



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF SPORT ANTHROPOLOGY

CALL FOR PAPERS 1ST INSA CONFERENCE DURHAM 18-19 APRIL 2024

(Re-)Placing Sport: Anthropological perspectives on a global problem

Modern sport is hegemonic. Games codified in Europe during the 19th Century are now central to social lives across the globe. These sports maintain their broad appeal, which hides their problematic aspects and often insidious nature. The modernist ideals of teamwork, meritocracy and fair play – though outwardly positive – have long restricted the worldview of sporting participants. With an excessive focus on individual excellence, sports limit the potential for wider systemic change. Sport is now at the vanguard of neoliberalism, and is often mobilised to maintain the status quo as much as to uplift and ‘develop’. Such critiques of sport are not new. Calls to ‘transform sport’ (Carter et al. 2018) or even ‘end’ its largest spectacle (Boykoff 2020) have been made across various platforms in recent years. At the International Network of Sport Anthropology, we recognise the need to challenge the hegemonic force of sport. We invite researchers from all related disciplines to consider how we might place sport more appropriately in context, seek to re-place it elsewhere, or indeed replace it altogether. We challenge researchers to consider more closely what sport is, including recognising that the very idea of ‘sport’ now permeates much of social life, affecting the ways definitions are formed. We hold that the perspectives anthropology and adjacent disciplines can bring to the study of sport is critical for critique in the present moment. We invite scholars to address the problem of hegemonic sport across the globe by joining us in (re-)placing it.

We invite paper abstracts around (but not limited to) the following themes:

- The place of sport in perpetuating inequalities
- Ontologies of sport
- Alternatives to sport
- ‘Modern’ sport and ‘traditional’ games
- The (mis)use of sporting ideals
- Local and global sporting contexts
- Sport policy and the ethics of practice
- Sport-like activities in the face of sport’s hegemony

To submit, please send your name, affiliation and abstract (including 3 keywords) to admin@sportanthro.org by 17th January. Abstracts should be no more than 250 words in length. We welcome abstracts from all adjacent disciplines, and encourage scholars from ‘outside’ anthropology to contribute to the debate.