, 2019; Michels and Steyaert, 2017).
- The embodied nature of knowledge production (Kamoche and Maguire, 2011), for instance taking inspiration from (neo-) phenomenology (Gugutzer, 2017), feminist epistemologies (Code, 2008), non- (or more-than-) representational theory (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012) or the neo-material, media-theoretical (Beyes et al., 2020) and affective ‘turns’ (Fotaki et al., 2017).
- The relationship between the discursive and rational to the bodily, embodied and affective (Ashcraft, 2017; Essén and Värlander, 2013; Gherardi, 2019).
- The incorporation of methodological insights from neighboring disciplines, for instance approaches such as “sensory ethnography” (Pink, 2015; Sparkes, 2009) or experiments with “inventive methods” (Lury and Wakeford, 2012) and “affective writing” (Stewart, 2007).

We particularly encourage potential contributors to depart from established research on the role of emotions in organizations, the social construction of the body, or the way the senses are referred to in language, for instance in metaphorical speech. Our aim is instead to draw attention to the material, physical, and physiological aspects of the senses, and how these come to matter for the production and dissemination of knowledge in organization and management.

### **Details of submission process**

To discuss your article prior to submission, please contact the special issue editors: Karen L.

Ashcraft ([karen.ashcraft@colorado.edu](mailto:karen.ashcraft@colorado.edu)); Nicolas Bencherki ([nicolas.bencherki@teluq.ca](mailto:nicolas.bencherki@teluq.ca)); Timon Beyes ([timon.beyes@leuphana.de](mailto:timon.beyes@leuphana.de)); Boukje Cnossen ([boukje.cnossen@leuphana.de](mailto:boukje.cnossen@leuphana.de)).

This call is open and competitive; manuscripts will be double-blind reviewed, and a limited number of papers will be selected by the guest editors for publication in the special issue. Submissions must fit with the aims and scope of Management Learning: <https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/management-learning#description> as well as with this special issue call. All submissions should be made online: [http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/management\\_learning](http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/management_learning) in accordance with the journal submission guidelines.

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