

COMPLETED DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

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The Seduction of Football:

Youth and Sport for Development and Peace in Post-Conflict Liberia

This thesis considers Liberian youth and the concept of Sport for Development and Peace (SDP). Since the early 2000s the notion of SDP has been strongly advocated, accepted and inserted into UN led policies and intervention strategies for uniting societies divided by violent conflict. Whilst little has been done to monitor and evaluate such programmes the notion has grown at an unprecedented pace and has been adopted by the development and humanitarian industry with real vigour. In many ways football has become the face of development in post-conflict societies. However, this fashionable intervention remains a development assumption rather than a tested method of programming.

Liberia is a post-conflict society with a large youth population, an active large UN peacekeeping force and a long footballing heritage with a plethora of local NGO's using SDP initiatives. My intention in this thesis is to question the assumptions of SDP advocates as they are applied in Liberia, in order to provide a better understanding of the social effects of football for Liberia's youth population. I pursue this goal through an ethnography of one Liberian youth football team, Zatti FC, the community from which the players are drawn and the Catholic youth centre where they play. This thesis is significant as, despite its popularity, SDP has rarely been subjected to academic scrutiny, especially using the detailed qualitative methods I apply here. I will argue that, in this context, SDP is highly counter-productive for the purpose of youth development and the re-building of a peaceful Liberian society because *football constitutes and reinforces the marginal status of youth*. Seductive images rather than rational argument are central to SDP's implementation and growth. Aiming to engage and integrate youth in post-conflict Liberia, SDP actively confirms youth status in a competitive and exclusionary age-based hierarchy.

Dr Holly Collison *Completed an anthropological study at Brunel University examining notions of community, post-conflict youth and the sport for development and peace (SDP) sector in Liberia, West Africa. Dr Collison is currently a Research Associate at Loughborough University, where she is conducting an ESRC research project examining the Sport for Development and Peace Sector in five developing countries. Most of Dr Collison's fieldwork has been conducted in West Africa but she has also conducted ethnographic research in Rwanda and Sri Lanka. Dr Collison has been a speaker at several international conferences and has authored several peer-reviewed essays.*

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Tattoos and Other Body Piercing Operations: Inter-ethnographic Approaches Between Recife and Madrid.

This study focuses on certain socio-cultural phenomena related to the aesthetic of tattoos, body piercing and so-called extreme body modifications, which include scarification, subdermal implants, body suspension and the like. This investigation is based on an analysis of sixty-four individuals of both sexes, belonging to different age groups and social classes. These were subdivided into the following groups: followers, tattoo artists, body piercers, suspension artists and body modifiers. In the West, body markings and rites were, for a long time, associated with the exoticism of ‘primitive’ people. Later, they served as inspiration for avant-garde movements, giving rise to body art, which in the 1970s influenced the ‘counter-culture’ movements, especially those related to the hippie and punk aesthetics. With Internet communication and the speed of technological information, the aesthetics and rites related to these social movements have become internationalized. The Internet has facilitated and opened a number of communication channels, as well as prompting the migration of people involved in these practices to the major urban centres, where products and services focusing on the body and body modifications are commercialized and consumed. In this research, an extraterritorial mobility was observed among followers of this kind of aesthetics, who migrated from Recife to Madrid, the two cities where this study was carried out. Tattoo and body piercing studios, workshops, fairs and conventions are popular venues for individuals who gather there to modify their bodies, turn them into performing art and expand their networks. While tattoos and body piercing are part of a major trend that is conveyed by the media and has its own consumer market, the techniques which are considered extreme are outside the widely-accepted canons of beauty; yet, they always manage to attract new followers. The guiding questions in this study were: how can we understand the expansion and dissemination of these phenomena among different groups and in apparently dissimilar urban contexts, such as Recife and Madrid? What accounts for the choice to engage in these practices? To what extent do aesthetical choices become a lifestyle and in some cases an occupation, while constituting markers of identity and other possible subjective categories?

Dr Fabiana Maria Gama Pereira is conducting her post-doctoral work in anthropology at the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), Brazil. She Graduated in Psychology at the Catholic University of Pernambuco (UNICAP), Brazil and obtained her PhD in Anthropology from the University of Salamanca (USAL), Spain. Dr Pereira is a Member of the Centre for Studies in Popular Religiosity of the Graduate Program in Anthropology at the Federal University of Pernambuco.

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The War of Positions: Football in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina

Research on the role that sport might or can play in a post-conflict environment has tended to focus upon sport's ability to deliver wider development objectives through what are known as Sport-for-Development and Peace (SDP) interventions. Such programmes are somewhat notorious for over-looking the wider influence of the pre-established domestic sporting milieus. An ethnographic study of the role sport — in this case, specifically football — plays in what is known as a 'returnee' town within the Bosnian Serb Entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina is herein presented in an attempt to understand the complex interplay of power between the town, their neighbours, the state and those who perform and deliver football. The relationships that are established across and within such entities and the negotiations required for co-existence are significant; in a variety of ways they influence the post-conflict processes.

The interplay of the varied social and cultural groups that constitute post-conflict Bosnia requires a multi-disciplinary approach to elucidate the post-conflict processes. Using a neo-Gramscian approach, what follows makes it possible to envisage the International Community — namely the supra-national institutions, international NGOs and funders — in the role of the dominant political group working to create its vision of a hegemony of peace. Concurrently the ethno-political indigenous élite are endeavouring to retain the status quo and have managed to create a permanent liminality, preventing Bosnia from creating a post-conflict hegemony. With historic links to nationalist impulses and intricate connections to the current political milieu, football provides a window through which the post-conflict processes of a community may be observed. As what we might best call a War of Position for the establishment of a post-conflict hegemony ensues, the research illustrates that whilst domestic football may be understood as a focal point for the promotion of civil society that carries many capabilities of political capital, there remains a tension between the ethno-political élite and the International Community. Both use the game for their own ambitions, but neither of their visions are accepted by the wider Bosnian population.

Dr Emily K. Vest was awarded her PhD in February 2015. She holds a BA from Cambridge University, an MSc in Development, Humanitarianism and Human Rights from Oxford Brookes University's Centre for Development Practice. Dr Vest's interest in sport as a vehicle for peace and development stems from her time spent working for NGOs in post conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina and Sierra Leone. Her MSc in Humanitarian, Development and Human Rights was obtained from the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice in Oxford Brookes University with a focus upon reconciliation for returning refugees. Her research interests focus on the role of sport in development and in reconciliation in post-conflict communities, the role of community based organisation in promoting sport for peace and development and the impact of corruption within sport in reconciliation and development processes.