

## **Call for Sessions for Annual Conference**

**North American Society for the Sociology of Sport**  
La Sociedad Norteamericana para la Sociología del Deporte  
Société Nord-Américaine de Sociologie du Sport

### **Call for Session Proposals**

The 2021 Annual Conference for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport will be held in Montreal, QC Canada. April 20-24 2022, at Le Centre Sheraton Montreal.

The Conference Program Committee would like to invite session proposals for

### **Inclusivity, Togetherness, Community, and the Sociology of Sport in a Post(?) -Covid World**

Our sociological language is peppered with words that highlight differences and express distinctions and distancing between peoples across the world, almost always as exercises of power, for example: stratification, colonization, discrimination, nationalism, and exclusion. Our politics at this time is also one that divides us in increasingly polarizing ways, as the conservative right and liberal left are pulled further apart, be it through the rise of populism, Trump's presidency (and its legacy) or Brexit. Longstanding disputes over personal rights and freedoms, for example through abortion laws, gun rights, and freedom of speech, have re-entered our socio-political consciousness in recent years in the wake of mass public protests. Processes of globalization and the technologies that have emerged and developed as a byproduct of our march toward 'progress' have also pulled us apart in novel ways. Indeed, who would have predicted that cell-phones – oft-heralded as a means of communication to push us closer together – would in time come to isolate us socially from others as they negate the need for face-to-face interactions?

Sport is also an arena that has experienced and witnessed changes in these regards. While spectatorship and 'fandom' have remained integral aspects of our cultures and collective identities, and television viewership of sport remains strong and financially lucrative, broad, sweeping statistics suggest that in North America we are actually playing and participating in sport less now than we used to, and considerably less than our parents did. While children are participating in (adult-led) organized sport much more, past the age of 13 years the numbers drop worryingly, especially for girls. Sporting opportunities remain inequitable along lines of social class, gender, race/ethnicity, religion, and (dis)ability among other factors, and also between various cultures within our increasingly diverse societies. Sporting participation has become a clear indication of social privilege more generally, and it seems the promises of previous generations – that sport can unite us – have not led to wholesale changes in 'who gets to play', much like the promises of neoliberal leadership within our economic and political institutions has not led to greater income equality and necessarily a healthier, happier society. Moreover, the

nature of our participation in sport and physical activity has also changed, as we have moved perceptibly from a focus on the collective to the individual. While gym memberships are on the rise, sports ‘club’ memberships are declining. The former is enjoyed often in a large, shared space but one in which most people would, it appears, prefer to isolate themselves and complete their workouts with headphones in their ears and – a symbol of our times if ever there was one – with cell phones in their hands. The necessity for social distancing brought about through Covid-19 has merely served to exacerbate this phenomenon. Shared sport participation, played/participated at a recreational level, has become increasingly scarce, especially among adults. Subsequently, these spaces have become increasingly valuable and necessary in our society, and probably more so as we move gradually, and full of hope, into a post-Covid world.

Despite these contemporary challenges, there remains a strong belief in the value of ‘community’. The lockdowns, physical isolation and social distancing from workplaces, schools and public spaces brought about by the Covid-19 global pandemic has had the effect of bringing us closer to those within our household but further from those outside of it. It is a reminder of what many of us had previously taken for granted, that is the importance of social connections and the indelible bonds of community. Indeed, it was almost as if we needed to be forced into this behaviour for us to have actually taken note and ‘acted’. Thus, it seems deep down we have retained a belief in community but required some larger force to push us there. The same could be said for efforts toward reconciliation, to heal wounds and historical divides between groups as we embark on decolonial praxis. We ask: now we know the truth of previous atrocities – especially since the recent discovered remains of Indigenous children’s bodies at former residential school sites in British Columbia and Saskatchewan – how can we move forward and begin a new conversation? It is an inveterate belief in the values of equity, inclusion and solidarity that propel us, in the face of threats that seek to divide us, to come together and ensure that our next move toward repairing our broken societies is the right one. Despite substantial evidence to the contrary, we retain a strong belief in the value of sport as a social bond that unites rather than divides communities. What is abundantly clear is that it can do both, and within our present socio-historical context, its value as both a medium for the transmission of ideology and also as a vehicle for social progression (or regression) remains considerable.

For this year’s NASSS conference – as we attempt to come together in-person in the spirit of inclusivity, togetherness and community – we welcome papers on any aspect of sport and physical culture as observed through a sociological lens. We would be particularly interested to receive submissions that explore sport and physical culture related to ideas around community, reconciliation, partnerships, relationships, equity, social inclusion, diversity, participation, and the indelible human spirit.

## Session Formats

Proposed session topics are due **August 16, 2021**. This conference will be conducted in-person, and those who are able to attend in-person are encouraged to do so, and to make use of our hotel room block at reduced rates. Our keynote talks will be run in a hybrid format, allowing those who cannot attend to tune-in virtually and to ask questions through a moderator in the Q&A. No other talks will be run virtually, and no virtual sessions will be run, with the exception of those organized or presented by graduate students. We will allow graduate students only the opportunity to present their work *virtually*, with the delivery of pre-recorded presentations (max. 10 minutes) that will be uploaded and available to view during the conference. A call for these papers will be included in the forthcoming Call for Abstracts.

Please note the following different format options:

- 1) Paper presentation sessions (normally 3-5 papers per session)
  - **Open paper presentation sessions** (3-5 papers per session). These sessions will be open to submissions of well-developed research during the call for paper abstracts.
  - **Pre-constituted paper presentation sessions**, whereby the entire session is pre-constituted (set number – usually 4 or 5 – already selected papers fitting with the session topic). For these sessions, include the name, institutional affiliation, and title of each presenter along with the session abstract. The individual paper abstracts for these sessions will be due at the same time as other abstracts. These sessions can also include a commentator, who should be listed in the session proposal.
  
- 2) Alternative sessions
  - **Panel sessions**, with a focused theme to be addressed by a panel of discussants. Session organizers should include the names and institutional affiliations of panel members along with the session abstract.
  - **Roundtable sessions**, which can include less developed, preliminary or exploratory research. These sessions can include 4-5 presenters for 5-minute introductions of research, followed by discussion among those presenting and conference attendees who join the roundtable. These sessions can be open for abstract submissions or can be pre-constituted. Pre-constituted sessions should include the names and institutional affiliations of all presenters. Abstracts for pre-constituted sessions will be due at the same time as all other abstracts.
  - **Student Poster Presentation session**, which are open to undergraduate and graduate (e.g., masters, doctoral) students submissions of well-developed research, presented in poster format during the call for paper abstracts.
  - **Other session**, based on an idea for a different type of session that is not included in this list, but which fits the scope/theme of the conference and the available timeframe (60-75 minutes).

All session proposals must include the name, institutional affiliation, and email address of the session organizer; a title (max. 10 words); and a brief abstract (max. 150 words) that describes

the session and ideally how it fits into the conference theme. Indicate clearly which type of session you are submitting for consideration. For pre-constituted sessions, include the names, titles and institutional affiliations of the presenters in the session.

### **Submission Process**

Submit session proposals online at: <https://nasss.org/call-for-sessions/> by **August 16, 2021**.

### **Questions**

Direct any questions to the Conference Committee Chair and NASSS President-Elect, Robert J. Lake at [nasssconf2021@gmail.com](mailto:nasssconf2021@gmail.com)

### **Timeline**

Session organizers will be notified of the acceptance of their proposed session on or before **September 15, 2021**. The Call for Abstracts will be released on **October 1, 2021**. Deadline for submission of individual Paper Abstracts is **November 15, 2021**. Session organizers will notify authors of abstract acceptance and submit their completed sessions (4-5 papers/presentations) no later than **December 1, 2021**. Final completed session submission is due **December 15, 2021**.

### **Montreal +1 Initiative**

In partnership with the Diversity and Conference Climate Committee Chair, Marques Dexter, the 2021 Conference Committee is pleased to continue the “+1” initiative. The goal of this initiative is to expand the audience for the NASSS conference to include those who have never attended the NASSS conference or who have not attended for some time. NASSS members are encouraged to invite a +1; this can be a colleague, student, peer, or friend who has never been to NASSS and to invite them to register and participate in the conference. As you are considering organizing a session and/or submitting an abstract, we encourage you to bring to your +1 to Montreal!

We especially encourage bringing undergraduate students to get them engaged with NASSS early.

### **Share the Call**

Feel free to distribute this *Call for Sessions* and the coming *Call for Abstracts* with your colleagues, other academic networks, organizations and listservs.