

CALL FOR PAPERS — Feminisms and Sports Studies —

In recent years, feminist (#metoo; #NiUnaMenos), anti-racist (Black Lives Matter; Rhodes Must Fall) and ecologist (Extinction Rebellion; Fridays for Future) political movements have become increasingly visible in academia, including in Sports Studies (McCullough & Kellison, 2017; Schultz, 2019; TePoel & Nauright, 2021). While this testifies to the renewed conversations taking place within universities and academia, resistance to this social justice turn is also in evidence. Feminist claims and analyses are still often disparaged as overly activism-led (McRobbie, 2009). In addition, feminist studies are sometimes subjected to “gender washing” through depoliticised analyses that use gender equity fallaciously in the aim of receiving funds or visibility (Fox-Kirk et al., 2020; Bilge, 2020). At this crossroads, we consider it essential to think about *how, why, for what* and *for whom* we refer to feminist scholarship in Sports Studies. What does it mean to produce feminist knowledge and ways of knowing, in a research area in which feminist concerns and approaches remain marginal (Park and Vertinsky, 2011; Pfister, 2017; Mansfield et al., 2018)? **Thus, this conference aims at thinking about the political dimensions of the feminist theories and the ways we use them (or not) in Sport Studies.**

Feminist scholarship in Sport Studies is obviously plural, being more “a multifaceted and multisited project than a bounded field” (Ferguson, in Disch and Hawkesworth, 2016: 2). We therefore define this conference as being “informed by the ideas and theories of feminism and not just focus on women” (Purvis, 1992: 274). Furthermore, we understand feminist scholarship both as a political standpoint (Kelly & Gurr, 2019) and as a way to “denaturalise that which passes for differences; challenge the aspiration to produce universal and impartial knowledge; engage the complexity of power relation through intersectional analysis” (Disch and Hawkesworth, 2016: 4).

This conference aims to critically investigate our own research field, i.e. Sports Studies. Within sports and physical activities, bodies are exposed, ranked, and naturalised, in the name of a collective understanding of sporting performance, all the while relying on and reproducing sexist, racist, heteronormative, ableist and classist bias (Collins and Bilge, 2016). Yet research in Sports Studies sometimes avoids engaging with these intersecting biases, or even internalises them (Williams 2019). Hence, the primary focus will be to understand how expanding our research focuses and literature (Fraser 1990), allows for innovative research avenues. On the one hand, we aim to question how original conversations between (and against) theories help reinvent the definition and contours of sport and physical activity, by following the diversity of practices, practitioners, and institutions, as well as the historical and geographical contexts. On the other hand, driving this conference is the goal of collectively thinking about the ways in which feminist approaches can innovatively reveal how the constituent norms and inequalities of sport are produced, maintained or destabilised, either at the material, corporeal level (Allen-Collinson, 2011), through practices of sports and physical activity or through Sports Studies itself.

Practical Organisation

As we strive for this conference to offer an interdisciplinary dialogue between feminist history of sports and feminist sociology of sport, as well as other fields, such as political science or philosophy

of science, we invite contributors to send proposals from these various fields. Interested participants are invited to send proposals outlining their particular approach to feminist theories, methodologies and politics and the empirical basis of their proposed contribution. 500-word abstracts should be sent to feminists.sports@protonmail.com by **30 September 2021**.

The conference will be held in **February 2022, at King's College London**. Participants will be expected to send more detailed abstracts for their presentation a month before the conference.

The conference is convened by Dr. **Solène Froidevaux** (Swiss National Science Foundation, University of Lausanne) and Dr. **Claire Nicolas** (Swiss National Science Foundation, King's College London). Contact: feminists.sports@protonmail.com

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