

**THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
AND SECURITY**

Andrzej GAŁGANEK

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3082-4353>

DOI : 10.14746/ps.2022.1.2

THE SMELL OF INTERNATIONALITY. TOWARDS A SENSUAL APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTRODUCTION

International relations are usually theorised about as activities of a political nature (theories of international politics). The core of their politicity is understood in different ways: politics of power and security, of cooperation and interdependence, of exploitation and dependence, and others. Thinking about international relations thus concerns the issue of their organisation and how they are managed.

The understanding of “internationality” proposed here focuses on how we interact with others and coexist with them. Such an understanding concentrates not so much on methods of human organisation, but more on unfathomable human and communal dispositions. If we consider the Great Debates on International Relations (IR) none of them deals with the issue of the ontology of internationality. They were dominated above all by questions of epistemology concerning how to produce legally valid knowledge. It is hard to find a debate attempting to answer the question of what internationality is.

So, what aspect of the social world constitutes the deepest ontological foundation of IR? The answer is unavoidable. The word *internationality* always leads to the same fundamental circumstance: human existence has never been individual, but always multiple. The essence of internationality has always boiled down to societies interacting together. This is the fundamental truth of the human world which justifies the existence of IR as an academic discipline. No other discipline places the fact of multiple societies at its ontological core (Rosenberg, 2016: 9). That multiplicity is not limited to politics and power relations, but its meaning spreads also into the social, economic and cultural spheres. Ultimately, this social multiplicity, and not politics, constitutes the deepest international code as a feature of human existence. And it is this that demands its voice be heard. This is a voice which tells us that social existence has been multiple and interactive since before the flood (Rosenberg, 2016: 10 and 20; Gałganek, 2021: 374–380). As a consequence of that understanding of internationality, IR extends beyond the traditional concepts of politics and economy. Literature, art, music, medicine, religion, philosophy, fashion, even language itself: all these arise in a context of social multiplicity, in which individuals are aware of paths of development separate from their own, and in which ideas, technologies and resources are constantly taken from one social environment to be placed into others, often creating original, even hybrid results.

So, IR should really be about almost everything: multiplicity and identity; multiplicity and sexuality; the interactive life of languages; structures of world literature; the unequal yet connected development of music; international relations of food and cooking; social strategies of dealing with differences (Rosenberg, 2018: 251), and also internationality experienced through the senses.

THE SENSES

The dominant model of knowledge typically rejects things as they are. Within it, social phenomena are treated as a system of relations between pre-established concepts. In other words, as linguistic phenomena. This model hinders questioning of the division separating “western” societies from the “rest of the world.” This division, despite not containing anything universal, is most often regarded as obvious. Historically constructed, it differentiated and separated the rational from the perceptual, the cognitive from the emotional. This resulted, however, not only in distinction, but also created a hierarchy. Everything that was assigned to the feelings and emotions was regarded as “inferior” and dangerous, as they could not be tested. In line with the binary logic, everything that was placed on the side of the mind and rationality was considered “superior,” as a foundation of civilisation (Laplantine, 2015: 1). In such an approach, we can see a kind of “camouflaged semantic slide” (Szołtysek, 2018: 219) involving the construction of binary, yet not symmetrical, pairs: mind – senses; intellectual – emotional; active – passive; culture – nature, and frequently also male – female. And though currently this model is rarely accepted, it is not enough to simply attribute value to the body versus the mind, emotion versus thought, speaking versus writing, to change our hierarchy of cognition and knowledge creation. The knowledge which the senses supply us with will still be devoid of its typical expressive authority and integrality by directing our attention more to the conditions of its creation, dissemination and reception. It is reduced to nothing more than a symptom of the truth, one which is sought everywhere other than on the surface.

After all, as Karl Marx stated, the senses should form the basis of all learning, that it is only *real* learning when it begins both in our sensual awareness and our sensual needs, and thus learning stems from nature. “The element of thought itself – the element of thought’s living expression – *language* – is of a sensuous nature” (Marx, 2005: 43).

The senses are, in fact, often the subject of considerations, but only in their individual physical and psychological aspect. Sensual experience is treated as a physical response entirely shaped by personal history. We all experience sensual memories of tastes, smells, images, sounds and tactile impressions from our childhood. We rarely contemplate how these sensual experiences were created and how they combine to form cultural constructs and practices. Sensuality is not only a question of individual physiological reactions and personal experience. It constitutes a fundamental area of cultural expression. It is a medium through which all social values and practices are constituted. “To a greater or lesser extent, every domain of sensory experience, from the sight of a work of art to the scent of perfume to the savor of dinner, is a field of cul-

tural elaboration. Every domain of sensory experience is also an arena for structuring social roles and interactions. We learn social divisions, distinctions of gender, class and race, through our senses. [...] [S]ensual relations are also social relations” (Howes, 2006: XI). The senses are a significant part of our daily experience, supplying us both with information about the surrounding world, as well as how they are structured and how we use them, mediating that experience.

Every culture creates its own sensory model, based on the relative significance attributed to each sense. This model is expressed through language, convictions and habits. Attributing varying degrees of significance to different senses has implications for the way in which a given culture perceives and interacts with the world. Understanding that our sensual “seeing” of the world can vary, could enable different societies to communicate with one another better (Classen, 1990: 722).

In recent years, we have observed a significant growth of interest in the senses in a range of disciplines: from history and philosophy, to geography, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, ethnology, law and medicine, to literature, literary criticism and art. We might even speak of a “sensual turn” in academic research (Reinarz, 2014: 3). This interest constitutes a reaction to a long period in which the senses and sensuality were overlooked as the opposite of rational research. In this rationalist perspective, sensual data was considered to be merely “flashy clothes” that had to be removed in order to arrive at the naked, abstract truth. The sensual turn, Canadian sociologist and anthropologist David Howes argues, is also a turn against the disembodiment of conventional academic writing. It also challenges the hegemony of vision in Western culture. This hegemony was the result of associating sight with scientific rationalism and capitalist visual ostentation, and its constant expansion through new technologies of observation and reproduction. It was the power and importance of vision in Western culture that, understandably, attracted academia’s attention. Other senses, in particular those called “inferior senses,” have been under-represented and under-theorised in contemporary research (Howes, 2006: XII).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, anthropologists were interested in the physical and sensory properties of the peoples they studied. Yet this interest was motivated by the desire to categorise people in terms of their belonging to various races. These classifications were based on a belief that associated Europeans with the mind and reason, and peoples outside Europe with the body and senses. Numerous studies were driven by the search for data that would confirm the belief in the “sensuality of savages.” Meanwhile, as François Laplantine argues, the real subject-object of anthropology, which in essence means ethnography, has always concerned emotions. The fieldwork experience boils down to the experience of sharing sensory impressions. “We observe, we listen, we speak with others, we partake in their cuisine, we try to feel what they experience along with them” (Laplantine, 2015: 2). The anthropology of the senses has gone beyond the audio-visual and restored the meaning of the senses of smell, taste and touch as a research subject. Anthropology’s earlier reluctance to study and acknowledge the cultural importance of smell, taste, and touch was related not only to the relative marginalisation of these senses by the modern West, but also to the racist tendencies of early anthropology to associate “inferior” senses with “inferior” races. The contemporary anthropologist of the senses is thus concerned with smell,

taste and touch, as well as with the role of sight and hearing, being not the evidence of the evolutionary status of particular societies or as anecdotal curiosities, but rather basic guidelines for the ways in which societies shape and give meaning to the world (Classen, 1997: 405).

The anthropological understanding of sensuality teaches us that the sensual can change our disciplinary categories, revive and reorient our thinking, and in particular create new ways of combining the sensual, social and political. If the most important question posed by politics is *how to live together?* then a significant part of the politics of sensuality concerns experiencing it together, that is, shared sensuality. A significant part of social life consists of seeing, listening, tasting, touching, sharing smells – *together*. Politicity and sensuality should therefore not be considered in binary terms. The politics of sensuality does not mean that every individual sensual experience is political, but that there is a political, international and historical dimension of sensuality that goes well beyond individual experience.

Reflection on sensuality illustrates the difficulties faced when any scientific cognition tries to bridge the gap between empiricism, or what we can observe, and the attempt to organise these observations. We typically do not know which observations are important and which are irrelevant, how to organise them, and how what our senses record works. Experience does not seem to provide us with any knowledge, it just exists, and the accumulation of more and more information does not offer any explanation. The difficulty in searching for patterns of sensuality and their rational status is partly due to the fact that knowledge, especially scientific knowledge, presupposes the existence of a constant object of study and the constancy of the examining subject. Meanwhile, sensuality is not such a constant subject of study, although it is precisely this constancy that we are looking for, but rather a kind of unstable relationship between subject and objects, as well as between subjects. The experience we get as a result of this relationship appears individual and unique. Sensory impressions seem to be constantly changing, appearing and disappearing, reappearing and disappearing again. They seem to have no substance, they are intangible and cannot be materialised, and it seems impossible to generalise them. In other words, sensuality seems non-essential and irrelevant. However, in the processual perspective, it is precisely this intangibility and relativity that are reality.

OLFACTORY INTERNATIONALITY

Although the word “smell” is apparently neutral, in practice it carries negative connotations in all languages. When we say “something smells here,” we typically mean “something smells bad here.” The term *olfaction*, understood as the sense of smell, or the way a person perceives a smell or malodour through their nose seems to remove this ambivalence and focuses our attention on the situation in which the smell, malodour or aroma, is present in the space between people, or things and people in the environment. Interestingly, the sense of smell and the sense of taste are very closely related, especially in the context of food. Both these senses appear to be chemical (Rodaway, 1994: 62). They can be distinguished in practice in terms of their func-

tionality: smell accompanies breathing, and taste accompanies food. Yet strong smells seem to “attack” both the nose and tongue. However, for the taste to work, its source must be placed on the tongue or in the mouth, while the smell gives us access to the world around us, including a wide range of stimuli, some of which we choose to smell, but most of which we encounter whether or not we choose to.

Alain Corbin, a contemporary French historian, researcher of the history of the nineteenth century, supporter of microhistory, associated with the *Annales School*, is widely recognised as the precursor of olfactory studies. In 1982, Corbin published a book titled *Le Miasme et la Jonquille. L’odorat et l’imaginaire social XVIII–XIXe siècles*, in which he analyses the relations between unpleasant smells and the efforts to improve public health in France at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This work, considered a classic today, focuses on demonstrating the profound influence of smells on daily life in France in times of social, political and cultural change. Another important publication in this vein of studies is the book by Constance Classen, David Howes, and Anthony Synnott titled *Aroma. The Cultural History of Smell* (1994), in which the authors present the cultural role of smells in various periods of Western history, as well as in the history of societies in other cultures. In 2014, Jonathan Reinartz published a work titled *Past Scents. Historical Perspectives on Smell*, in which he discusses the issues of religion and smell, race and smell, gender and smell, class and smell, cities and smell, and the perfume trade.

Often considered to be merely “biological,” the sense of smell is present in almost every aspect of culture, ranging from constructing personal identity and defining social status, through affirmation of group affiliation, to transmission of tradition. We tend to approach smells only in terms of phenomenological immediacy, but the customs and motives linking people with the sense of smell are conditioned by numerous cultural factors constructed by societies in the process of smells being part of the environment, the bodies of members of society and symbolic images of the world (Drobnick, 2006: 1).

Geographers sometimes use the term “smellscape” by analogy with “landscape.” The intention here is to emphasise that smells can be spatially ordered and linked to a specific place. Continents, countries, regions, districts, especially “ethnically” different ones, and houses all have their own specific scents. J. Douglas Porteous speaks of the smell of the “third world” with its distinct regional varieties, but also of the smell of the industrialised world, that was divided during the Cold War into the capitalist West and the communist East (Porteous, 1985: 364, 369).

However, it seems that the visually entrenched concept of “land-scape” is not well suited to the “pictorial” description of the olfactory experiences that constitute the “nasal” experience of the world around us. Smells tend to be present or absent, depending on the movement of the air or our movement. Being familiar with a specific smell and the phenomenon of habituation associated with it, and so our gradually diminishing response to a recurring or ongoing stimulus, may decrease our sensitivity when we encounter it again. However, coming across a smell previously experienced in a different place and time stimulates our memory of this smell and the experiences related to it that make up our biography. This makes our first olfactory impressions decisive in forming our response to scent and creating our olfactory memories. Habituation is well

illustrated by the olfactory impression during the first visit to another person's home, or the impression of a foreign country. The suggestive smells we are experiencing are usually not noticed by the hosts or residents of another country.

Scents are components of the concepts and practices of participants at all levels of social organisation (individual, family, tribal, state, and global) in various realms of social life (somatic, linguistic, socio-economic, political and aesthetic). Even though the sense of smell to a large extent remains a mystery to modern science, scents have always been an integral part of individual and social life. Specific smells are typically associated with a given place, but they also travel with and create internationality. Compared to other senses, the sense of smell is distinguished by great mobility and crosses many boundaries that are difficult to cross. Smell is strictly related also to the sense of identity. Frequently approached with suspicion, in various cultures smell was a source of knowledge where other sources were unavailable. Smell made it possible to distinguish Christians from pagans, whites from blacks, women from men, virgins from harlots, artisans from aristocrats, and stench from perfumes (Reinarz, 2014: 18).

In the humanities and social sciences, smell as a subject of study is only beginning to show its potential for opening new realms of reality (Reinarz, 2014: 218). Yet the existing historiography demonstrates that various societies in various places and times perceived smells differently and thus understood their worlds in different ways. While difficult to recall today, the scents of ancient Egypt or nineteenth-century Warsaw were important for their inhabitants, for their activities, interactions and the way they perceived their world and other worlds. It should be borne in mind that the sense of smell is usually placed at the lowest level of the hierarchy of senses. The sources of this hierarchy are most often found in Plato, who argued that sight is the most valuable and most important sense. Aristotle was of the same opinion and also pointed out that smells do not have an individual identity. Thus, trying to describe them, we are forced to refer to an emotional classification and distinguish such scents that, for example, evoke specific pleasures or longings, or those that evoke disgust. However, the sense of smell, often in conjunction with other senses, without doubt produces knowledge or strengthens existing beliefs. Contrary to what the few defenders of the role of the senses claim, the sense of smell as an instrument of cognition was depreciated by European elites in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What is more, it was increasingly often associated with animals, "savage" people, and even degenerates. Sigmund Freud believed that the depreciation of the senses is an element of the evolutionary process and a defining feature of civilised man. The sense of smell seemed to be inversely correlated with the development of intelligence. It was therefore believed that the sense of smell was better developed among "savages" than among civilised people. Naturalists and explorers (Alexander von Humboldt, James Cook) and early anthropologists were unanimous in this respect. Even if some anecdotal observations on this subject seem exaggerated, the observations of "savage" peoples reinforced the belief that the sense of smell is better developed in people living outside civilised societies (Corbin, 1986: 6). Such scientific opinions created numerous taboos about how the sense of smell is used. Sniffing and smelling, the acceptance of animal scents, the erotic influence of sexual scents all became suspicious. Such behaviour was treated as "savage" and confirmed an affinity with animals, and thus a lack of refinement and

ignorance of good manners. Additionally, Immanuel Kant disqualified the sense of smell for aesthetic reasons.

At the end of the eighteenth century, writing a natural history of scents seemed possible. Despite numerous attempts to classify smells, the final conclusion on this issue was that olfactory abstraction is impossible. The French philosopher and physician of Louis XVI, Pierre Cabanis (1757–1808), criticised the sensualist approach proposed by John Locke. Cabanis argued that a good analysis should not separate the way any sense works from the way all others work. All the senses are interdependent, and experiencing sensations is a function of the whole organism. Nevertheless, Cabanis saw the sense of smell as that which determines whether people like or dislike one another (Corbin, 1986: 140). At the time, anthropology explained also another paradox, namely that the sensitivity to delicate, pleasant smells develops in reverse to the ability to recognise odours present for a long time. For example, the people of Kamchatka can hardly sense the smell of cologne, but can smell rotten fish or a stranded whale from a distance. Similarly, workers who work all day in a polluted environment become resistant to strong odours and, as a consequence, lose their sense of smell. Due to the “law of compensation” that governs organ development, having strong arms excludes delicate noses that can only be a feature of people who do not have to do physical labour. This kind of unequal sensuality was just another indication of inequality between people. Alain Corbin argues that all such beliefs are the foundations of what he calls “bourgeois control of the sense of smell and the construction of a schema of perception based on the preeminence of sweetness” (Corbin, 1986: 141).

Researchers admit that we still cannot explain the transformation of physical qualities into sensations. The most influential theory, proposed by neuroscientists and the 2004 Nobel laureates Linda Buck and Richard Axel, is that molecules bind to receptors in the nasal passages. The identification of olfactory molecules is described as a chemical process. Often, research on scents in various societies begins with a remark about the olfactory experience being downgraded in the societies of the global north. This lack of interest in the sense of smell as a cultural experience limits our ability to understand the rich vocabulary through which other cultures express nature and give meaning to the order and relationships in their communities, and define their place in the world.

Scent and power. Olfactory others, race and scent

From an ethnographic perspective, Paul Stoller argues that internationality requires a more sensuous approach in which local epistemologies and sensory regimes are more fully explored. Stoller believes that sensuous descriptions improve not only the clarity and force of ethnographic representations but also the social analysis of power relations-in-the-world. Fully sensuous scholarship not only pushes social scientists to reconsider the analysis of power-in-the-world but also compels them to rethink their scholarly being-in-the-world (Stoller, 2004: 820).

The racial coding of Africans through smells began in the early modern era. Various cultural others were classified in terms of smell long before the Atlantic slave trade commenced. However, this early racial coding differed from how racial stereo-

types were built later on. This specific pattern arose from a cultural fascination with scents, treated as inherent and impossible to remove. European travellers to Africa tried to be objective in their accounts of their exotic and fragrant encounters in contact zones (Kettler, 2021: 44). The conviction that Africa and its peoples had a “pungent” smell appeared at the end of the seventeenth century and gradually led Europeans to believe that Africans needed to be cleansed. This need partly resulted from the rhetorical definition of the African other through various spiritual, biological, and scientific languages relating to odour, miasmas, contagion, and contamination. Such racial olfactory roots of sensuous culture later gave rise to the beliefs of slave traders, who saw African scents as a sign of biological inferiority. “Blackness” and “whiteness” were increasingly defined upon a cultural binary, where the former was often symbolised by virginity, purity and floral scents, and the latter by inherent dirtiness, sinfulness and odour (Kettler, 2021: XI).

In the history of human societies, smells both connected people through various types of rituals and divided them, being used as justifications for oppressing others. Therefore, it is necessary to relate various methods of olfactory perception to social structures. The analysis of social conflicts and tensions seems incomplete without recognising the various forms of sensuality that influenced them. The aversion to certain smells produces forms of social power that are characteristic of it. The presence of smelly rubbish seems to threaten social order, and the victory of hygiene and “nice” smells supports its stability.

Scent ontologies have marked, and continue to create, boundaries. In 1709, French doctor and pharmacist, Nicolas Lémery, suggested that different social classes be marked with various scents. “Royal perfumes” would be for the aristocracy, “bourgeois perfumes” for the middle class and perfumes – for the poor. The latter were devoid of any aesthetic value. They consisted of ordinary olive oil mixed with soot, and their sole purpose was to disinfect the air (Vigarelo, 1998: 96).

In the 1930s, George Orwell suggested that the true secret of class divisions in the West could be expressed by saying that “lower classes smell.” Working-class body odours were considered an “impassable barrier” for the possibility of a close relationship between classes. “For no feeling of like or dislike is quite so fundamental as a physical feeling. Race-hatred, religious hatred, differences of education, of temperament, of intellect, even differences of moral code, can be got over; but physical repulsion cannot” (Orwell, 1937: 115). Orwell believed that personal hygienic practices divide classes to a greater extent than commonly admitted. At the same time, he was aware that contempt for the “lower classes” as a component of middle-class consciousness had been instilled even in him when he was a boy, along with the requirement of washing his neck and being ready to die for his country.

At present, political correctness does not encourage exploring the issue of olfactory differences between human races. However, our personal scent is a function of race, ethnicity, culture, age, gender, and class (Porteous, 1985: 361). Viet Cong soldiers were apparently able to smell the American military by its “cheesy” scent, produced by their consuming large amounts of milk-derived products.

In other times, Graham Greene recalled the scent of Liberian carriers he encountered during his journey through the jungle as quite pleasant, sweet-sour, bitter, sof-

tened by the rich plum aroma of kola nuts and a slight floral scent (Greene, 1971: 78). British general, diplomat and writer, Scot Fitzroy Maclean, who spent more than two years in the Soviet Union between 1937 and the end of 1939, for the first time smelled something that was to stay in the background of his entire stay there. "It was not quite like anything that I had ever smelt before, a composite aroma compounded of various ingredient odours inextricably mingled one with another. There was always, so travelers in Imperial Russia tell me, an old Russian smell made up from the scent of black bread and sheepskin and vodka and unwashed humanity. Now to these were added the modern smells of petrol and disinfectant and the clinging, cloying odour of Soviet soap. The resulting, slightly musty flavour pervades the whole country, penetrating every nook and cranny, from the Kremlin to the remotest hovel in Siberia. Since leaving for Russia, I have smelt it once or twice again, for Russians in sufficiently large numbers seem to carry it with them abroad, and each time with that special power of evocation which smells possess, it has brought back with startling vividness the memories of those years" (Mclean, 1964: 11). Travelling in Soviet Central Asia later on, Maclean observed that the cold and musty smell of Russia faded as the climate became warmer and more "Eastern-smelling."

Travelling across foreign or unknown places may evoke strong identity-related emotions such as fear and aversion on the one hand and admiration and desire on the other. In the history of relations between various societies, encounters have been an integral part of the politics of perception, whereby cultural values could be perceived through the senses, including smell. Such encounters, especially when international, force their participants to evaluate one another and are related to their cultural values. Romans were openly anxious about the "foreign odour" they associated with the cultural depravity of others. The clothes and bodies of the German tribes that conquered Rome gave off an insipid odour which might have come partly from the butter they put on their hair. In turn, the "barbarians," who lived hard lives, did not accept such subtleties of the upper Roman class as perfumed clothes and fragrant baths. Classen, Howes and Synnott note that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "[h]uman odours, for example, were enthusiastically, if not very reliably, classified by sex, race, age, diet and even hair colour [...] by the scientists of the period" (Classen et al., 1994: 88). Knowledge acquired during such encounters usually transformed into the collective imagination and perpetuated a sense of collective identity. Consequently, smell separated societies: the West from non-West, the colonisers from the colonised, the exploiting from the exploited. The sense of smell is therefore often described as the "sense of difference." Alexander von Humboldt, a nineteenth-century German naturalist, wrote that Peruvians can distinguish "Europeans, American-Indian, or Negro" in the dark, using only their sense of smell (Carlisle, 2004: 27). Humboldt's contemporaries believed that humans capable of detecting subtle scent differences were closer to animals and savages than those who did not have this ability. At the same time, non-white races were believed to be more dirty and less civilised than white Europeans. In almost all cases, "primitive" peoples attributing a significant role to scent was interpreted as further evidence of their being lower on the evolutionary ladder of civilisation. In general, all non-Western societies were considered "malodorous." Smell was an essential part of the cultural construction of this difference and inequality. This kind of cultural

embedding of “racial scents” emphasised the absoluteness of social boundaries. The permanence implied by such evaluative assessments historically stimulated spatial and social exclusion, and justified that contacts with social groups from whom it was possible to become infected should be minimised (Reinarz, 2014: 86). Such opinions were widespread in European travel literature, especially when the first travellers encountered other cultures. Moreover, the concept of “racial scent” has remained in academic studies of scents and smell, and not only those dealing with physiological issues. For example, in the case of African Americans, the reference to an unpleasant odour was an important element in creating a racist ideology. Smell, and not sight only, played a key role in creating racial differences.

While socially dominant groups are characterised by a symbolic lack of scent, peripheral groups are usually classified as “scented.” Ethnic groups usually smell “foreign” and “undesirable.” The working class “reeks” of poverty. The ruling class faces the olfactory challenge of maintaining their odourlessness and protecting themselves against the scents peripheral groups exude. Peripheral groups typically apply two strategies. One is to internalise their designated place in the olfactory classification and to try to gain respect by diffusing or masking the scent associated with them. The other strategy is for peripheral groups to establish their own olfactory norms, to recognise their olfactory identity as positive, and to denounce the false identity imposed on them by the ruling class (Classen et al., 1994: 161).

In the Western tradition, the smell of ethnic groups and social classes has often been explained as a result of consuming certain types of food or of perfuming practices. Yet it was equally often treated as an inherent feature of a given group, unchanging as the colour of the skin. Such “ethnic” or “racial scents” are usually presented as distinctive and unpleasant, thus justifying the aversion to contact. Olfactory aversion seems not so much to cause ethnic antipathy as to express it. No matter how imaginary the racial scent whites attributed to blacks was, the belief that it existed influenced both the perception of blacks and their self-perception. If you often hear that you smell bad, you start to believe it. In order to contradict this belief numerous blacks turned to perfumes and deodorants. However, their use could not dispel the bias that was rooted in culture rather than nature. With every perfume used by blacks, whites reinforced their belief that blacks had an unpleasant smell. Likewise, in England, cheap perfumes used by members of the working class were seen as a sign of their “uncouth” taste.

The pursuit to cleanse the Western social body of “contaminated elements” took its most tragic form in Nazi Germany. National Socialists described Jews as “spreaders of germs” and “perpetrators of racial contamination.” Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf* about the possibility of an olfactory policy practiced with closed eyes. The racist olfactory politics regarded Jews as undesirable and socially dangerous because of their unpleasant odour, associating it with their physical and moral corruption. Hygiene institutes established during the Nazi regime, apart from their obligations of conducting epidemic control and research on bacteria, were involved in the distribution of gas used in concentration camps to “eliminate” Jews and representatives of other nations.

In the concentration camps, a suffocating stench exuded from the overcrowded barracks and cells. Deprived of hygienic products, prisoners lived in conditions of eternal

dirtiness. The prisoners' unpleasant smell was a justification for the camp torturers to see them as "smelly Jews" and "human dirt." The worst thing, however, was the persistent smell of burning human bodies coming from the crematoria. From the point of view of the Nazis, the stench breaking into their houses was the most troublesome thing. Rudolf Höss, a war criminal and the commandant of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1940–1943, wrote that in bad weather or when a strong wind was blowing, the smell of burning bodies spread many kilometres away and made the whole neighbourhood talk about burning Jews, despite official counter-propaganda. The Nazis tried to solve this problem, but they failed. The stench would not subside. However, in the terrible metaphor of the Nazi torturers it was better for prisoners "to '[go] to heaven in [a cloud] of gas' than to '[die] in shit'" (Lifton, 1986: 196).

Asylum: internationality and scent

An immigrant can be considered a paradigmatic figure of modern diversity and internationality. Numerous discourses on epidemics, germs, crimes and social threats are constructed around immigrants' bodies. They are culturally constructed as a source of undesirable sensory experiences. They are often viewed as a natural carrier of contaminating and negative odours. Smell and scents are typically components of differences and inequality, being culturally constituted. In modern Western discourses, the olfactory presence was established as non-Western, uncivilised, and primitive. It can be argued that the examination of the term "smelly immigrant" allows us to understand the politics of the body and the sensual meanings given to the world in the process of building global capitalism. In the United States, Asian Americans were historically directly associated with food and – indirectly – with specific smells. Filipinos, Koreans and Vietnamese were referred to as "dogeaters." The Chinese were accused of cooking and eating cats and rats. Indians were blamed for food that was hot and spicy to the point of being inedible. Even though New York abounds in scents, the city is usually pictured in terms of a mythical image of odourless skyscrapers. The skyscrapers and their odourlessness constitute the modernity and centrality of New York as a global financial and technological hub.

Olfaction is a political and cultural internationality that should be viewed in emotional terms of guilt, fear, disgust and shock. Finnish author Eeva Puumala, in her work *Asylum Seekers, Sovereignty, and the Senses of the International*, identifies asylum seeking as a "politico-corporeal struggle that profoundly challenges our thought of political existence" (Puumala, 2017: XII). This forces us to adopt the perspective of sensual internationality, an understanding of relations between the senses and politics, of how these relations develop in bodies and are developed by bodies. The mobile bodies of refugees and asylum seekers provide the materiality of internationality by articulating political relations as choices, decisions, struggles and obligations. "The body, with its multiple strategies, introduces a politics of the body and suggests a sensuous focus on the international" (Puumala, 2017: XII). In this sense, internationality is about the political practices of establishing bodily relationships that are inevitably associated with the creation of boundaries and hierarchies. Internationality should therefore be

analysed in terms of how it is experienced, how it forms and how it resonates within and between bodies. Trying to generalise this perspective, we can say that this understanding of internationality refers us to both the meanings that each of us attributes to our experiences and to sensory perceptions that provide the basis for these meanings and rationality and logic – usually that of the ruler who sets the framework in which we experience internationality. Typically such a framework is created through the setting of political boundaries and the efforts to maintain them. However, internationality constantly crosses the boundaries thus set. Conducting her “field” research, Puumala discovers a completely different world. Reception and detention centres materialise into a world where nothing is what it seems, and where nothing remains the same. “It took me time to understand it, but from early on the stories I heard, the things I witnessed, the people I touched and who touched me, and the smell of that world affected me” (Puumala, 2017: 22).

Adopting the ethnographic approach in IR can change how we perceive internationality and the world. Ethnography can facilitate our deeper understanding of sovereignty practices and enable us to discover many meanings of internationality. Sensual internationality is realised in everyday life, reinforced by the mobility of people and the relationships they establish. The ethnographic perspective can function as an epistemological attitude or even an ontological attitude: real people in real places. The smell of the air after the rain evokes a memory of her native country in Adan, a Somali asylum seeker in Finland, and the feeling of being there again. A Kurd named Soran, finds the smells of the reception centre repugnant (Puumala, 2017: 146).

Olfactory travelogy

Many first contacts of Europeans with the peoples of Africa, the Americas and Oceania occurred during exploratory expeditions. It is therefore not surprising that not only the “discovered” lands, but also the bodies of the people inhabiting them, were measured and mapped in order to determine their position in the European *mappus mundi*. In the practice of measuring body parts and recording the sensory abilities of “primitive” peoples, anthropologists constructed themselves as rational Europeans and their subjects as “sensual savages.” “Primitive” peoples were thought to have a clear tendency to give priority to “inferior,” “animal” and “primitive” senses. As early as the eighteenth century, treatises were written describing tactile aesthetics and the unique olfactory abilities of “savages.” These became commonplace in the nineteenth century, drawing from the anecdotal descriptions of explorers and travellers in their travel accounts. A representative of natural history, German biologist and botanist Lorenz Oken (1779–1851) even created a “sensory hierarchy of human races.” The European “eye-man” was placed at the top of his classification, followed by the Asian “ear-man,” then the Native American “nose-man,” the Australian “tongue-man,” while the African “skin-man” was at the bottom (Classen, 1997: 405).

Building empires diffused “exotic” fragrances and incorporated them into traditional “smellscapes.” Porteous speaks of bringing “British” scents into the Indian

world, such as the smell of railroads, the smell of English flowers in Indian resorts, the distinctive smell of sewage, Christian churches and mallow in Rangoon. Naturally, these processes worked both ways, as Victorian gardeners radically changed the English “smellscape” by importing hundreds of plant species from all over the world and acclimatising them in the UK. In the second half of the twentieth century, the global “smellscape” was largely unified due to the American “sanitisation” of the home, covering also the sphere of clothing, food and broadly understood consumption. Sanitisation can symbolise the antiseptic endeavours leading to “sensuous death.” Since not all the surrounding smells can be pleasant, we will not have any smells at all (Porteous, 1985: 366).

Alternative olfactory cultures

The methods with which non-Western cultures classify scents are usually very complex and illustrate how arbitrary all distinctions are. The African shepherd people of Dassanech, living in the Omo River delta in southern Ethiopia, classify smells in relation to the dry and wet season. The former features acrid smoke from pastures being burnt to remove old plants. The consumption of meat is also essentially restricted to the dry season. In the dry season, unpleasant odours, such as rotting fruit, rise and are spread by the wind. These unpleasant smells in a way regenerate in the rainy season, bringing revival, new plants and fragrances. Although the classification of smells by the Dassanechs is understandable to representatives of Western culture, it also emphasises the fact that both pleasant and unpleasant smells are essential elements of the life cycle. As cattle breeders, they treat its smell as close to ideal. Therefore, their daily practices include anointing the body with products of animal origin (clarified butter, urine, manure), symbolising the importance of their primary source of livelihood. Their pastoral lifestyle becomes an indicator of their group identity, allowing them to distinguish themselves from other local groups, for example, fishermen, whose scent they rank as inferior. There is no place for the smell of fish in the shepherd’s scent calendar which is why it is generally considered a polluting odour. Unlike other scents, the smell of fish does not flow off and can potentially contaminate cattle. The taboo on fish is sometimes lifted in times of drought and famine, but then the Dassanechs become, as they say of themselves, “stinky people.” While fishermen are not considered “untouchable,” female shepherds are not allowed to marry fishermen. This prohibition does not apply to male shepherds. After the engagement, the fisherman’s daughter lives with the father or brother of her future husband until she gets rid of her fish smell and becomes a “shepherd woman.” The fact that the two groups are not completely separate from each other only increases the shepherds’ concern about protecting their own identity and social structure from external forces of depravity (Classen, 1993: 85).

The example of the Dassanechs is significant for the understanding of olfactory internationality. The smell of the other in their social practice is not only a scent attributed to others, but also an illustration of how the smell is understood and used by others. For “primitive” tribes and Western societies alike, smell is both a sign of

their identity and a regulator of “international relations” between them. Such everyday practices of constructing otherness through smell established ethnic groups as distinct and different.

In the irrational world of racist politics, internationality will always “stink” and pose the threat of “contamination.” Albeit scientifically discredited, the rhetoric of “racial scents” continues to influence the public perception of smells.

White residents of the West, who are prone to deprecating the smell of others, learn that their smell can be just as unpleasant to other nations. American sociologist Robert Park, who studies racial prejudice, talks about the confession of an Indian friend who explained the ultimate reason for his family opposing his marriage to an American woman. In a letter, his father expressed his hope that, if no other conditions could prevent this marriage, the Anglo-Saxon scent should be enough to avoid such a misalliance (Classen et al., 1994: 168).

Smell can play a significant role in many forms of various social classifications. Often it is the actual scent that triggers the feeling of difference on the part of the person doing the feeling. Yet just as often, the smell of the other is not so much an actual scent as it is a feeling of aversion transferred to olfactory activity. In both cases, smell provides a powerful symbolic measure to create, strengthen and reproduce class and ethnic boundaries (Classen et al., 1994: 169).

CONCLUSIONS: SENSUAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sensual IR proposes a new way of understanding relations between politically organised communities and enables the discipline to return to the living world of everyday life of internationality. It helps to “see” internationality and to deal with the belief dominant in IR that internationality cannot be seen (K. Waltz) and that we do not know where its “inter” is located or what it is (M. Wight).

The confirmation of the proposition that the senses are culturally conditioned shows that different social sensory models not only influence how people perceive the world, but also determine their mutual relations. Sensual internationality stimulates interest in the direct sensory experience of internationality and allows us to show the role of the senses – sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste – in this experience. The possibility of showing the role of each sense separately does not defy the multi-sensory nature of everyday experience. Sensual internationality is a promising category, and the senses are not merely passive receptors of international stimuli, but play an active role in organising and giving meaning to the world.

Scott Lash, a sociologist, argued that in the cultural sphere, modernism is discursive and textual, whereas postmodernism is figural and sensual. While modernism places meaning at its centre, postmodernism focuses on experience (Lash, 1988: 311–336). Meanwhile, the humanist perspective, and in particular the phenomenological approach to perception, postulates the unity of experience and meaning. This means that the sense(s) is (are) related to both sensual experience and meaning. This kind of humanistic approach suggests that the following problems in understanding sensual internationality should be considered essential.

First, this approach suggests *returning to things as such*. This means that although all the senses form a multi-sensory whole, the role of each of them in the understanding of internationality can be examined separately.

Second, the humanist approach suggests *intentionality and anthropocentrism*. It places at its centre a human seeking to understand the nature of “Being-in-the-world” (M. Heidegger). As a result, human intentionality is the primary concern of phenomenology. Our experience, including sensual experience, is always about the awareness of something, and through our attitude to it, this something participates with us in constituting the world. This kind of intentionality of experience means that it is always associated with participation, relationship, and situationality. In this way, internationality can be understood in the context of a place, which seems crucial from the point of view of understanding human experience.

Third, it suggests a perspective of *wholeness and participation*. Phenomenology embeds us in the world we are part of and which we examine. The very act of examination inevitably changes the thing being examined and the researcher. This process can be described as the interdependence of what is examined and of the method. Thus, when examining sensual internationality, on the one hand we become more aware of what it is, and our experiences change in this process on the other (cf. Rodaway, 1994: 7–8).

From this perspective, IR can create a representation of the internationality we experience, which we perceive both through our senses and in our mind. We form this representation through our perception, understood as the process of collecting data and organising it. International perception is simply the perception of the surrounding world in order to understand our place in it and give meaning to this world. The theories of international politics tell us what data to collect and what scheme to apply to organise it. Perception, or using different senses that create perception, is a learned behaviour (tool). Through trial and error, as well as through “formal” education, the body and mind acquire special skills of perceiving and understanding the world. We often realise that our perceptions have a group- or culture-specific nature precisely due to our encounters with internationality, that is, with people who do not share our perception. Perception and the meaning attributed to perceptual data vary by culture and time (Rodaway, 1994: 22). The various disciplines of social sciences show the contrasting experiences of various peoples and social groups with regard to the ways, styles and depth of perception. We perceive the world through a kind of *cultural filter* formed by (un)shared values and beliefs, education, physical abilities and age, socioeconomic status, or class. Simply put, we see, hear, smell, taste and touch the world through this cultural filter. The cultural perspective reminds us that our perception is more of a creative, qualitative variable than a mechanistic, stimulus-response model.

What should the ultimate product of our search for sensual internationalities be? Could it be text? Would that not mean that all the effort is wasted by trying to reduce a multisensory cognition of internationality to text? To a large extent, it is undoubtedly the case. However, the uniqueness of text means that no sensual data is directly presented through the text, with the exception of the visual nature of the printed word itself. Therefore, text seems to create a kind of equality between the senses. Addition-

ally, as David Howes argues, the written word allows readers to become aware of the distance between them and the culture being described, and also to be aware that they are learning about this culture second- or third-hand. We ought to remember that the author's most important task is always to translate what they think, applying the available means of communication shared with other academics and readers. Such a translation is inevitably imperfect and sometimes impossible. "Yet rather than try to change our modes of thought and media of communication and attempt to conceptualise the world through smell or touch, let us admit that there are dimensions of sensory knowledge that we (given our particular cultural backgrounds) cannot hope to dominate, which must remain foreign to us" (Howes, 2006: 58).

Text shows the process of sensual internationality transforming through historically new symbols, new associations, new abstractions and constant attempts to embrace them within our understanding of internationality. We should also be aware that this transformation may involve a transition from a multi-sensory and complex "natural" or direct experience of the world to a single, monosensory, simplified, "synthetic" and simulated world experience. Is this the actual reality, or is it just the "reality" accessible to the senses that has been transformed by cultural and technological changes? Do the examples of sensual experiences of internationality continually reaffirm the cognitive value of the senses in an expanding world through multiple relationships and the changing context of experiencing internationality? Or are we experiencing internationality being reduced and simplified into a kind of domesticated reality, through increasing human control over a world that is becoming more and more synthetic and produced in accordance with prior designs? Is it a reality of internationality without original references, or a self-referential reality? Or is it a hyper-reality, more real than the reality itself, to which the senses have been subordinated?

REFERENCES

- Carlise J. (2004), *Common Scents. Comparative Encounters in High-Victorian Fiction*, Oxford.
- Classen C. (1990), *Sweet Colors, Fragrant Songs: Sensory Models of the Andes and the Amazon*, "American Ethnologist", Vol. 17, No. 4.
- Classen C. (1997), *Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses*, "International Social Science Journal", Vol. 49, No. 153.
- Classen C., Howes D., Synnott A. (1994), *Aroma. The Cultural History of Smell*, London–New York.
- Corbin A. (1986), *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odor and the French Social Imagination*, Leamington.
- Drobnick J. (2006), *Introduction: Olfactocentrism*, in: *The Smell Culture Reader*, (ed.) J. Drobnick, Oxford–New York.
- Gałganek A. (2021), *Filozofia nauki o stosunkach międzynarodowych. Ontologia, epistemologia, metodologia*, Kraków.
- Greene G. (1971), *A Sort of Live*, New York.
- Howes D. (2006), *Sensual Relations. Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*, Ann Arbor.
- Kettler A. (2021), *The Smell of Slavery. Olfactory Racism and the Atlantic World*, Cambridge.

- Laplantine F. (2015), *The Life of the Senses. Introduction to a Modal Anthropology*, London.
- Lash S. (1988), *Discourse or Figure? Postmodernism as a Regime of Significance*, "Theory, Culture & Society", Vol. 5, No. 2–3.
- Lifton R., *The Nazi Doctors. Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide*, New York.
- Maclean S. F. (1964), *Eastern Approaches*, New York.
- Marks K. (2005), *Rękopisy ekonomiczno-filozoficzne z 1844 roku*, Warszawa.
- Orwell G. (1937), *The Road to Wigan Pier*, London.
- Porteous J. D. (1988), *Smellscape*, "Progress in Human Geography", Vol. 9, No. 3.
- Puumala E. (2017), *Asylum Seekers, Sovereignty, and the Senses of the International. A politico-corporeal struggle*, London–New York.
- Reinartz J. (2014), *Past Scents. Historical Perspectives on Smell*, Urbana.
- Rodaway P. (1994), *Sensuous Geographies. Body, Sense and Place*, London–New York.
- Rosenberg J. (2016), *International Relations in the Prison of Political Science*, „International Relations”, Vol. 30, No. 2.
- Rosenberg J. (2018), *IR 101*, "International Relations", Vol. 32, No. 2.
- Stoller P. (2004), *Sensuous Ethnography, African Persuasions, and Social Knowledge*, "Qualitative Inquiry", Vol. 10, No. 6.
- Szołtysek A. E. (2018), *Filozofia umysłu*, Kraków.
- Vigarello G. (1998), *Czystość i brud. Higiena ciała od czasów średniowiecza do XX wieku*, Warszawa.

ABSTRACT

The tenet of this article is the conceptualisation of social multiplicity, rather than politics, being the deepest code of internationality as a property of human existence. As a consequence of that understanding of internationality, International Relations (IR) extends beyond dealing with the traditional concepts of politics and economy. All the manifestations of human activity arise in a context of social multiplicity, in which individuals are aware of paths of development separate from their own, and in which ideas, technologies and resources are constantly taken from one social environment and combined with others, in order to produce new and original results. From this perspective, IR concerns nearly everything: multiplicity and identity; multiplicity and sexuality; the interactive life of languages; structures of world literature; the unequal yet connected development of music; international relations of food and cooking; social strategies of dealing with difference, and internationality experienced through the senses.

This article illustrates how olfaction is present in international relations through power relations, olfactory others, the issues of migration and asylum, olfactory travelogy and alternative cultures of smell. The analysis confirms that sensual internationality may show a new aspect in understanding relations between politically organised societies. Sensuality – sensory experience – may be a foundation for a hitherto neglected way of understanding internationality. Sensual IR enables the discipline to return to the everyday life of internationality. It helps us to experience internationality and to dispose of the dominant belief in IR that internationality cannot be seen, or that we do not know where its “inter” is located or what it is.

Keywords: social multiplicity, senses, olfaction, olfactory internationality, sensual science about international relations

ZAPACHOWA MIĘDZYNARODOWOŚĆ. KU SENSUALNEJ NAUCE O STOSUNKACH MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł opiera się na konceptualizacji, że to społeczna wielość, a nie polityka stanowi najgłębszy kod międzynarodowości jako cechy ludzkiej egzystencji. Konsekwencją takiego rozumienia międzynarodowości jest wyjście IR poza tradycyjne zajmowanie się polityką i ekonomią. Wszystkie przejawy aktywności społecznej pojawiają się w kontekście wielości społeczeństw, których członkowie są świadomi innych dróg rozwojowych niż ich własna, a idee, techniki i zasoby są nieustannie wyprowadzane z jednego środowiska społecznego i następnie łączone z innymi, aby wytworzyć w rezultacie nowe i oryginalne rezultaty. W tej perspektywie przedmiotem IR jest prawie wszystko: wielość i tożsamość; wielość i seksualność; interaktywne życie języków; struktura światowej literatury; nierówny i połączony rozwój muzyki; międzynarodowe stosunki żywności i gotowania; strategie radzenia sobie przez społeczeństwa z różnicą, a także doświadczanie międzynarodowości poprzez zmysły.

Artykuł ilustruje obecność olfakcji w stosunkach międzynarodowych poprzez stosunki władzy, zapachowych Innych, problemy imigracji i azylu, zapachową trawelogię i alternatywne kultury zapachu. Analiza uzasadnia przekonanie, że sensualna międzynarodowość może ukazać nowe pole rozumienia stosunków między zorganizowanymi politycznie społecznościami. Zmysłowość – doświadczanie zmysłowe – dostarcza podstawy, na której można zbudować pomijany dotąd sposób rozumienia międzynarodowości. Sensualna IR umożliwia dyscyplinie powrót do żywego świata codziennego życia międzynarodowości. Pomaga ona doświadczyć międzynarodowości i uporać się z dominującym w IR przekonaniem, że międzynarodowości nie można zobaczyć lub że nie wiadomo gdzie i czym jest to „między.”

Słowa kluczowe: wielość społeczna, zmysły, olfakcja, zapachowa międzynarodowość, sensualna nauka o stosunkach międzynarodowych