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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

**THE USE OF FOOTBALL AND OTHER SPORTS FOR
PEACE-BUILDING IN COLOMBIA AND NORTHERN
IRELAND**

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ABSTRACT

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THE USE OF FOOTBALL AND OTHER SPORTS FOR PEACE-BUILDING IN COLOMBIA AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The use of sport to tackle a variety of social challenges, a strategy referred to as “sport for development and peace” (SDP), is on the rise. In spite of the recent upsurge in SDP research, current academic literature is characterized by a lack of cross-regional studies analyzing the SDP phenomenon beyond Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, at the same time that it focuses heavily on the perspective of program beneficiaries. This investigation explores the use of football and other sports for peace-building in Colombia and Northern Ireland from the perspective of the personnel involved in designing, supporting, promoting and implementing sport for development and peace initiatives (SDP officials), as well as it provides an insight into the SDP sector in these societies affected by division and conflict.

This investigation adopts a qualitative research approach, employs collective case study as a research methodology and uses triangulation as a data collection method. The research strategy delved into the perceptions, points of view and interactions of SDP officials in Colombia and Northern with regards to the opportunities and challenges of using football and

other sports for social cohesion, and their particular role within the specific conflict context in which they operate.

Using an analytical framework that incorporates three dimensions: SDP officials, SDP programs and SDP sector, this research found points of commonality and divergence and revealed that the unique conflict dynamics in Colombia and Northern Ireland have played a major role in shaping the perceptions of SDP officials with regards to the social role of sport, as well as in the structuring of programs and the development of specific methodologies which enhance the qualities of sport as a peace tool. In Northern Ireland the SDP sector shows a satisfactory degree of integration, but a clear policy on sport for peace and social cohesion is still lacking, while in Colombia, where SDP is still not a veritable field, recent developments point to future opportunities for policy creation on the social dimension of sport. Lessons were drawn from both cases with regards to the SDP phenomenon which could benefit the global SDP sector, both Colombia and Northern Ireland, as well as other divided societies.

RESUMEN

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EL USO DEL FÚTBOL Y OTROS DEPORTES PARA LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE PAZ EN COLOMBIA E IRLANDA DEL NORTE.

El uso del deporte para hacer frente a una variedad de desafíos sociales, una estrategia conocida como “deporte para el desarrollo y la paz” (DDP), está en auge en la actualidad. A pesar del reciente aumento en las investigaciones en esta área, la literatura académica actual se caracteriza por la falta de estudios interregionales que analicen el fenómeno del DDP más allá de África, Asia, Europa del Este y Medio Oriente, al igual que se enfoca en gran medida en las perspectivas de los beneficiarios de programas. Esta investigación explora el uso del fútbol y otros deportes para la construcción de la paz en Colombia e Irlanda del Norte desde la perspectiva del personal involucrado en el diseño, apoyo, promoción y ejecución de iniciativas de desarrollo y paz a través del deporte (oficiales DDP), así como también explora el sector del DDP en estas sociedades afectadas por la división y el conflicto.

Este estudio adopta un enfoque de investigación cualitativa, emplea estudio de caso colectivo como metodología de investigación y utiliza la triangulación como método de recolección de datos. La estrategia de investigación profundiza en las percepciones, puntos de vista e

interacciones de los funcionarios del DDP en Colombia y en Irlanda del Norte respecto a las oportunidades y los retos que presenta la utilización de fútbol y otros deportes para la cohesión social, y el papel particular de estos oficiales dentro del contexto específico del conflicto en el que ellos operan.

Empleando un marco analítico que incorpora tres dimensiones: funcionarios, programas y sector DDP, esta investigación encontró similitudes y divergencias revelando que las dinámicas del conflicto únicas en Colombia e Irlanda del Norte han desempeñado un papel importante en la conformación de las percepciones de los oficiales del DDP con respecto a la función social del deporte, así como en la estructuración de los programas y en el desarrollo de metodologías específicas que potencializan las cualidades del deporte como herramienta de paz. En Irlanda del Norte el sector DDP exhibe un grado satisfactorio de integración, aunque se advierte la ausencia de una política clara sobre el deporte para la paz, mientras que en Colombia, donde el DDP aún no es un campo auténtico, acontecimientos recientes apuntan a futuras oportunidades para la creación de políticas sobre la dimensión social del deporte. Una serie de lecciones se extrajeron de los dos casos con respecto al fenómeno DDP que podrían beneficiar al sector global del DDP, a Colombia y a Irlanda del Norte, así como a otras sociedades divididas donde este tipo de intervenciones se llevan a cabo.

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