

Imitation, Contagion, Suggestion: Rethinking the Social Conference at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark 28–29 May 2015

The imagery of imitation, contagion, and suggestion, which played a key role in the formative years of the social sciences at the end of the nineteenth century, has gained renewed foothold in much present-day popular and scholarly discourse. In debates about financial markets, for example, there has been a widespread adoption of the notion of contagion to account for the recent financial crisis, linking the alleged contagiousness of crises to ideas about pandemics. Similarly, much recent social and political theory harks back to this discursive repertoire in an attempt to come to terms with new forms of populism, or in order to rethink politics and the political.

Against this backdrop, the aim of the 'Imitation, Contagion, Suggestion: Rethinking the Social' conference is threefold, namely, first, to explore the historical contexts in which the social sciences started to deploy this vocabulary; second, to examine how this vocabulary evolved in the social sciences, and beyond, from the late nineteenth century to the present; and third, to discuss if this conceptual horizon could, and should, be revived in a present-day theoretical and analytical context (and what that might entail). By scrutinizing these issues, the conference will shed important light on the revival of the imagery of imitation, contagion, and suggestion.

Venue: The conference will take place at **Copenhagen Business School, Kilen Ks71, Kilevej 14, 2000 Frederiksberg**, from **Thursday 28 to Friday 29 May 2015**.

Registration: Attending the conference is free, but registration is needed. Please register at **tb.mpp@cbs.dk**.

For more information about the conference, including a full description of its aims, a list of abstracts, etc., please visit **info.cbs.dk/crowds**.

*The conference is organized under the auspices of the Sapere Aude research project on 'Crowd Dynamics in Financial Markets'. For inquiries about the conference, please contact Professor Christian Borch at **cbo.mpp@cbs.dk**.*

Thursday 28 May

08:45–9:15: *Registration and coffee*

9:15–9:20: Welcome: Christian Borch

9:20–10:20: Nidesh Lawtoo (Johns Hopkins University): 'The Mimetic Unconscious: From the Socius to the Social'

10:25–11:25: Bjørn Schiermer (University of Copenhagen): 'Extending the Crowd: Durkheim and the Mediated Collective'

11:30–12:30: Lisa Blackman (Goldsmiths, University of London): 'Hypnotic Suggestion, Automatic Writing, Magic and Memory'

12:30–13:30: *Lunch*

13:30–14:30: Ruth Leys (Johns Hopkins University): 'The Chameleon Effect and Mirror Neurons: A New Vocabulary to Explain the Old Problem of Mimesis and Contagion?'

14:30–15:00: *Coffee Break*

15:00–16:00: Elisabetta Brighi (University of Westminster): 'Imitation, Contagion and the Globalisation of Terror'

16:05–17:05: Andrea Mubi Brighenti (University of Trento): 'The Reactive: Social Experiences of Surfaces and Depths'

17:05–17:30: Discussion across the Papers

Friday 29 May

08:45–9:00: *Coffee*

9:00–10:00: Marc Renneville (CNRS. A. Koyré center, Paris): 'Imitation and Contagion of Crime: From Scientific Debates to Penal Reform'

10:05–11:05: Christian Borch and Kristian Bondo Hansen (Copenhagen Business School): 'Market Contagion: Imitation and Suggestion in Financial Markets'

11:05–11:30: *Coffee Break*

11:30–12:30: Peta Mitchell (Queensland University of Technology): '#contagion'

12:30–13:30: *Lunch*

13:30–14:30: Robert Peckham (University of Hong Kong): 'Epidemic Intelligence and the Futures of Contagion'

14:30–15:00: *Coffee Break*

15:00–15:30: Sebastian Vehlken (Leuphana University Lüneburg): 'Contagious Agents: From Generative Social Science to the Computer Simulation of Epidemics'

15:30–16:00: Discussion across the Papers

16:00: End of Conference