

SMELLS IN THE WORKPLACE: CORPOREAL POROSITY, OLFACTORY METHODOLOGY

*Research about business and business-like odors
compiled by Grover Dunn, Improbable Research staff*

Corporeal Porosity in Office Work

“Smell Organization: Bodies and Corporeal Porosity in Office Work,” Kathleen Riach and Samantha Warren, *Human Relations*, epub October 9, 2014. The authors, at Monash University, Australia, and the University of Essex, UK, explain:

This article contributes to a sensory equilibrium in studies of workplace life through a qualitative study of everyday smells in UK offices. Drawing on Csordas’ (2008) phenomenology of intercorporeality, we develop the concept of corporeal porosity as a way of articulating the negotiation of bodily integrity in organizational experience. We explore the corporeal porosity of workplace life through smell-orientated interview and diary-based methods and our findings highlight the interdependence of shared, personal, local and cultural elementals when experiencing smell in office-based work....

Corporeal porosity, therefore, captures the entanglement of embodied traces and fragments – corporeal seeping and secretion that has hitherto taken a backseat in organizational studies of the body at work.

Olfactory Methodology for the Workplace

“Developing an Olfactory Methodology for Researching Workplace Smell: A Research Note,” Samantha Warren and Kathleen Riach, Essex Business School Working Paper Series 2014. The authors explain:

We were particularly interested in exploring the entanglement of smell and culture, the body and the social, following recent writings in sensory anthropology which insist upon the culturally infused character of sensory experience and expressly argue against psychologically reductionist accounts of senses as ‘triggers’ for cultural interpretation based on neurological pathways and related brain activity.... [We] decided to include observations of ‘live smelling’ in the research design.



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Samantha Warren. Drawing by Nan
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Smell organization: Bodies and corporeal porosity in office work

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Abstract

This article contributes to a sensory equilibrium in studies of workplace life through a qualitative study of everyday smells in UK offices. Drawing on Csordas’ (2008) phenomenology of intercorporeality, we develop the concept of corporeal porosity as a way of articulating the negotiation of bodily integrity in organizational experience. We explore the corporeal porosity of workplace life through smell-orientated interview and diary-based methods and our findings highlight the interdependence of shared, personal, local and cultural elementals when experiencing smell in office-based work....