

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

Sport, Justice and Belonging: Critical Analysis and Worldmaking.

Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.
Arundhati Roy

If the Anthropocene proclaims a sudden concern with the exposures of environmental harm to white liberal communities, it does so in the wake of histories in which these harms have been knowingly exported to black and brown communities under the rubric of civilization, progress, modernization, and capitalism. The Anthropocene might seem to offer a dystopic future that laments the end of the world, but imperialism and ongoing (settler) colonialisms have been ending worlds for as long as they have been in existence.

Kathryn Yusoff (2018), *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*

Key words: justice, social inequality; worldmaking

Since its emergence as a site for wealthy white men to consolidate power during the development of capitalism in mid 18th century England, modern sport has been a contested site in terms of participation, representation, cultural symbolism and economic benefit. Ideas about what counts as 'sport' and how sport matters for identity, belonging and legitimacy are stitched into the mythical fabric of many nation states and animate national and global systems of social stratification and cultural conflict.

Despite declarations and protestations from global, national and corporate sporting bodies that sports are not political, sport has never been separable from power and politics. In its various forms it has served as both a tool for white/male/cisheteropatriarchal/racial capitalist domination and as a site of resistance to injustice both on and beyond the playing field. The history of sport, for example, cannot be told without attention to colonialism and postcolonialism. But neither can colonialism's history be told without attention to sport. Substitute "white supremacy," "racism," "heteropatriarchy," "homophobia," "transphobia" or "organized religion" for colonialism and the relationship holds, however equivocally. Sport is global in reach and full of layers. Global sports mega-events and corporate sporting

bodies put profit ahead of people and environmental sustainability and yet so many of us, in so many places, love sport/physical culture with great intensity and devotion, often grappling with the cognitive dissonance this brings about.

As sociologists we identify and analyze social systems for distributing material and cultural resources, from the local to the global, and the ways in which these systems are contested; we study the past to understand the present; and we craft stories of worlds we have never seen. Whether explicitly or implicitly; as critical sports studies scholars we are engaged in world making, meaning the process(es) by and through which the realities of social life are created, through both interactions and symbolic meanings. Given that sport has multiple and layered materialities and meanings, particular to time and place, the sociological imagination empowers us to engage with this complexity.

This is a crucial time for our field. The Sociology of Sport analyzes the relationship between sport and structures of power, domination and social control and contributes to world-making via engagements with activists and social movements. NASSS as an organization has a long history of critically interrogating the bases of inclusion/exclusion in sport and beyond, the role of sport role in normalizing the social structures of the nation, hierarchies based on race/gender/sexuality/ability/citizenship etc., and colonialism and postcolonialism in all its variations. We also have a strong track record of revering sport, highlighting its power and beauty and inviting each other to engage from this place of feeling.

The current world that has been made is a troubling one. Authoritarian and oligarchic modes of governance are contributing to a nearly unbearable level of human and planetary suffering that is unexceptional given world history. Social movements at all ends of the political spectrum have been able to reshape societies and ecologies in extraordinary ways, often unexpectedly, at times leveraging sport symbolically and/or materially.

Key questions:

- What does sport DO in the world? How is sport a form of worldmaking? What worlds does sport contribute to building/sustaining?
- What contributions does our scholarly field and international community of sports-minded humans make to understanding our worlds and to movements striving to build worlds that are more equitable and sustainable?
- How are sport sociologists engaging in projects to build more just worlds? How can sport sociologists contribute to and/or disrupt certain forms of worldmaking?
- How can our work expand the boundaries of what is possible?

The societies NASSS scholars inhabit are global and interconnected. Globalization and the neoliberal engineering of planetary inhabitants shapes the contexts within which we live

and work. We invite in-person and hybrid session proposals that critically focus on sport in this social context.

Some broad topic examples:

- Sport and Contested Belongings
- Sport and the Far Right
- The Future of Women's Sport
- Sport and Racial Justice/Capitalism
- The relationship between sport scholarship and social activism
- Sport and social movements
- Athlete Activism across the political spectrum
- Sport mega-events, nation-states and the politics of resistance
- Neoliberalism and sport
- Globalization and sport
- Human rights and sport
- Religion and sport
- War and sport
- Envisioning more just sporting spaces/practices

While the organizing committee encourages dialogue around these pressing issues, NASSS also welcomes session proposals that address other issues related to sport and movement cultures.

Session Types

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

The following types are available:

1. **Open:** Session organizers submit an abstract with a title and description that is open during the call for abstracts to papers, presentations, or performances guided by well-developed scholarship, research, or creative works. Next, the session organizer accepts or declines abstracts and then groups them into one or more sessions of 3-4 abstracts.
2. **Preconstituted:** 3-4 preselected papers, presentations, or performances within the session topic. With the session abstract, submissions must include the name, institutional affiliation, and title of each presenter, including a commentator if

chosen by the session organizer. Individual abstracts for these sessions are due during the call for abstracts.

3. Panel: This session type is for more advanced OR less developed, preliminary, or exploratory scholarship. These sessions can consist of 4-5 presenters with 5-minute introductions of scholarship, followed by discussion amongst presenters and conference attendees joining the panel. These sessions may be open or pre-constituted.
4. Poster: This session type is open to submissions of well-developed scholarship presented as a poster from undergraduate and graduate (e.g., masters, doctoral) students as well as early-career scholars.
5. Professional Development: In line with (re)structuring NASSS for its educational purposes, this session type (continued from 2023) is focused on professional development. Topics should speak to the diverse membership of NASSS and may focus on a particular area of professional development, such as leadership and service to NASSS, navigating student, faculty, or administrative work, reviewing for *Sociology of Sport Journal* or related sociological journals, applying to and interviewing for graduate programs or faculty and administrative positions.

Conference Session and Abstracts Process

NASSS Annual Conference begins with this call for sessions. This call generates sessions for conference participants to submit to during the call for abstracts in the spring. Session organizers are responsible for accepting or declining abstracts submitted to their session. Abstracts may also be submitted to an open session or placed there by the conference organizers. Most sessions are 90 minutes in length to allow for audience discussion. We aim to include as many sessions as possible within our space limitations. All presenters must be NASSS members and register for the conference.

Hybrid Conference Planning. Building on the first steps taken at the 2023 conference in New Orleans, the conference program committee is actively working to produce a robust virtual participation dimension at the conference. Further details will be shared in the coming months. If, as a session organizer, you require or plan to support virtual access, please indicate this in your call for sessions. Further direction will be provided in the call for abstracts. To reiterate, all presenters, inclusive of all presentation formats, must be NASSS members and register for the conference.

Please note:

Only one paper as lead author will be permitted at the conference (if you are listed as second author the first author must attend and present) – this measure is in place to allow for more substantial audience/presenter discussions in each session.

It will not be possible to change the conference program to accommodate individual scheduling conflicts. Please be prepared to attend the entire conference.

Timeline

- Submit session proposals at: **LINK TBA** by April 1, 2025. This URL should be live by approximately March 15, 2025.
- Session organizers will be notified about their proposed session no later than April 15, 2025.
 - The call for abstracts will be released approximately two weeks after this notification date.
- Deadline for submission of abstracts is June 1, 2025.
- Session organizers will notify abstract submitters (authors) of abstract decision (acceptance/decline) no later than July 1, 2025.
- Final completed session submissions are due August 1, 2025.
- A preliminary program will be released by September 1, 2025.
- All presenters must be a member of NASSS as of October 1, 2025.
- Conference registration information, pricing, and hotel information is forthcoming on the NASSS website.
- Closing time for all dates is 11:59pm Pacific Time.

Please share the call for session and the forthcoming call for abstracts with your colleagues, academic networks, and listservs.

Conference Site

The 2025 annual conference for the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport will be held in Seattle, WA, November 5-8 at the Westin, Seattle.

Direct questions to the Conference Program Committee Chair, Travers, at atravers@sfu.ca.