

# Sport and Politics from Antiquity to the Modern Day

## 24th Congress of the European Committee for Sports History

### #CESH2020



## CALL FOR PAPERS

### CESH 2020 - Congress of the European Committee for Sports History

#### “Sport and Politics from Antiquity to the Modern Day”

9-11 September 2020

Institute of Contemporary History, NOVA School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Lisbon, Portugal

The 24th edition of CESH will be held from the 9th to 11th of September 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal. The theme of this year’s congress, "Sport and Politics from Antiquity to the Modern Day", aims to explore the historical configurations of the sports field and its relationship with a broad range of political processes. The political meaning of sport is a contested affair and a source for multiple and conflicting arguments – ranging from sport as part of 'bread and circus' policies or as a terrain of 'alienation' and 'discipline,' to ideas about sport as an instrument for the promotion of peace, social integration and moral virtue, when duly insulated from the realm of politics. This relationship has been one of the most examined dimensions of sports history. In recent years a growing body of literature has focused on topics such as the link between sport and fascist and communist regimes; the analysis of government strategies of intervention in sports policy; the functions of sports mega-events at the level of international relations; the connection between sports and nationalism; the social, racial and gender inequalities embedded in sporting cultures and practices; or the organizational transformations associated with the globalization and commodification of sports. Despite the developments observed in the field, a number of questions about the historical and social conditions of possibility of modern sport and its political dimensions remain open to further inquiry.

While the modernity of sports, and their relation with capitalism and industrialization, is widely recognized, many of our representations and our theories about the historical nature and social location of sports are anchored around ideas that stress the continuities between modern sports and the rituals, spectacles and exercises that are considered its precursors. The political *enjeux* of sports can be seen, from this perspective, as one of those themes that free the historical imagination and allow us to discuss our current political predicament by placing it in the

past. The 2020 CESH Congress calls for contributions that can shed new light on the historical transformation of sports ideologies, practices, agents and institutions and help us reconsider the relation between sports and power. We are particularly interested in papers that: 1) develop empirical analysis that extends our understanding of the political meaning of sports; 2) examine the theoretical and methodological models on which the relationship between sports and politics is grounded; and 3) discuss the way the field of sports history relates to other research fields in the discipline.

On a more substantive level, CESH 2020 welcomes contributions centred on, but not limited to, the following research themes and questions:

**Sport and political regimes:** How can we make sense of the transformations of the sporting experience in different political regimes? Is it possible or not to put forward a political periodization of sport? What is fascist (or communist) about fascist (or communist) sports practices and spectacles? Is there an essential break between aristocratic, authoritarian and democratic sports (and, if yes, at what levels)?

**Sport, race and colonialism:** What role did sport play in colonial empires? How did the colonial politics of racial differentiation and hierarchization shape sports? And how was the colonial project shaped by sporting practices and ideologies? What can we learn about decolonization processes by putting sports centre stage? How did newly independent nations negotiate imperial memories and/or political projects of autonomy through sport? How do racialization practices operate on the sports field?

**Sports organizations as political institutions:** What is political about sports institutions and governance? How do the politics of sports organizations and clubs relate to other spheres of the political? What are the political stakes in conflicts taking place inside sports institutions? What type of political mobilization takes place inside sports organizations? How do sport organizations and practices relate with mass and popular culture?

**Sport and imagined communities:** In what ways and in which scales do sports clubs and sporting institutions come to serve as foci of community identification? How do these systems vary historically and geographically? What type of institutions shape these identifications? How do media discourses reproduce and transform sports cultures and identities? How do the moral grammars of different fan cultures relate with other identification systems (*ie* religious, political, regional) and other moral grammars?

**Sports and governmentality:** How have state policies shaped sporting practices and landscapes? Which groups are the main targets of biopolitical technologies? Under which rationalities have specialists of the sports field exercised and legitimised their power? Which institutions have been at the forefront of the management and administration of bodies through sport? What systems of classification and identification have been applied by different state agencies to sports practitioners, fans and institutions?

**Sport and international relations:** What type of role does sport play in international relations? How do national and international political questions impact on the sports field? Does the globalization of different sports practices and images follow the patterns of the international political system or does it have its own specific logics? How do sports mega-events allow us to reframe power relations in a global world?

**Sport and Gender:** How has the relationship between sport and gender evolved? What can a history of sport tell us about the construction of gender categories? How can we reconstruct our understanding of sports as gendered practices? How do sports practices contribute to the production of gendered bodies?

We welcome papers from historians, including those outside the field of sport history, as well as from researchers across the social sciences, namely anthropology, cultural studies, economics, geography, political science and sociology, tackling one or more of these themes and questions, as well as others. **Abstracts (maximum 300 words) along with a paragraph with biographical information, should be sent by email to: cesh2020@fcs.unl.pt by April 3, 2020.** Besides individual papers, we also encourage the submission of panel proposals (up to three papers). In this case, convenors should also present an abstract for the panel (maximum 300 words) alongside the individual papers abstracts in a single file. Applicants will be notified of the results of the selection process by **May 15, 2020.**

### Keynote speakers:

- Barbara J. Keys (Durham University, United Kingdom)
- Patrick Clastres (Université de Lausanne, Switzerland)
- Stefano Pivato (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo, Italy)

### Organising Committee

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### More information:

[bit.ly/cesh2020](https://bit.ly/cesh2020)