



**July 2024**

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**Have a nice summer!**

Dear EASS members,

As some of us approach the summer break and others are already enjoying it, the European Association for Sociology of Sport (EASS) extends warm wishes to all. We hope you find this time restful and enjoyable. Thank you for your continued support and contributions. We look forward to reconnecting in the autumn with renewed energy and exciting updates. Please send us any news or updates for the next newsletter.

Enjoy your summer!

Best regards,  
The EASS Board

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## Conference Report

### Sport, Democracy, Inequalities, and Beyond

#### 20th Conference of the European Association for Sociology of Sport

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### Tapas (Introduction)

The 20<sup>th</sup> European Conference for the Sociology of Sport took place in Madrid from June 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> hosted by the European University of Madrid, with the topic of *Sport, Democracy, Inequalities and Beyond*. The remarkable and modern venue welcomed scholars from all Europe and also a small representative from other continents, like Asia and North America.

What emerged from the work conducted by the scholar who participated is that sport is a social phenomenon, it is a microcosm reflecting broader societal dynamics, embodying both the potential for positive change and the perpetuation of inequalities. It is paramount to promote sustainable (socially, economically and environmentally) practices where sport contribute to change societies in positive.

Taking part to this conference has given to us as the opportunity to meet other scholars that are willing to make every effort through their work so as to contribute to building a better society.

For some, the conference started informally earlier on the June 4<sup>th</sup> afternoon. In fact, it has been organised a special workshop for doctoral students and early career researchers.

### Gazpacho (PhD Workshop)

The two-hour workshop was held by Prof. Hanna Vehmas (University of Jyväskylä, Finland), the President of European Association for Sociology of Sport (EASS) and Prof. Adam B. Evans (University of Copenhagen, Denmark), the Editor in Chief of the European Journal for Sport and Society, and Associate Editor of the Journal of Aging and

Physical Activity. The first part of the session focused on academic career pathway. Hanna Vehmas first described her own journey into research, and then opened up the opportunity for the PhD students and early career researchers to share their journeys within the academy up until the workshop. This session also provided an opportunity to share visions and preferred academic paths. The result was a rich discussion on the basis of the different experiences. The second part was held by Adam Evans, on the topic of publishing in scientific journals, which was a topic requested by the PhD students and early career researchers attending the workshop. Aspects covered and discussed were the process of submitting a research article to a journal, factors that increase the acceptance of the submitted article by the journal (e.g., selecting a relevant journal for the article, and following the journal's author guidelines), the process of receiving the reviewed article back with different outcomes (e.g., acceptance, rejection or requested adjustments for acceptance to the journal) were covered.

### **Sangria (Opening Ceremony)**

As well as the doctoral workshop on 4<sup>th</sup> of June, the official opening ceremony of the EASS conference took place that evening at the Cecilio Rodriguez Gardens, Retiro Park, Madrid. The venue was surrounded by a breath-taking garden, home of a group of imperial peacocks, the real stars of the evening. The opening ceremony began with welcome speeches by Prof. Hanna Vehmas, President of EASS, Prof. Carlos García, Chair of the Scientific Committee, and Gerardo Bielons, Chair of the Conference and Director of Events GB. The speeches were followed by a taste of Spanish cuisines, in the form of tapas. The standing dinner gave the opportunity to socialise and make new academic contacts.

As the sun began to set over the city of Madrid, the opening ceremony was coming to an end. This also meant that the first full day of the conference was about to begin. Keynote speeches and parallel sessions in form of oral presentations were on the agenda.

### **Cocido Madrilenno (Key Notes)**

After the formal welcoming speech of Prof. Simone Sato, Dean of the Medicine, Health and Sport Faculty, we can say that the conference has finally kicked-off, opening to the discussion.

In order to frame the picture of the status of sport regarding inequalities and democracy, after the open ceremony, Prof. Louise Mansfield (Brunel University London) and Prof. Till Müller-Schoel (German Sport University Cologne) dialogued on the vital aspects of the congress' topics: Sport, Democracy and Inequalities: where are we now? They were able to quickly and clearly present the challenges sport is facing so as promote democracy and contrast inequalities. One of the important reflections emerged from their speech was the necessity of a new interaction with the policymakers. In fact, in order to help them to develop efficient policies, scholars need to find an innovative way to communicate their results in a more direct and short way rather than scientific publications.

The other keynote speeches focused on topics related to this starting dialogue. In this regard, it may be not immediate the connection between the previous topics and the eSports emerging phenomenon. However, Prof. Iovan Hilvoorde (Vrije Universiteit), with

his speech on *eSports at the Olympics. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly Game*, was able to introduce a controversial thematic who is affecting sport, major sport events and people. Giving the idea of what the literature says so far on the topic and which are the arising inequalities linked to it, Prof. Hilvoorde presented a complex panorama who inspired the participants to open the eyes to new perspectives in sport.

The following speech was about *Towards Inclusivity in Community Sport:*

*Understanding and Celebrating Difference and Diversity* by Prof. Louise Mansfield (Brunel University London). Thanks to everyday life and personal examples, she presented this topic by reaching the heart of the participants. She focused on inclusivity in community sport and how participatory research and codesigning have the potential to understand and address inequalities, aiming to enable people to reach their full potential.

Prof. Paul Dimeo (University of Stirling) stimulated a serious dialogue on sport and doping institutions with his speech on *Does anti-doping policy support democratic governance and address inequality?* What emerged from his worlds is a non-democratic system, for necessities relate to its purposes, which lack of transparency, and which is self-controlled. Game fairness it is required not only to sportspeople, but also to the hole sport system.

The last day was dedicated to *City as a space for inclusive sports practice*, by Prof. Sacra Monrejón (University Ramon Llull). The presentation of the projects developed in Barcelona in the past years, underline the fundamental role that public space has as to practice sport freely. Connecting with people living there and making them responsible of the common good there are using is an important step for community building and active citizenships. Future steps will require their participation from the beginning during the design phase as well.

### **Paella: Parallel Sessions, Posters Presentation and Panel on Policy**

Besides the keynote speeches, the conferences program included 153 oral presentation and 14 posters. These were concerning 32 relevant issues such as the environment, social inclusion of marginalized communities, élite sport, sport policy, politics and gender. For the full topics and abstract, click [here](#).

The session *Special POLIS session: Networking Call. Municipal Movement Policies* aims to promote the networking on this key topic among participants. These authors did not participate to this gathering; however, we are sure that the practical examples of ongoing project, presented in that occasion, gave way to the interaction between the attendees.

Each in their areas, these numerous presentations were the expression of a variety of hypothesis, research methods, and approaches. The intercultural vision ensured a multi perspectives of the same phenomenon enriching the debates.

After these eventful days, the participants of the conference were invited to the closing dinner on Thursday evening.

### **Agua de Valencia (Closing Dinner)**

The restaurant L'Albufera Melia Castilla, centrally located in Madrid, hosted the closing dinner of the conference. Continuing with the theme of Spanish cuisines, paella was severed as the main dish. After the formal dinner setting, the evening progressed into an open dancefloor which was quickly crowded.

### **Crema Catalana (Young Research Award)**

The 20th EASS conference also hosted the 16th EASS Young Researcher Award. The purpose of the award is to support young researchers' integration into the sociology of sport research community. The Selection Committee for the award was Prof. Fabien Ohl (University of Lausanne), Prof. Michał Lenartowicz (University of Physical Education in Warsaw), Prof. Stacey Pope (Durham University), Dr. Davide Sterchele (Leeds Beckett University). The Young Researcher Award was rewarded to Dr. Alessio Norrito, Manchester Metropolitan University, and his academic paper titled *Between hope and cruel optimism? The dangers and possibilities of football in fostering hope for refugees*. His work covered the asylum-seekers journeys crossing the Mediterranean to reach Europe for a brighter future. These authors also want to take the time to congratulate Alessio Norrito for his academic work. After receiving the award, he presented his research. Listening to his presentation, greater understanding was gained of the varied possible experiences of the refugees who crossed the Mediterranean. We are looking forward to the future research conducted about this delicate and paramount area.

### **Churros (Closing Ceremony)**

After the Young Researcher Award and coming to an end of the eventful conference programme, the closing ceremony took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June, Friday afternoon. Similarly, to the opening ceremony, Prof. Hanna Vehmas, President of Eass, Prof. Carlos García, Chair of the Scientific Committee, and Gerardo Bielons, Chair of the Conference and Director Events GB, held speeches, that were summarising the 20<sup>th</sup> *European Conference for the Sociology of Sport*. They also thanked all the involved for making the conference possible, including for instance the Local Organizing Committee (Marta Eulalia Blanco García, Javier González del Castillo, Eva Asensio Castañeda, and Víctor Jiménez) and student volunteers.

### **Conclusion**

Looking back on the 20<sup>th</sup> *European Conference on the Sociology of Sport* with over 150 oral presentations, it is clear that the conference brought together researchers from all over the world. As new PhD students, the conference gave us insight into different research topics, we received relevant feedback on our work, and the opportunity to network with scholars from around the world. The fact that this conference report is co-written by two PhD students who actually met during the conference is one example of its excellent networking possibilities. Even though at the end of the conference the weather was not merciful, the most entrepreneurs were not stopped by the rain and could enjoy the city of Madrid and its most famous monument like the Prado Museum. Now, we would like to briefly pitch the forthcoming 21<sup>st</sup> *European Conference on the Sociology of Sport*.

### **Cześć Warszawa, Polska! (Hello Warsaw, Poland!)**

25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> June 2025, save the date! We would like to invite you all to the next edition of the EASS conference will be hosted by the Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw, Poland. The overarching conference theme will be *Sport and the World in Crisis: Challenges and Solutions*.

“Do zobaczenia na następnej konferencji” is what we would like to end this report with.

If you are not familiar with the Polish language, you will need to look for the words, which will give you some Polish language skills for the upcoming conference. Information about the upcoming conference will soon be available on the official EASS [website](#).



## PhD Course

### Qualitative Methods in Sport, Exercise and Health: Innovative Approaches

**Aim:** The aim of the course is to provide PhD students with more in-depth knowledge about cutting edge research methods in Qualitative Methods in Sport, Exercise and Health research (e.g. creative methodologies, writing techniques, data analysis and ensuring qualitative methods). The course also provides a space to exchange ideas and knowledge about research methods related to the course topic. The course will enable communication, networking and cooperation among the students and the experts.

**Content:** Each day entails experts' presentations on different aspects of innovative methods in Qualitative research, as well as students' PhD project presentations. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity for individual supervision sessions with the experts. The course also includes a workshop on preparing a manuscript for publication.

### Format:

- 1) Lectures about Qualitative methods in sport, exercise and health

- 2) Student presentations of their PhD projects
- 3) Opportunity for individual supervision by the invited experts
- 4) Workshops on publication strategies, research methods and completing a PhD in the social sciences

Students are encouraged to present their PhD project during the course (15 min. presentation).

### **Formel requirements**

Acceptance to PhD course:

- Postgraduate Students from any location are welcome to enrol for the course.
- Upon enrolment, applicants will receive an automatically generated confirmation. Please note that this is preliminary. Applicants will be informed of their acceptance to the course by October 7th, 2023, the latest.

### **Learning outcome**

The aim of the course is to provide PhD students with more in-depth knowledge about innovative qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and physical activity, and about current debates concerning scientific rigour and methodologies in the field. Furthermore, the students will get practical experience on how to prepare manuscripts for publication and will learn about what editors are looking for in the manuscript submission process. Students will have the opportunity to network with international students and experts. The course provides a space to exchange ideas and knowledge about research methods related to the course topic. The course will enable communication, networking and cooperation among the students and the experts.

### **Lecturers**

Confirmed speakers:

- Professor Cassandra Phoenix, Durham University, UK
- Dr Solvejg Wolfers-Pommerenke, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany
- Professor Anne Tjørndal, Nord University, Bodø, Norway
- Dr Gareth McNarry, Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK
- Associate Professor Toni Williams, Durham University, UK
- Assistant Professor Verena Lenneis, Aalborg University, Denmark
- Associate Professor Adam Evans, NEXS, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Associate Professor Helle Winther, NEXS, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Assistant Professor Stine Frydendal, NEXS, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
- Associate Professor Ulrik Wagner, NEXS, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

If you have any questions related to the course please do not hesitate to contact:

Adam Evans ([be@nexs.ku.dk](mailto:be@nexs.ku.dk))

[More information](#)

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**Next eass congress 25th-27th June 2025 in Warsaw, Poland  
Safe the dates!!**

**eass**  
European Association for  
Sociology of Sport

21<sup>st</sup> European Conference for the Sociology of Sport

**Sport and the World  
in Crisis: Challenges  
and Solutions**

25-27 June 2025, Warsaw



**25-27<sup>TH</sup>  
June 2025**

Józef Piłsudski University  
of Physical Education  
in Warsaw, Poland



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We would like to thank Federica Comazzi, Kristof Jaczina and Adam Evans for their collaboration in the preparation of this newsletter and **we invite you to send us any information** you consider to be of interest to other eass members for the next newsletter



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