

Tentative title: **Multisensorial research, migrations and inequalities – exploring new methodological pathways**

IMISCOE 2023 Annual Conference - Workshop's proposal

Organizers:

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Rational:

The sensory scholarship has become part of the canon of social sciences, and authors such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Paul Stoller, C. Nadia Seremetakis, David Howes, and Sarah Pink are extensively read. Howes (2021) has recently argued that the sensory turn in social research reached maturity. Yet multisensory perspectives are too rarely employed, both as a methodology, and as a way forward to theoretical advancements in migration studies. A reflection on the ethical consequences of the research through the multisensory perspective is limited too. We point out that sensory anaesthesia (Seremetakis 1996) in migration research may limit researchers' understanding of the investigated problems. With this workshop, we call for a critical discussion on how the involvement of a multisensory perspective can influence the theoretical conceptualisations of migrations and inequalities and its methodology, and what consequences it can bring for the research ethics. In our claims, we depart from the observation that both researchers and research participants are equipped with primary cognitive tools – the body and the mind - through which they interpret their life worlds and communicate this interpretation to others. Overlooking the body, while prioritising the mind in this process, gives necessarily only a partial picture of the researched situation. Having this in mind, the proposed workshop seeks to advance the discussions around the following issues:

What possible theoretical advancements can come out from the employment of the multisensory perspective to the research on various levels?:

Do sensory backgrounds (culturally grounded systems of interpretation of senses) influence divisions between the migrants and the majority society? If so, how does it impact equality?

What does it mean to live in transnationality on a bodily level? Can a body be transnational? How?

What are the consequences of the employment of the multisensory perspective on research ethics?:

Can senses re-humanise, re-establish subjectivity of the research participants? To which extent does it help researchers to bring the subject at the centre of analysis?

Can senses effectively de-centre euro-centric/male knowledge?

How can the multisensory perspective enrich the methodology? Does it contribute to more dense research findings?:

How can we conceptualise the senses with the positionality of the researcher and research participants?

How can we account for sensory experiences as part of our collected data?

The participants to the workshop will choose one or several aspects each, and will address them briefly at the beginning of the workshop, based on a case study from their research. The remaining time will be dedicated to a discussion between the participants and the audience, moderated by the organisers and chaired by a senior scholar within the multisensory scholarship and migration.