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Game, Set, Match: Sports and the Future of Diplomacy

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Game, Set, Match: Sports and the Future of Diplomacy

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Master's Thesis

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

- Contextual Theories: Liberalism
- Soft Power
- Globalization and Sports
- Traditional Diplomacy vs. Public Diplomacy

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- Russia and Brazil: Emerging Powers and the role of the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup
- Ping Pong Diplomacy: The United States and People's Republic of China
- Cricket Diplomacy: India and Pakistan
- Aftermath of the "Football War": Honduras and El Salvador
- South Africa and the 1995 Rugby World Cup

CHAPTER 5: EVALUATION OF CASES

CHAPTER 6: FUTURE OF SPORTS DIPLOMACY AND CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abstract

This thesis will serve to demonstrate sports diplomacy as a legitimate field of study in international relations. In this thesis, I will argue that the practice of sports diplomacy has provided countries with relative contentious relationships, with a 'soft entry' to a potential restoration of their diplomatic relations. As a fairly new study field, sports diplomacy has received its fair amount of criticism as to whether diplomacy and sports should mix. It is important to note that this criticism is not unfounded or unwarranted and that this field in particular does have its limitations and restrictions. There's definitely an argument to make that sports in its most competitive form seem counterintuitive to what diplomacy stands for. However, and with this thesis, I will attempt to dispel this notion and highlight, through examples, that sports diplomacy can produce tangible results when the appropriate environment is created and nurtured. With factors that range from an adequate political environment to a strong leadership in the countries involved, sports diplomacy has proven to have the capacity of breaking diplomatic standoffs.

In this thesis, I will highlight four different areas where sports diplomacy has had a significant and successful impact in the improvement of relationships both in the domestic and in the international realm. The four areas are image building with Brazil and Russia hosting the Olympics Games and the FIFA World Cup respectively; as a platform for dialogue with the examples of the Ping Pong Diplomacy and the Cricket Diplomacy; as a tool for integration and reconciliation with the role of the 1995 Rugby World Cup and South Africa; and as an instrument of social inclusion and peace-building where sports, through its values of respect, discipline and team work, are used to attract

disenfranchised youths to learn not only a sport per se but to gain important life skills while interacting closely with youths of different cultures and bring them together in their love of the game.

Chapter 1: Introduction

My thesis will aim to explore the role of sports and its relationship with diplomacy. Even though this relationship has not been studied in depth, there's a long history in which national governments have used sporting events to advance their political agendas. For example, Adolf Hitler used the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games as a platform to legitimize his Nazi regime and to validate his ideology of the superiority of the Aryan race.

In spite of its novelty, it is necessary to consider the field of sports diplomacy for legitimate reasons. In "Sports and Diplomacy: an introduction," Geoffrey A. Pigman and J. Simon Rofe write that "nowhere has the diffusion and redistribution of political and economic power in the globalizing world been more visible to the general public and scholars alike than in international sport." Nowadays, sporting events are viewed by millions of people around the world; these experiences are no longer confined to small audiences. In addition, it is in sports where we have witnessed the rise of the BRICS countries: China, Russia, South Africa and Brazil, as they have been selected to host mega sporting events such as the Summer and Winter Olympics Games, and the FIFA World Cup.

It is important to highlight the relative rise of soft power. Joseph Nye describes soft power as "the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants." With this definition in mind and considering that diplomacy is one of soft power's most effective tools, especially when referring to public diplomacy, there's a heightened interest in sports diplomacy. International sporting events can be perceived as

“an ideal channel for nations, regions and cities to share identities, their merits and their ‘brands’, with the rest of the world.”

These are questions that I would like to research in:

- How can we define sports diplomacy?
- What are some specific examples that illustrate how sports have affected diplomatic endeavors?
- Why has sports diplomacy yet to develop as a field of study?
- Which theoretical frameworks apply to determine sports diplomacy’s effectiveness?
- Has sports diplomacy proven successful?
- Why is sports diplomacy important?
- Why it is important to build sports diplomacy’s literature?
- Can sports diplomacy be used as an effective diplomatic tool to ease tense relations between countries?
- Why has sports diplomacy succeeded on specific cases e.g ping pong diplomacy or cricket diplomacy?
- How has it failed to improve diplomatic relations?
- When utilizing sports for diplomatic reasons have not borne positive results, what are the reasons behind it?
- How the celebration of international sporting events have heightened domestic tensions within the host countries?
- Are there specific factors and or conditions that allow sports diplomacy to thrive?

For my hypothesis, I will argue that sports when used for diplomatic purposes do have the potential to reignite diplomatic relations by providing a bridge among countries that otherwise may have strained political relationships. I want to identify standards for best practices for the use of sports diplomacy as well as factors that have allowed sports diplomacy to work in specific instances.

Sports diplomacy has been marred with hits and misses. One of the most notorious cases where sports diplomacy did bare positive results was the “Ping Pong Diplomacy” exchange between the United States and the People’s Republic of China. During the 1971 World Table Tennis Championships in Nagoya, Japan, the U.S Table Tennis team received a surprise invitation to visit China. Their trip, which was facilitated by the National Committee on United States- China Relations, a nonprofit organization that aims to improve Sino-America relations, became the first visit by an American delegation to mainland China since 1949. The visit represented an opening between two countries feuding for almost 20 years. The 1971 American visit to Beijing was followed by a trip of then President Richard Nixon, the first by an American President in two decades, and by the successful visit of the People's Republic of China's world champion table tennis team for a series of matches and tours in ten cities around the United States. This tour represented an auspicious start “to further sports — not to mention cultural and educational — exchange. In the athletic arena alone, the National Committee launched a number of exchanges throughout the remainder of the decade, eventually sending and receiving delegations representing many major sports.” For some critics, ping pong diplomacy represented the opening needed to reignite the otherwise broken relationship

between the United States and China. However, there were conditions put in place that allowed for this kind of diplomacy to be effective and I will expand on them later.

Another relevant example is the cricket diplomacy exchange between India and Pakistan. For the purpose of this thesis, I will focus on the attempt at sports diplomacy which was restarted in 2011 after the terrorist attacks in 2008 in Mumbai. In anticipation of the 2011 Cricket World Cup semi-final match between both countries, the then Pakistani Prime Minister Syed Raza Gilani accepted an invitation from then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, to attend the match together. Stuart Murray writes that cricket diplomacy was “an attempt to use sport to create a feel-good atmosphere between the two countries at a time when the atmosphere of suspicion and hostility towards Pakistan in India is very strong.” This episode of cricket diplomacy, as in past occasions, resulted in a temporary rapprochement between both countries; however, cricket diplomacy has not produced the long lasting results that this type of diplomacy has been aiming for, yet. The partial success in improving Indo-Pakistani relations through cricket diplomacy shows how sports diplomacy is certainly dependent on a myriad of variables in order to be fully effective.

However, there have been instances where the use of sports for political purposes have bore negatives results. In 1969, a brief 100-hour war broke between El Salvador and Honduras following the conclusion of the three runoff matches that would qualify the winner to the 1970 FIFA World Cup. The two countries played three matches with Honduras winning the first match in Tegucigalpa and El Salvador winning the second and third match in San Salvador and Mexico City respectively and ultimately winning the tie. The Mexico City win by the Salvadoran team resulted in the immediate cessation of

all diplomatic ties between the two countries. The war began on in July 14th, 1969 when the Salvadoran military launched an attack against Honduras. The Organization of American States (OAS) negotiated a ceasefire on July 18th which took effect on July 20th. Despite that the two countries were able to overcome this particular episode, the dispute between the countries has lingered and the tense relations between the two have remained. I will look into the confrontation's aftermath and why the diplomatic efforts used to resolve the conflict between the countries, did not lead the two countries to overcome their differences.

In conclusion, sports work primarily by bridging relationships across social, economic and cultural divides within society, and by building a sense of shared identity and fellowship among groups that might otherwise be inclined to treat each other with distrust, hostility or violence. For example, the United Nations continues to advocate sports as a vehicle for social inclusion, conflict prevention and peace building. In the case of the newly arrived refugees from Syria and other countries to several European countries, meaningful sporting initiatives can act as a bridge between otherwise "different" populations and which can prove an innovative way to insert these refugees into the larger fabric of their society in a non- aggressive fashion.

Another example worth of consideration is the continuous sporting exchanges that have occurred between Iran and the United States even with during at the heights of their ideological and political tensions. These exchanges have allowed for Iranians and Americans to share a strong affinity for sports, appreciate vigorous competition, and seem uninfluenced by political trends. Sports exchanges between Iran and the United States provide a unique opportunity to dispel stereotypes and prejudices and improve

relations between the peoples of the United States and Iran. This can expedite the process of the eventual normalization of relations with Iran.

My methodology will be a qualitative study relying on descriptive or case information and analysis that is supported by the literature already written and then analyze it according to my hypothesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

For centuries, sports and politics have had an interconnected relationship for centuries. In Ancient Greece, representatives from different Greek city-states gathered in Olympia to celebrate the Olympic festivals in honor of the god Zeus for a three month period. During this period of time, a truce or an ekecheiria was traditionally upheld by the Games' participating cities to assure the safe mobility of athletes and spectators while suspending all warlike activities that could potentially interfere with the observance of the event.

Since then, sports have often been used for political purposes whilst been marred by politics at the same time. Jeremy Goldberg states that “political conflict has long appeared in sports, whether it is communism vs. capitalism, amateurism vs. professionalism, nationalism vs. internationalism, or integration vs. segregation.”¹ Goldberg adds that during the twentieth century and especially during the Cold War, sports “assumed ideological dimensions as countries used athletics to validate political systems and beliefs.”² For example, Adolf Hitler used the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympic Games as a platform to try to legitimize the Nazi regime as a political system and to validate, through the success of the German athletes, the superiority of the Aryan race. This is one of the reasons that the efforts of Jesse Owens in winning five track and field gold medals are important to highlight as his athletic performance discredited Hitler in front of his compatriots.

¹ Jeremy Goldberg, “Sporting Diplomacy: Boosting the Size of the Diplomatic Corps,” *The Washington Quarterly* 23 no. 4 (Autumn 2000): 64, accessed April 14, 2015, http://muse.jhu.edu/ccny-proxy1.lib.ccny.cuny.edu/journals/washington_quarterly/v023/23.4goldberg.html

² Ibid.

In their book “Sport and International Relations: An emerging relationship”, Roger LeVemore and Adrian Buss argue that countries that are struggling to gain international recognition by international organizations such as the United Nations; acquiring membership status in organizations such as the IOC or FIFA for that matter, represent an important step to pursue:

Sport has often become an important vehicle by which the state is accorded recognition in the international community. Membership of international associations such as FIFA is particularly important, as “other than being admitted as a member of the United Nations... it is the clearest message that a country’s status as a nation state has been recognized by the international community.”³

A notorious example is the one that was presented by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and its efforts to earn diplomatic recognition through his excellence in sports. Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger write that “success in sports was seen in East Germany as one means, perhaps the most accessible and ‘popular’, of gaining acceptance of the regime and enhancing its image at home and abroad while other channels were closed.”⁴ However, the continuous pressure of having to provide performances of caliber represented a heavy burden for East German athletes participating in the world’s most important sporting events. For almost a decade, the United States and its NATO allies denied visas to several East German athletes forcing them to miss important Olympic dates. It was through the continuous athletic success of East German athletes alongside

³ Roger LeVemore and Adrian Buss, *Sport and International Relations: an emerging relationship* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 21.

⁴ Jim Riordan and Arnd Kruger, *The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 60.

with their sometimes dubious reputation that forced the world's most important sporting organizations to reconsider their position towards East Germany and in that way, paving the path for a future diplomatic recognition.

There are aspects of sports that need to be considered when determining their potential as a political instrument. Colin Tatz describes sports as a serious industry with money and vested interests; as a “medium of and for ideology, prestige, status, nationalism, internationalism, diplomacy and war.”⁵ Tatz’s definition gives a compelling picture of the capabilities of sports to produce tangible political change in the international field. In “Sports as Public Diplomacy,” Barry Sanders expands on Tatz’s description of sports by characterizing them as “a gigantic and powerful medium for the international spread of information, reputations and relationships.”⁶ Further, Sanders mentions two powerful reasons on why sports could represent a valuable resource to conduct diplomatic relations among countries or to advance policies championed by international governmental and nongovernmental organizations: first, the sporting industry is a behemoth that moves unthinkable amounts of money and second, it is an industry with the unique capacity to reach large audiences around the world more than politics or even movies can.

Barrie Houlihan identifies five areas where sports and international politics have traditionally overlapped: diplomacy, ideology, nation-building, access and money. For purpose of this thesis, I will focus on diplomacy and its connection with sports. For many

⁵ Colin Tatz, “The Corruption of Sport,” in *Power Plays: Essays in the sociology of Australian sport*, ed. Geoffrey Lawrence and David Rowe (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1986), 47.

⁶ Barry Sanders, “Sports as Public Diplomacy,” *CPD Monitor*, July-August 2011, accessed April 15, 2015, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/pdin_monitor_article/international_sport_as_public_diplomacy

critics, sports represent an untapped, low risk means to practice diplomacy. Houlihan notes that “for any government, the development of international sporting contact has provided them with a low-cost, but high profile resource for publicizing their policy on international issues or towards specific states.”⁷ In “The Contested Terrain of Sport Diplomacy in a Globalizing World,” author Steve Jackson writes on the reasons why sports have remained socially relevant in societies around the world for centuries. He writes that sports not only represent human drama at its finest but it also demonstrates the limits of the human body and emotions. Furthermore, sports help to create compelling narratives where heroes and villains arise and whose stories are followed by millions around the world by television, radio, the Internet, among other mediums.⁸

In sports diplomacy, sportspeople are called to partake in diplomatic activities on behalf or in conjunction with their national governments. When describing sports diplomacy, Stuart Murray writes that sports diplomacy “uses sports people and sporting events to engage, inform, and create a favorable image among foreign publics and organisations, to shape their perceptions that is (more) conducive to the sending of government’s foreign policy goals.”⁹

According to Murray, the increased interest in sports diplomacy is a consequence to the changes experienced in the diplomatic environment which have pushed diplomacy

⁷ Barrie Houlihan, *Sports and International Politics* (Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 9.

⁸ Steve Jackson, “The Contested Terrain of Sport Diplomacy in a Globalizing World,” *International Area Studies Review* 16, no. 3 (2013): 275, accessed April 6, 2015, doi: 10.1177/2233865913498867

⁹ Stuart Murray, “Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves,” *Cultural Diplomacy*, accessed April 17, 2015, <http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2011-symposium/Sports-Diplomacy-a-hybrid-of-two-halves--Dr-Stuart-Murray.pdf>

to adapt and test new approaches.¹⁰ The interest of governments in sports diplomacy should be considered a proactive acknowledgment of the end of the Cold War era and the beginning of a new post-Cold War one. By using sports diplomacy as an indirect means to foreign policy ends, governments are taking strides in creating a more attractive image towards their state's foreign policy and in that way, projecting it to foreign audiences in an innovative and engaging manner. In this new era of information and technology, sports with its undeniable worldly appeal, has become a powerful foreign policy tool as global audiences have gravitated and become more receptive to soft power exchanges such as sporting or cultural exchanges than hard power ones.

The connection between sports and diplomacy has often been considered close due to the values that, at least on paper, they both share. Diplomacy has been characterized as the business of peace where negotiation, conciliation and dialogue are essential to build successful relationships among countries. By the same token, sports are often touted as a good mechanism to bring together different societies. For many, sports represent tolerance, respect, goodwill and sportsmanship; all in light of fair and honest competition. And even though, sports diplomacy has encountered plenty of critics who believe that this "merger" is counterintuitive because of the obvious fierce competition, nationalistic fervor and fanaticism that sports generate; it is important to indicate that while sports diplomacy will not provide the expected results in every case when applied, it is important to see the larger picture. As Carrie Walters points out "the real benefits of these encounters (sporting exchanges) often have little to do with who wins or loses, and

¹⁰ Ibid, 9.

much more to do with celebrating our shared experiences.”¹¹ Walters adds that the real sports diplomacy does not take place during a competition but before and after as athletes do share a certain camaraderie that goes beyond their countries of origin.¹²

Stuart Murray and Geoffrey Pigman write that sports diplomacy is a “theoretical and practical hybrid of two significant institutions- is specialization, exploitation and reification of a familiar aspect of state-qua-state interaction.”¹³ The rise on the practice of public diplomacy allowed sports diplomacy to find the appropriate niche to evolve as a field of study. This evolution has effectively created conditions by which sports diplomacy has the opportunity to succeed:

In the contemporary diplomatic environment, conditions are ideal for sports diplomacy. The appearance of ‘new’ diplomatic actors – CSOs, multinational corporations and intergovernmental organizations, and even influential celebrities –has consolidated expressions like plural, ‘polylateral’ or ‘multi- stakeholder’ to describe the vertical and horizontal networks that characterize modern diplomacy. In this dynamic environment, international sportspeople can be employed to augment a foreign policy message; rancorous diplomatic relationships can be bridged through sport or, as was the case with the ban placed on apartheid South Africa, sport can be used as a punitive tool.¹⁴

¹¹ Carrie Walters, “Sports Diplomacy Is the New Comeback Kid,” *The CPD Blog*, August 03, 2007, accessed April 19, 2015,

http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/070803_sports_diplomacy_is_the_new_comeback_kid

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Stuart Murray and Geoffrey Allen Pigman, “Mapping the relationship between international sport and diplomacy,” *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 17, no. 9 (2014): 1100, accessed April 17, 2015, doi:10.1080/17430437.2013.856616

¹⁴ Ibid.

Stuart Murray further defines sports diplomacy as a practice “facilitated by traditional diplomacy [that] uses sports people and sporting events to engage, inform and create a favourable image among foreign publics and organisations, to shape their perceptions in a way that is (more) conducive to the sending government’s foreign policy goals.”¹⁵ As a somewhat new field of study, sports diplomacy has gone relatively under-theorized and with a “variation in the standards of how sports diplomacy has been practised and even a wider divergence in the extent to which it has been able to achieve stated objectives.”¹⁶ In their article “Mapping the relationship between international sport and diplomacy,” Geoffrey Pigman and Stuart Murray highlight two of the primary reasons why sports diplomacy should grow in relevance: globalization and the relative rise in the importance of soft power as a direct consequence of the end of the Cold War. They write that “nowhere has the diffusion and redistribution of political and economic power in our globalizing world been more visible to the general public and scholars alike than in international sport.”¹⁷ The end of the Cold War gave room for diplomacy to thrive and by being one of soft power’s main tools, there has been a heightened interest in its practice and “international sporting competition is perceived increasingly as an ideal channel for nations, regions and cities to share their identities, their merits and their ‘brands’ with the rest of the world.”¹⁸

When analyzing the networks where international sport and diplomacy converge, Rofo and Pigman distinguish two distinct categories; the first, a more traditional version

¹⁵ Murray, *Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves*, 8.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Allen Pigman and J. Simon Rofo, “Sport and diplomacy: an introduction,” *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 17, no. 9 (2014): 1097, accessed April 17, 2015, doi: 10.1080/17430437.2013.856612

¹⁷ Ibid., 1095

¹⁸ Ibid., 1096

which sees sports and sportspeople consciously employed by governments to amplify a diplomatic message or the use of major sporting events by governments to further public diplomacy opportunities to either cool tensions between states or to test the ground for possible policy change.¹⁹ The second version is the international-sport-as-diplomacy which “includes the effects of both international sport on diplomacy and the specialized diplomacy of international sport: the diplomatic activities that occur to make international sporting competition possible.”²⁰ The International Olympic Committee’s Summer and Winter Olympic Games or the Federation International of Football Associations’s (FIFA) World Cup come to mind when thinking about these large sporting competitions.

While the authors recognize the potential of sports diplomacy as a field of study, they also acknowledge that in order to grow as a field of study, there’s a need for the identification and dissemination of best practices both in the technical practice of sports diplomacy as well as in the values, ethics and objectives which sports diplomacy carry which can be utilized for effective capacity building.²¹

The end of the Cold War forced governments to adapt to a new diplomatic environment. The collapse of the old system forced governments to make conscious efforts to keep their diplomatic institutions current and approachable to foreign audiences while maintaining its effectiveness. And sports diplomacy represented this new approach. Sport represents a unique global platform as it “spreads information, reputations and relationships that are the essence of public diplomacy. The money spent world-wide on sport dwarfs what any government spends on public diplomacy. The size of the global

¹⁹ Murray and Pigman, “Mapping the relationship between international sport and diplomacy,” 1099

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

audiences for sport and the audience's level of interest exceed those of any other subject matter.”²² At the same time, governments recognize the importance of engaging accomplished and popular athletes in their diplomatic efforts due to their prominence and the respect they generate in audiences around the world because of their prowess in their respective fields. Athletes are revered by a loyal fandom who are always attentive to their every move. Therefore, high profile athletes have become unofficial ‘ambassadors’ for their countries and as such, there are certain expectations that come with this role. These days, sportspeople are expected to be more socially minded and be vocal about issues they are willing to lend their voices to. Long are the days where sportspeople just played sports; globalization has opened new horizons for athletes and they are embracing it.

However, the exercise and effectiveness of sports diplomacy have been largely questioned and criticized by a number of critics. For some authors, sports and politics and by association, diplomacy should not mix. While diplomacy is a political activity that aims to secure a state's foreign policy agenda through peaceful means; international sports in its purest form appeals to a country's nationalistic fervor while providing “an arena for governments to demonstrate various types of superiority, from their athletic prowess to the ideology of a particular system of state.”²³

In the same article “Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves,” author Stuart Murray develops a counterargument that highlights the political incompatibility between sports and diplomacy. Murray states that “sports are often associated with war, tribalism,

²² Sanders, “Sports as Public Diplomacy.”

²³ Murray, *Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves*, 14.

conflict, division, separation and violence- the antithesis of diplomacy.”²⁴ He notes how fans attribute sports with a “spiritual” status that go above any government’s attempt to use them for a no-sport related purpose. For the public, “sport is neither ‘above’ nor ‘below’ governments – it is beyond them and there it should be left, pure, untouched and untapped.”²⁵ Robert Redeker, one of the most critical voices of sports diplomacy as a field of study, further expands on this point and he writes that “countries think they are using sports for their own purposes, for the furthering of some political strategy, when in reality... people pick up just the opposite message their states think they are sending”.²⁶ The words and the messages that carry some sort of meaning in international relations arena are “empty sounds . . . after passing through the gates of sport.”²⁷

In his article, Murray brings up an important point on the problems that come with the concept of sports diplomacy. For him, the term is self contradictory because in a sports diplomacy episode, the pre-negotiation stage can be highly publicized however, the negotiation process itself is held with the utmost secrecy with heads of states being completed exempted and leaving these endeavors to expert negotiators who understand the value of discretion and privacy as a way to build trust and relations between the involved parties. On this point, Jacques Defrance and Jean Marc Chamot write that these two cultures, the sporting and the diplomatic, fundamentally diverge in certain aspects:

²⁴ Stuart Murray, “Moving Beyond the Ping Pong Diplomacy: Sports Diplomacy in the Modern Diplomatic Environment”, *PD Magazine*, Winter 2013, <http://publicdiplomacymagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Moving-beyond-the-Ping-Pong-table-Sports-Diplomacy-in-the-Modern-Diplomatic-Environment.pdf>

²⁵ Murray, *Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves*, 15.

²⁶ Robert Redeker, “Sport as an Opiate of International Relations: The Myth and Illusion of Sport as a Tool of Foreign Diplomacy,” *Sport in Society* 11 no.4 (2008): 495, accessed April 18, 2015, doi: 10.1080/17430430802019482

²⁷ Ibid.. 498

the two cultures – sporting and diplomatic – are poles apart...in the former, agents express themselves through their body, in the latter, they work with words: while the former show themselves, the latter act with discretion: the rise of ‘adrenalin’ among sportsmen differs from the quiet gestures of diplomats, the clamour of the stadium is the opposite of the peaceful atmosphere of embassies.²⁸

Sport “purists” argue that the arrangement between sports and diplomacy is a superfluous gimmick. When a situation that requires diplomatic intervention arises, “traditional” sport diplomats are certainly not found at the negotiating table working judiciously with other diplomats attempting to de-escalate a potential conflict; however, their presence is always welcomed for the required photo opportunity to celebrate the “big moment” posing next to the heads of states. Therefore, this “false camaraderie” during, for example, a high stake sporting event, is nothing short of self serving.

Competitive sporting events are usually imbued with a high doses of patriotism where fanatics wear their emotions on their sleeves while chanting anthems and wearing proudly their countries’ colors; this display of exuberance can easily lead to a growing sense of nationalism. Murray quotes Delay who writes that the “completion merely intensifies enmity; sport severs itself from the civility required by rules and diplomacy, becoming a prelude to incivility and, in the worst case, violence.”²⁹ And unfortunately, in numerous occasions, scenarios of violence have erupted during the celebration of large sporting events. Murray mentions how terrorists have utilized the international platform

²⁸ Jacques Defrance and Jean Marc Chamot, “The Voice of Sport: Expressing a foreign policy through silent cultural action: The case of French foreign policy after the Second World War,” *Sport in Society* 11 no.4 (2008): 395, accessed April 18, 2015, doi: 10.1080/17430430802019342

²⁹ Murray, *Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves*, 19.

that sports provide and launched deadly attacks in order to distribute a message of fear in front of a global audience. The most notorious example is the murder of eleven Israeli athletes by the pro-Palestinian group Black September during the 1972 Munich Summer Olympic Games. Since then until 2005, “sport-related terrorist attacks have been logged.”³⁰

On the other hand, Murray states that sports diplomacy, in spite of its limitations, does have a future. He recognizes that in this era of globalization, sports can transcend borders and play a conciliatory role between warring parties and could be notably useful in a state’s “‘low’ political agenda such as “campaigns for sustainable development, worldwide literacy, or human security,”³¹ with athletes as their strongest campaign spokespeople.

In the next chapter, I will highlight the theoretical framework and concepts I will use in this thesis that will provide with the necessary theoretical support as why sports diplomacy is and should be acknowledged as a valid field of study in international relations that produces substantial results. Also, it is important to note that this era of globalization and the ascent of public diplomacy have cultivated the necessary ground for governments to seek out the opportunities and openings that a novel field such as sports diplomacy could potentially provide.

³⁰ Ibid. 20.

³¹ Ibid., 22.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Frameworks

Contextual Theories

Liberalism

Sports diplomacy reflects a liberal focus on global cooperation and collaboration. From a liberalist perspective, non state transnational actors, such as international organizations or multinational corporations, and groups play a significant and active role in world politics. “The liberal image of international relations is a large, seemingly all-inclusive tent—not just states, but also international and nongovernmental organizations and the often cross- cutting networks that connect them.”³²

In describing liberalism as an approach, Robert Keohane, one of the most influential thinkers in international relations in the last few decades and pioneer of institutional neoliberalism, remarks that “liberalism emphasizes individuals, seeks to understand collective decisions, and, in an ethical sense, promotes human rights and validates attempts to ameliorate the human condition.”³³ He also states that “liberalism reaffirms the attempt of institutionalists to seek to understand politics for the sake of designing institutions that will promote cooperation, welfare, and human rights.”³⁴ Therefore, it is important to understand liberalism in order to understand the goal of the utilization of sports as a diplomatic tool which is to address and promote democracy, cooperation, and peace.

³² Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory 5th Edition* (Glenview: Pearson, 2012), 129

³³ Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World* (London:Routledge 2002), accessed March 20, 2015, <http://ir.nmu.org.ua/bitstream/handle/>.

³⁴ Ibid., 10.

Additionally, liberalism emphasizes the fact that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world contributes to how a state behaves. These growing transnational networks are being built jointly between states and non state actors and they continue to make a considerable impact in different areas. According to Viotti and Kauppi, “the world is ever more closely bound with a veritable cobweb not only of economic, but also social, cultural, and political or transnational ties, [and so] the literature of interdependence naturally flows into discussion of the process of globalization.”³⁵ Classical liberal theorists such as Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, and Giuseppe Mazzini foresaw that the creation of international institutions would be beneficial for states to improve trust among them and promote cooperation and peace.

Soft Power

Sports can also be seen in terms of the exercise of soft power. Joseph S. Nye Jr. describes soft power as “the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants.”³⁶ While realists define power as an inherent goal of states and humankind which is related to a country’s economic and military might used to coerce others in order to get what they desire; liberals include factors that involve economic and cultural “power.”

Nye classifies power into two categories: hard power and soft power. Hard power focuses on a nation’s or a political entity’s ability to utilize “military intervention,

³⁵ Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory 5th Edition*, 130.

³⁶ Joseph S. Nye Jr., *Soft Power: The Means To Succeed In World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 2.

coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions to enforce national interests.”³⁷ On the other hand, soft power can be exercised by not only the state but also by non state actors such as international organizations or multinational corporations to name a few. Nye calls soft power as the "second face of power" that indirectly allows a country to obtain desired outcomes. According to Nye, a country's soft power rests on three resources: "its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority).”³⁸

The success of soft power heavily depends on a country's global reputation. The better a country's standing, the more other countries want to follow it; the influence exerted by one country over the other is done by co-option rather than coercion: “A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries- admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its levels of prosperity and openness- want to follow it. In this sense it is also important to set the agenda and attract others in world politics, and not only to force them by threatening military force or economic sanctions.”³⁹

Nye associates soft power with democracies. He mentions that political leaders in democratic nations understand the advantages of exercising soft power in relation to hard power. It is more advantageous and more cost-efficient to attract a country with intangible assets such as culture, personality or values than threaten a country with

³⁷ Ernest J. Wilson III, “Hard Power, Soft Power and Smart Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 616 no.1 (2008): 114, accessed March 21, 2015, doi: 10.1177/0002716207312618

³⁸ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “*The Future of Power*” (New York: Public Affairs, 2011), 84.

³⁹ Nye, *Soft Power*, 5.

military, economic, or commercial consequences, which can prove to be a costly enterprise: “Political leaders have long understood the power that comes from attraction. If I can get you to want to do what I want, then I do not have to use carrots or sticks to make you do it.”⁴⁰

For Nye, soft power is “attractive power” and it is this attraction that often leads to compliance. In Nye’s argument, soft power is not just mere influence or persuasion. In drawing comparisons with hard power in terms of resources and outcomes, Nye explains that soft power resources “are the assets that produce such attraction.”⁴¹ and in terms of outcomes, he compares the variety of ways pursued to get the desired outcomes. While hard power relies heavily on the threat of force, on economic sanctions or the restriction of one’s preferences; soft power is more effective when it appeals to shared values, purposes, and sentiments: “If I am persuaded to go along with your purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place—in short, if my behavior is determined by an observable but intangible attraction—soft power is at work.”⁴²

Nye recognizes that soft power faces certain limitations and its “attractiveness” may or may not be conducive to obtaining sought after outcomes depending on the conditions. He mentions that some scholars resist the concept of soft power and what it represents because they often equate power with the deliberate exercise of command and control. They do not consider soft power’s attraction capacity as an effective way of getting the outcomes you desire. In their view, attraction or imitation does not translate into power: “The skeptics who want to define power only as a deliberate acts of

⁴⁰ Ibid.,6.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 7

command and control are ignoring the second, or ‘structural,’ face of power — the ability to get the outcomes you want without having to force people to change their behavior through threats and payments.”⁴³

Nye goes on to explain that it is important to establish that there are conditions under which soft power’s attraction could determine wanted outcomes. First, he refers to the role of popular culture; soft power tends to have more of an impact in societies that share similar cultural traits as soft power’s survival is conditioned on the reception of “willing interpreters and receivers.”⁴⁴ He attributes soft power’s attraction to the fact that it “has a diffuse effect, creating general influence rather than producing an easily observable specific action.”⁴⁵ This attraction and diffuse effect may not be always tangible or direct; however, its influence can be used by political leaders when bargaining at the negotiating table.

It is in democracies rather than in authoritarian regimes that soft power is more important as power “is more dispersed rather than concentrated.”⁴⁶ Lastly, he argues that soft power can generate a direct effect on specific goals or more effectively, on general goals that a country is pursuing. In the foreign policy realm and based on definitions given by Arnold Wolferson, Nye mentions that a country has two types of goals to pursue in order to run an effective foreign policy agenda: “possession goals” and “milieu goals” with milieu goals being more conducive to democracy: “Soft power is particularly

⁴³ Ibid.,15.

⁴⁴ Ibid.,16.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

relevant to the realization of ‘milieu goals’. It has a crucial role to play in promoting democracy, human rights and open markets.”⁴⁷

A relevant objection posed by scholars is that soft power often does not come directly from the state but is exerted by non state actors or members of civil society. In Nye’s perspective, it is not in a government’s interests to disprove or dismiss civil society’s capacity for soft power as they need to work in tandem to properly build a strong foreign policy agenda: “It is true that firms, universities, foundations, churches, and other nongovernment groups develop soft power of their own that may reinforce or be at odds with official foreign policy goals. That is all the more reason for governments to make sure that their own actions and policies reinforce rather than undercut their soft power.”⁴⁸

As previously mentioned, a country’s soft power rests on three resources: culture, its political values, and its foreign policies. Sports can easily be added to this context. As Gary Armstrong and James Rosbrook- Thompson write, sports as a practice that can be competitive and inclusive, “can help establish dialogue and mutual understanding in an arena where there is only a game to be lost. It thus has the potential for influencing and furthering diplomatic relations.”⁴⁹ Sporting events such as the Olympic Games, conceived by Pierre de Coubertin as a form of an athletic competition but also as a means to promote peace and diplomacy, serve as global platforms for thousands of competitors

⁴⁷ Ibid.,17.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Gary Armstrong and James Rosbrook-Thompson, “The role of sport in soft power projection,” *International Centre for Sport Security* 1 no.3 (2015) :1, accessed July 27, 2015, <http://icss-journal.newsdeskmedia.com/The-role-of-sport-in-soft-power-projection>

representing their countries not only as individuals but also representing the values heralded by their countries. This experience in addition to sports' undoubtedly power of attraction is an opportunity taken by countries to demonstrate soft power:

It is precisely this power of attraction that makes sports and those competing in it a ready-made opportunity to attach national values, aims and characteristics to broadcast to the world. It is a significant vessel within which the attributes of soft power can be transported wider, further and deeper – certainly much more than can be hoped for than by cultural exchanges.⁵⁰

Globalization and Sports

Globalization is defined as “the continued increase in transnational and worldwide economic, social, and cultural interactions that transcend the boundaries of states, aided by advances of technology.”⁵¹ Robert Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. went one step further and defined globalization as a measurement of a much larger phenomena. For both scholars, this much broader process is called globalism. And in this context, globalization is the process of increasing globalism.

Globalism is defined as a state of the world in which transnational networks have been established to allow the flow of multiple elements that are constantly connected: “Globalism is a state of the world involving networks of interdependence at multicontinental distances. These networks can be linked through flows and influences of capital and goods, information and ideas, people and force, as well as environmentally

⁵⁰ “Sport as a Soft Power Tool,” Today’s Zaman, accessed March 21, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/todays-think-tanks_sport-as-a-soft-power-tool_325953.html

⁵¹ Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory 5th Edition*, 450

and biologically relevant substances (such as acid rain or pathogens).⁵² The consolidation and density of these global networks paired with the constant flow of information through different channels make globalization an intensive and an extensive phenomena that has an important influence in people's everyday lives all over the world.

Further, Keohane and Nye characterize globalization "as the process by which globalism becomes increasingly thick."⁵³ To add to this characterization of globalization as the globalism's thickening process, it is necessary to consider the multidimensional nature of globalism. There are four main dimensions that have been established: economic globalism, military globalism, environmental globalism, and social globalism.

Social and cultural globalism refers to the continuous movement of ideas, information, and population around the globe. Ideas, information, images, populations, and values travel constantly, trespassing geographical and political borders, and have the potential of producing real change in societies that are open and willing to adapt and incorporate new sets of ideas and values into their different social structures and also can potentially re-shape a society's identity. Keohane and Nye sum up social globalism as follows:

At its most profound level, social globalism affects the consciousness of individuals and their attitudes toward culture, politics, and personal identity. Indeed, social and cultural globalism interacts with other types of globalism, since military and environmental, as well as economic, activity convey information and

⁵² Keohane and Nye Jr., "Governance in a globalized world," in *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (London:Routledge 2002), accessed March 20, 2015, <http://ir.nmu.org.ua/bitstream/handle/>

⁵³ Ibid., 198.

generate ideas, which may then flow across geographical and political boundaries.⁵⁴

It is in this context that the use of sports as a means of interaction between states becomes relevant. Sport has been transformed into a global medium capable of spreading information and ideas in real time to hundreds of millions of viewers regardless of their location in the world.

Large scale events as the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup, the Summer Olympics, the Cricket World Cup or a game between the two giants of the Spanish National Football League, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, are watched on television or followed in social media by large audiences from all different corners of the world. It is estimated that the 2014 FIFA World Cup Final between Germany and Argentina was watched or partly watched by more than one billion people. On social media, the month long event “was responsible for more than 3 billion interactions on Facebook and 672 million messages on Twitter.”⁵⁵ And these stratospheric numbers are not limited to the World Cup as there are other sporting events that garner the same interest worldwide. The opening ceremony of the 2012 London Summer Olympic Games drew almost 900 million viewers.⁵⁶ Comparatively, one billion people approximately have tuned in to watch the India-Pakistan group stage match during this year’s Cricket World Cup in Australia making it the most watched game in

⁵⁴ Ibid., 196.

⁵⁵ David Bauder, “The World Cup Final Was The Most Watched Soccer Game In U.S. History,” Huffington Post Sports, accessed March 21, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/07/14/world-cup-final-viewers-record_n_5585861.html

⁵⁶ In only Great Britain, the host nation for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games, 88% of the total population tuned in to watch the opening ceremony; see <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/08/07/>. Retrieved March 21, 2015.

the history of the sport.⁵⁷ The last *El Clasico*, the historic matchup between Real Madrid FC and FC Barcelona, was watched by more than 400 million viewers globally.⁵⁸

Sporting events, sports teams and sports players have become global brands with an undeniable economic power and an ability to mobilize throngs of devoted fans following them, willingly attentive to their words and actions. Sports are reshaping global politics, as Markovits and Rensmann wrote:

Sports subjects appear in popular movies, television series, and various other narratives that captivate millions, even billions, of people around the world. Sports have evolved into an integral part of the global entertainment. In recent years, this formidable feature of our cultural landscape has attracted increasing interest and legitimacy as an important subject of intellectual inquiry.⁵⁹

The status of sports as a carrier of “cultural capital” has been recognized and promoted with the rise of globalization. Cultural capital is defined as “symbolic, nonmaterial value of goods and their nonmaterial benefits for individuals and collectives. They entail social recognition, public attention, and collective practices and identities.”⁶⁰

Sports have largely met the conditions listed by Andrei Markovits in his definition of cultural capital and accordingly, different regimes from military dictatorships to democracies have employed sports in their attempt to gain legitimacy from the

⁵⁷ Monica Sarkar, “#IndvsPak cricket: A billion viewers expected to have tuned in,” CNN, accessed March 21, 2015, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/02/15/sport/india-pakistan-cricket/>

⁵⁸ Dermot Corrigan, “Real Madrid vs. Barcelona is the richest football game in the world,” ESPN, accessed March 21, 2015, <http://www.espnfc.us/spanish-primera-division/15/blog/post/2099282/real-madrid-vs-barcelona-is-the-richest-football-game-in-the-world>

⁵⁹ Andrei S. Markovits and Lars Rensmann, “*Gaming The World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture*” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

international community “Using sports as ‘cultural capital’ has become commonplace in many societies and is not limited to populist politicians. Sport as an ornamental tool has turned into a globalized phenomenon, which is part of our ubiquitous and inescapable zeitgeist.”⁶¹

Traditional Diplomacy and Public Diplomacy

Diplomacy has been largely defined as the art of negotiation. In his *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, G.R. Berridge explains that diplomacy as a highly powerful political activity that “enables states to secure their objectives of their foreign policies without resort to force, propaganda, or law.”⁶² Stuart Murray describes diplomacy as “the engine room of international relations, the master- institution of international society.”⁶³

For many scholars, the creation of Western modern diplomacy began in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia; a series of peace treaties that ended the Thirty Years War in the Holy Roman Empire. As a result of this diplomatic Congress, the concept of Westphalian sovereignty was based on the coexistence of sovereign states, on the establishment of a balance of power that would counteract inter-state aggression, and on a zealous defense of a state’s domestic affairs from foreign intervention:

Europe created modern diplomacy because Europe created the modern, geographically sovereign state—the so-called Westphalian state after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The new form of international actor that has characterized the

⁶¹ Ibid., 10.

⁶² G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice 4th Edition* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 1.

⁶³ Murray, *Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves*, 8.

modern international system required a new kind of diplomacy, matched to its needs and consonant with its nature.⁶⁴

Since then, diplomacy became the state's "vanguard institution for international relations"⁶⁵ and as John Robert Kelly stresses in "The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution," diplomacy has been one of the "few institutions that have remained so stable and enduring"⁶⁶. Diplomacy has been carried out exclusively by official agents (diplomats) representing the values and interests of their respective sovereign states: "There was the propagation of the concept of the professional career diplomat, who cultivated specific skills that ensured effective performance of his duties."⁶⁷ In "Sports Diplomacy: A Hybrid of Two Halves," Stuart Murray describes diplomats, as conceived by traditional diplomacy, as "specialists in precise and accurate communication, and experts in negotiation; they gather and disseminate information; and, unless it runs contrary to their state's foreign policy, seek to minimize friction in an anarchical and competitive international relations environment."⁶⁸

For centuries, traditional diplomacy monopolized foreign affairs. It is in 1960s that U.S diplomat Edward Guillon coined the term public diplomacy when he penned a brochure at the newly established Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University:

⁶⁴ Nigro, "Theory and Practice of Modern Diplomacy: Origins and Development to 1914," 197.

⁶⁵ Murray, 5.

⁶⁶ John Robert Kelly, "The New Diplomacy: Evolution of a Revolution," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 21 (2010): 286, accessed March 29, 2015, doi:10.1080/09592296.2010.482474.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 4

⁶⁸ Murray, 4-5.

Public diplomacy... deals with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication, as diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the process of intercultural communications.⁶⁹

Public diplomacy as a practice has developed two approaches: a traditional version of public diplomacy that aimed to establish contact between a national government (state) and the people of a foreign country; and a “new public diplomacy” approach which was born in the ashes of the Cold War. This “new” public diplomacy incorporates non- state actors such as multinational corporations (MNCs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to its diplomatic lineup in order to address the transnational nature of today’s world and to properly confront transnational threats such as terrorism and climate change:

The appearance of ‘new’ diplomatic actors – NGOs, MNCs, IGOs and even influential celebrities – has led to the introduction of terms like plural, ‘polylateral’ or ‘multi- stakeholder’ to describe the vertical and horizontal networks that characterise modern diplomacy. Where the state and its diplomats have found trouble, non-state actors have stepped in and proliferated,

⁶⁹ Nicholas Cull, “‘Public Diplomacy’ Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase” *The CPD Blog*, April 18, 2006, http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/060418_public_diplomacy_before_gullion_the_evolution_of_a_phrase

neatly filling the vacuum of responsibility left by the state. These non state actors range from the messianic to the mad, and have affected change to the international relations system – bringing into question the relevance and effectiveness of the state to solve the growing pains of globalization.⁷⁰

Public diplomacy focuses on a state's and increasingly, a non-state actor's attempt to communicate and engage with foreign organizations and citizens aiming to propel, mainly but not exclusively, its international image and prestige. It also aims to promote an idea that the actor deems important within its foreign policy agenda. Nevertheless, the objective is clear: the management of the international environment.

Public diplomacy needs to be understood under the umbrella of soft power. In "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," Jan Melissen describes public diplomacy as one of soft power's key instruments while attesting that this practice has been largely accepted even before it was recognized as such.⁷¹

In addition, Melissen tries to place soft power into a historical context. He characterizes the Cold War as an era in which the United States, the Soviet Union and European powers invested in "communications with the world" even though conventional diplomatic and public diplomacy activities were not pursued in a complementary way but in parallel. Melissen, then, describes the second half of the twentieth century as a period in international relations in which ideas and values contended with one another while immersed in a hard power sphere. However, the diplomatic community did not react

⁷⁰ Murray, 6.

⁷¹ Jan Melissen, "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice," in *The New Public Diplomacy Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 4.

swiftly to the challenges posed by the state's growing interest in establishing direct dialogue with foreign audiences, given that diplomacy and its diplomatic corps tend to be a rather enclosed entity with protagonists accustomed to interact only among their own kind. Melissen expands on this topic:

Diplomatic culture is after all fundamentally peer-orientated, and the dominant realist paradigm in diplomatic circles was a by-product of a long history of viewing international relations in terms of economic and military power. The question today of how foreign ministries can instrumentalize soft power is testing their diplomats' flexibility to the full.⁷²

Today, the roles and responsibilities of public diplomacy actors in international relations are not as defined due to the nature of the international system in which transnational relations and the diversity of the actors involved, make the environment less controlled and continuously transforming. Success in public diplomacy focuses on openness and transnational cooperation and "such openness and multi-level cooperation call for the active pursuit of more collaborative diplomatic relations with various types of actors. Public diplomacy is an indispensable ingredient for such a collaborative model of diplomacy."⁷³

And it is in this rise in transnational relations, in the diversification of contemporary diplomatic actors and the relative rise in the importance of soft power, public diplomacy's key element, that the value of international sports within this contemporary diplomatic context has been enhanced. As Simon Rofe and Geoffrey Allan

⁷² Melissen, 5.

⁷³ Melissen., 5.

Pigman write in “Sport and diplomacy: an introduction,” that the global diffusion and redistribution of political and economic power has not been more visible to the public and academics than in international sports.⁷⁴ Experiencing an sporting event is now as simple as turning on a television set or using the Internet to livestream the desired event; millions of people around the world are riveted by the sporting prowess of their favorite sporting team or their favorite athlete. Undoubtedly, sports represent “a gigantic and powerful medium for the international spread of information, reputations and relationships that are the essence of public diplomacy.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, international sporting competitions are “perceived increasingly as an ideal channel for nations, regions and cities to share their identities, there and their ‘brands’ with the rest of the world.”⁷⁶ Sports are attractive because they can connect with audiences on a human level in the way politics will never do. They carry powerful messages of self- improvement, of resilience, of healthy competition, of camaraderie that make sport a vehicle to carry these messages.

⁷⁴ J. Simon Rofo and Geoffrey Allan Pigman, “Sport and Diplomacy: an Introduction,” *Sports in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics* 17, no. 9 (2014): 1095, doi: 10.1080/17430437.2013.856612

⁷⁵ Sanders, “Sports as Public Diplomacy.”

⁷⁶ Rofo and Pigman, “Sport and diplomacy: an introduction,” 1096.

Chapter 4: Historical Background

During the twentieth century, governments from around the world have used sports as a policy instrument in order to find resolutions to solve conflicts in both the international and the domestic sphere. Havard Mokleiv Nygard and Scott Gates correctly state in their article “Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace building,” that great and middle powers have continuously engaged in sport diplomacy in a variety of ways as a form of soft power.⁷⁷ These ways may take the form of “hosting events such as the Olympic Games, and the FIFA World Cup, but also sponsoring sports exchanges and international youth tournaments. The objective in such cases is to foster peace-building between and within nations.”⁷⁸ At the same time, Nygard and Gates write that as a policy tool, “sport(s) can also incur a policy response from other political actors. Indeed, the politics of sport need not be conciliatory. It may be confrontational.”⁷⁹

Whether for conciliatory or for confrontational purposes, the use of sports has produced resounding successes such as the Ping-Pong diplomacy episode between the United States and the People’s Republic of China and terrible failures such in the case of the Football War between Honduras and El Salvador. Furthermore, sporting boycotts, which were common during the Cold War, were used as a mechanism to exert pressure on certain countries over domestic policies such as the case of South Africa.

In this thesis, I will examine six cases where sports diplomacy has been implemented to a different level of effectiveness. The sporadic success of sports

⁷⁷ Havard Mokleiv Nygard and Scott Gates, “Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace building,” *International Area Studies Review* 16 no.3 (2013): 236, accessed November 10, 2015, doi:10.1177/223338659135002971

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

diplomacy has, in a way, limited its scope as a field of study. Despite its limitations, as Nygard and Gates state, there are three important mechanisms in which sports constitute effective instruments of soft power: image building, as a platform of dialogue and as a tool to reconciliation and integration. In the first category, I will write on the Russian and Brazilian attempts to consolidate their position as legitimate world powers by hosting the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games and consequences, positive and negative, at home and abroad. In the second category, I will examine three different cases that illustrate different degrees of success when countries attempted to use sports as platforms for dialogue. I will start with the successful Ping-Pong Diplomacy episode between the People's Republic of China and the United States, followed by the Cricket Diplomacy episode between India and Pakistan after the 2011 terrorist attacks in Mumbai which represented a serious attempt at repairing seriously broken relations and third, the Football War between El Salvador and Honduras which showed the dark side of sports. To conclude, I will write on the crucial role that rugby played in South Africa in helping to bring down the brutal apartheid system while being astutely used by then President Nelson Mandela to reunite the country.

Sports for Image Building: Russia and Brazil, the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics

In "Does Hosting the Olympics Actually Pay Off,?" author Binyamin Appelbaum writes that the idea of hosting the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup as a profitable enterprise, is a relatively new phenomenon. Despite the novel idea, governments continue to seek the coveted nomination and with that, footing the billion dollar bills that a sporting event of this magnitude encompasses; from the construction of large sporting

arenas, the improvement of infrastructure to the overall acceleration of the host city's economic apparatus; the political, social and economic benefits seem worth the large investment. Appelbaum states that "such claims are based on the idea that the Games can serve as a tourist attraction, a chance to catch the eye of global business leaders and a way to rally political support for valuable infrastructure projects."⁸⁰

Besides the apparent economic benefits, hosting large sporting events has always been a matter of honor and an official signal that a country has arrived on the world stage. These events have been widely used by regimes to "mobilize capital and human capital in a very short period of time, which would otherwise have been next to impossible."⁸¹ Two major emerging global economies, Russia and Brazil, members of the BRICS association, decided to pursue this expensive enterprise as they understood that the costly price tag was worthy due to the unique exposure that their countries would experience as the eyes of the world would be set on them. Russia held the Olympic Games in 2014 and will hold the FIFA World Cup in 2018 while Brazil hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and will host the Olympic Games in Rio next year.

For Russia and President Vladimir Putin, hosting the Games of the XXII Winter Olympiad in Sochi and its selection to host the FIFA World Cup in 2018, represented more than just a honorable occasion. As Michael Reynolds writes for President Putin, "these games will, he hopes, showcase not simply his country today, but more importantly its recovery under his leadership from the disastrous decade of political

⁸⁰ Binyamin Appelbaum, "Does Hosting the Olympics Actually Pay Off,?" *New York Times*, August 5, 2014, accessed November 10, 2015. <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/10/magazine/does-hosting-the-olympics-actually-pay-off.html? r=0>

⁸¹ Nygard and Gates, *Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace building*, 238.

disarray and economic chaos that followed the Soviet collapse of 1991.”⁸² It is worth remembering that Russia previously hosted the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow which, in the height of the Cold War, was largely boycotted by the United States and fellow allies. Despite the backlash, the Moscow Games are fondly remembered by Russians of Putin’s generation.

Geographically, Sochi’s location represented an additional show of strength for President Putin. Located in the North Caucasus, it is close in distance to Chechnya and Abkhazia; territories that represent respectively the nadir and zenith of Russia’s power. Putin’s goal in Chechnya was to pacify and stabilize the highly unstable region and in some respects, it can be considered a *fait accompli*. In the summer of 2008, in midst of the celebration of the Beijing Summer Olympics, Russia waged a brief war against Georgia over the region of Abkhazia. By the end of this brief war, which Russia won, Abkhazia became an “independent” and “sovereign” state in the eyes of the Russian government. However, and more importantly, Georgia’s defeat represented an undeniable blow to American policies in the region.

With this background, President Putin understood the repercussions of hosting a successful Olympic Games both at home and abroad. At home, it would not only bolster his already solid popularity but it would also effectively legitimize his government. For this reason, the Russian government invested billions of dollars in building up the necessary infrastructure to transform Sochi into a true Olympic city. Between public and private expenditures, the consensus on the final cost of the Sochi Games was \$50 billion dollars which “easily qualify Sochi as the most expensive Olympics ever, about 25

⁸² Michael Reynolds, “The Geopolitics of Sochi,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, January, 2014, accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2014/01/geopolitics-sochi>

percent more than the \$40 billion spent on the much-larger 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.”⁸³

The organization of these games was largely criticized even prior to the lighting of the Olympic cauldron. From aesthetic mishaps such as bizarre looking toilets to brown running water to the roaming of large packs of stray dogs, the success of the Sochi Olympics was questioned every step of the way. The enormous price tag attached to these Games became heavily questioned and denounced by journalists critical of the Kremlin. They stated that the Russian government had played an active role in the sustenance of an already serious issue in Vladimir Putin’s Russia: a rampant corruption that had permeated every economic and business sector since he took over power.

Russia also came under the microscope for a controversial law which passed the upper and lower houses of the Russian Parliament in June 2013 outlawing “propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations” to children. The passing of this legislation had a tremendous consequences towards the country’s LGBTQI community with a dramatic increase of homophobic attacks in the country. Western countries, such as the United States, pushed back against this law and made an effort for this issue to be frequently discussed prior and during the Olympic festivities. President Barack Obama decided to skip the Games in their entirety and sent a group of openly LGBTQI sportspeople to be part of the U.S delegation to the Games. At the same time, current and former Olympians joined their voices to express their disdain towards this law and criticized not only President Putin’s government but the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the

⁸³ Paul Farhi, “Did the Winter Olympics in Sochi really cost \$50 billion? A closer look at that figure,” *The Washington Post*, February 10, 2014, accessed November 12, 2015.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/did-the-winter-olympics-in-sochi-really-cost-50-billion-a-closer-look-at-that-figure/2014/02/10/a29e37b4-9260-11e3-b46a-5a3d0d2130da_story.html

large multinational corporations sponsoring the event for not having a stronger stance against Russia's blatant promotion of anti LGBT rhetoric. As a result, the International Olympic Committee introduced a specific anti-discrimination clause to its host city contract. The binding agreement between the IOC and the winning bidder for the 2022 Winter Olympics, would be based on principle 6 of the Olympic charter. The clause reads: "Any form of discrimination with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, gender or otherwise is incompatible with belonging to the Olympic movement."⁸⁴

With the Volgograd terrorist attacks in mind and the silent preparation prior to the controversial annexation of the Crimean Peninsula a few weeks after the Games' closing ceremony, these Games became a "monument to Putin's Russia—a nationalist showcase, intended to demonstrate just how far the country has come in the past two decades. It has also given Russia its first world-class winter resort, and has significantly developed the infrastructure of the Caucasus. In that context, overspending can become, perversely, a point of pride."⁸⁵

Brazil, as Russia, was chosen as the country to host both the FIFA World Cup which took place in 2014 and the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. In the same vein and just as its Russian counterpart, the Brazilian government sought to organize these mega sporting events because it "symbolize(s) Brazil's rise and is an important part

⁸⁴ Owen Wilson, "Olympic anti-discrimination clause introduced after Sochi gay rights row," *The Guardian*, September 25, 2014, accessed November 15, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/sep/25/olympic-anti-discrimination-clause-sochi-gay-rights-row>

⁸⁵ James Surowiecki, "The Sochi Effect," *The New Yorker*, February 10, 2014, accessed November 15, 2015. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/02/10/the-sochi-effect>

of the strategy to advance Brazil's global status."⁸⁶ In Andreia Soares' "2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games: Brazil's Strategy 'To Win Hearts and Minds Through Sports and Football,'" the author states that in the Brazilian context, "sports and football must be seen as elements of ambitious cultural and public diplomacy strategies and efforts to further Brazilian foreign diplomacy goals, such as establishing and promoting a positive national image, and enhancing Brazil's prestige, visibility and credibility."⁸⁷ Soares further explains that, for quite a while, the Brazilian government has been using official instruments of soft power like public diplomacy, development assistance, disaster relief and military-to-military contact to develop a variety of strategies that would further advanced its political and economic stance not only regionally but internationally such as Brazil's increased interaction and development assistance with Africa especially with the five PALOP members or Portuguese speaking countries in Africa.⁸⁸

The World Cup cost Brazil approximately \$14 billion dollars with almost 90% of the event's budget allocated to the construction or renovation of football stadiums around the country including the controversial Arena da Amazonia in Manaus, in the heart of the Amazon rainforest, which represented the perfect exhibition of the wasteful spending incurred in the organization of this event. These major projects was largely subsidized by public monies in contrary to President Lula da Silva's promise that the majority of these funds would come from private investors. The Summer Olympics in Rio are projected to

⁸⁶ Andreia Soares e Castro, "2014 FIFA World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games: Brazil's Strategy 'To Win Hearts and Minds Through Sports and Football,'" *Public Diplomacy Magazine*, Winter 2013, accessed November 15, 2015. <http://publicdiplomacymagazine.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/2014-FIFA-World-Cup-And-2016-Olympic-Games-Brazil's-Strategy-'to-Win-Hearts-and-Minds'-Through-Sports-and-Football.pdf>

⁸⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

cost \$18 billion dollars with some critics projecting that the budget for these Olympics will rise to almost \$25 billion dollars. In a dream scenario, as Andrew Zimbalist writes in his article “Brazil’s Long To-Do List”, the Olympics and the World Cup would have provided the necessary boom which would have propelled Brazil’s economy from an emerging market into a developed one. Consequently, the billions of dollars that theoretically would have poured into Brazil’s economy, would have enabled the Brazilian government to heavily invest in large public works projects and to expand the country’s general infrastructure; from the building of new roads, to the creation of a rapid-transit train system between major cities to the expansion of airports, they would have created thousands of new jobs as well as investment opportunities.⁸⁹ Additionally, the Brazilian tourism sector would experience a peak with thousands of tourists spending millions on meals, entertainment and accommodations. Finally, worldwide media attention would help Brazil to brand itself as the sophisticated and vibrant country that could compete with any of the countries in the Northern Hemisphere. However, the reality has not panned out as intended, particularly when Brazil’s economy is faltering.

Sports as a Platform for Dialogue: Three Examples, Three Different Outcomes

During the World Table Tennis Championships celebrated in Japan in 1971, the U.S. Table Tennis team received a surprise invitation to visit People’s Republic of China (PRC) in order to play a series of exhibition matches. No American delegation had visited China since 1949 when diplomatic ties between this country and the West were formally severed after the Chinese Communist Party’s Army or the Red Army led by Mao Zedong defeated the forces of the Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek

⁸⁹ Andrew Zimbalist, “Brazil’s Long To-Do List,” *Americas Quarterly*, Summer 2011, accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.americasquarterly.org/zimbalist>

were forced into exile to the Island of Formosa, today's Taiwan, where the Republic of China (ROC) was formed.⁹⁰

Fitting to the dynamics of the Cold War, the USSR became a major backer of the Chinese Communists during the Chinese civil war while the United States sided with the Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists. For the United States and its allies, Mao's victory in mainland China represented a significant spread of Soviet influence and positive proof that its ultimate goal was a Soviet-led, communist global hegemony.⁹¹ This helped framing the development of the 'domino theory' which suggested that communism would spread through geographical proximity and contagiousness. This assessment caused the United States to increase its military intervention throughout South-East Asia in the 1950s and 1960s.⁹²

However, in the 1960s, the relationship between Soviet Union and the PRC began to crumble as China started to resent Soviet attempts in becoming communism's stalwart around the world. A territorial standoff between China and Russia in China's northern border provided the United States with the ideal opportunity of approaching Mao's regime which had already attempted to distance itself from its Soviet counterpart. Therefore, the 1971 visit by the U.S Table Tennis team to Beijing presented a low risk pretext to start exploring a possible political, economic and military normalization of Sino-American relations. The story goes that after missing his bus, American table tennis player Glenn Cowan was invited by his Chinese colleagues to ride in the bus transporting

⁹⁰ Thomas F. Carter and John Sugden, "The USA and Sporting Diplomacy: Comparing and Contrasting the Cases of Table Tennis with China and Baseball with Cuba in the 1970s," *International Relations* 26, no. 1 (2012): 102-103, accessed November 18, 2015, doi: 10.1177/0047117811411741

⁹¹ Ibid., 103

⁹² Ibid.

the Chinese National Ping Pong team and in the interim, he befriended Ping Pong superstar Zuang Zedong. A week after this casual encounter, Cowan, his teammates and their respective families, a group of journalists and four U.S officials were invited to travel to mainland China from Hong Kong to play a number of exhibition matches. Four days later, Premier Zhou Enlai told the American team that a new page had been turned: 'I believe this is a new beginning of our friendship that will win support from most people in both our countries.'⁹³ This was followed by a trip of then President Richard Nixon to China, the first visit by a sitting American President in two decades, and an official 12-day tour by the World Champion Chinese table tennis team around nine different cities throughout the United States. This exchange was possible particularly because the two superpowers had major vested interests in fixing a seemingly broken relationship with corresponding domestic, personal and political gains for both Nixon and Zedong.

Another compelling example is the 2011 cricket diplomacy exchange between India and Pakistan which followed the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. Cricket is a very popular sport in the Indian sub-continent which is "linked with the existence and development of the British Raj via the East India Company... In India, cricket was played for the first time at Cambay, near Baroda in 1721."⁹⁴ Since the British partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 into a Hindu-majority India and a Muslim-majority Pakistan, both countries have fought four wars and as Nayeem Showkat writes "their

⁹³ Ruth Eckstein, "Ping Pong Diplomacy: A View from behind the Scenes," *The Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 2, no.3 (1993): 328, accessed November 18, 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23612842>

⁹⁴ Nayeem Showkat, "Cricket Diplomacy between India and Pakistan: A Case Study of Leading National Dailies of Both the Countries (The Hindu & Dawn)," *Mass Communication and Journalism* 3, no.1 (2013): 1, accessed November 20, 2015, doi:10.4172/2165-7912.1000142

unsettled relationship lies beneath many of South Asia's most festering problems, including their dispute over Kashmir, lasting decades."⁹⁵

In 2008, ten Pakistani members of the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba carried out twelve coordinated attacks across Mumbai which lasted a total of four days. At least 164 people, between civilians and security personnel, and nine attackers were killed at the attacks. India blamed Pakistan-based militants of perpetrating the attacks and immediately, suspended the undergoing peace process dialogue between the two countries which had started in 2004 at which they were addressing a series of bilateral issues.

However, in 2011, after high level contacts between both countries, the Indian and Pakistani governments decided to restart the peace dialogue process which had been halted since 2004. That same year, the Cricket World Cup was held in three host countries: India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. After almost one month of competition, the semi-finals saw India and Pakistan playing for a spot to the championship game. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in the spirit of the peace talks, extended an invitation to their Pakistani counterparts, President Asif Ali Zardari and his Prime Minister Syed Raza Gilani, to watch together the game in Indian city of Mohali located in the state of Punjab. In a sign of goodwill, the "Pakistani government also freed an Indian national, Gopal Das, who has been languishing in a Pakistani prison for 27 years as an alleged spy."⁹⁶ These acts, although symbolic, contributed in reducing the levels of hostility between both countries bringing the two governments and nations closer together. Furthermore, "people

⁹⁵ Ibid., 2

⁹⁶ Ibid.

feel that Cricket diplomacy is a positive move, which made both authorities to visit the opposite nation and enhance the relationship between the two nuclear powers of Asia. Cricket matches have in the past used as meeting opportunities and for discussions or icebreakers on the sidelines.”⁹⁷

The sports- politics pairing has also proven counterintuitive whenever countries with a contentious past, have used sports as a means to exacerbate nationalistic and often violent sentiments within their population. This is the case of the Football War between El Salvador and Honduras. The issues that triggered this 100 hours war went beyond the sports realm; however, we would not consider these football matches as a major catalyst that led to this bellicose encounter. In 1969, Honduras’ population was estimated at two million people while El Salvador had a population of three million. Size wise, Honduras has a much larger territory than El Salvador and consequently, thousands of Salvadorans decided to leave their densely populated country in order to move to neighboring Honduras which was less populated and with more labor opportunities avoiding in that way, a notorious decline in their quality of life. When Salvadoran workers started “taking away” jobs as factory and farm workers, rural Hondurans began to resent this immigration. As a result, the governments from both countries acknowledged the situation and signed a number of treaties to try to resolve the issue at hand which was becoming a dangerous ticking time bomb.

Both governments tried to stem the tide of unauthorized immigration and resultant border disputes by reestablishing the border between the two countries;

⁹⁷ Ibid.

however, a string of treaties intended to solve the problem were met with public contempt. The last of these treaties, the Bilateral Treaty on Immigration, though defunct by 1967, endures in popular memory as resentment is still felt by both sides. By the time that the first qualifying match took place between Honduras and El Salvador in 1969, there were 300,000 Salvadoran immigrants living and working in Honduras. This considerable immigrant population accounted for approximately 20% of Honduras's peasant population. As border disputes continued to simmer and resentment towards the Salvadoran workers grew, soccer matches between the two countries were poised to arouse nationalist passions that would escalate the conflict and provoke a war.⁹⁸

The conclusion of a three football match runoff between both countries, which would qualify the winner to the 1970 FIFA World Cup in Mexico, meant the beginning of this four day war. El Salvador won the runoff 2 games to 1 but the consequences of this victory resulted in the immediate cessation of their diplomatic ties. The war began on 14 July 1969 when the Salvadoran military launched an attack against Honduras with the bombardment of the main road that served to connect both countries. The Salvadoran Army, better equipped than its Honduran counterpart, made quick territorial gains by capturing a Honduran city. In retaliation, the Honduran Air Force dropped bombs in some the El Salvador's oil refineries and major power centers. However, due to the lack of resources, both countries decided to reach a ceasefire which was brokered by the Organization of American States (OAS) and that quickly took effect on 20 July. Despite

⁹⁸ Yuriy Veytskin, Claire Lockerby and Steven McMullen, "The Soccer War," *Soccer Politics Blog*, 2009, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/the-soccer-war/>

that the two countries were able to overcome this bloody episode, the ongoing disputes between them have lingered and the tense relations have remained unsolved.

Sports as a Tool for Reconciliation and Reintegration

Once Nelson Mandela said the following about sports: “Sport has the power to change the world; it has the power to inspire; it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers.”⁹⁹ The 1995 Rugby World Cup represented that opportunity for Mandela to solidify the idea of the “rainbow nation” where White and Black South Africans could peacefully co-exist. It is difficult to forget the moment, as immortalized by the Hollywood movie, *Invictus*, when at the beginning of the Championship game, Nelson Mandela trotted out in front of 50,000 white South Africans at Ellis Park wearing the green jersey of the South African National Rugby Team and suddenly, the crowd that packed every corner of the stadium chanted exultantly “Nelson, Nelson.”

For the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the South African National Rugby Team or the Springboks, adopted a motto that fittingly described South Africa in that moment in history: “One Team: One Country.” It is fair to say that these four words also became Nelson Mandela’s motto ever since he was elected as South Africa’s first Black President in 1994. His election represented a turning point in South Africa’s history, a history marred by the establishment of the apartheid regime, a system of racial segregation enforced through legislation in South Africa by the Afrikaner-led National Party that for

⁹⁹ Dave Zirin, “Mandela’s Uses of Sports: Resistance, Reconciliation and Rebranding,” *The Nation*, December 9, 2013, accessed November 27, 2015. <http://www.thenation.com/article/mandelas-uses-sports-resistance-reconciliation-and-rebranding/>

forty six years, mandated the oppression of social, economic and civil rights of Black South Africans. President Mandela himself served twenty seven years in prison as he was convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the state, and sentenced to life imprisonment. After his liberation, he successfully ran for the highest executive position in in an overwhelming victory which saw, for the first in time in the country's history, citizens of all races having the right to vote as well as it was the first one held with universal adult suffrage.

Since the establishment of the apartheid regime, South Africa was subjected to numerous sporting boycotts throughout the apartheid era. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) withdrew its invitation to South Africa to the 1964 Summer Olympics when interior minister Jan de Klerk insisted the team would not be racially integrated and later, the country was officially expelled in 1970. African nations also played a decisive role in removing South Africa from international sporting competitions as they did effectively in 1976 when they boycotted the Montreal Olympic Games after the IOC refused to suspend New Zealand for its continued contacts with South Africa, including a tour by the New Zealand national rugby union team. In 1980, the United Nations began compiling a "Register of Sports Contacts with South Africa", a list used to track the participation of sportspeople and officials within South Africa and served as moral pressure for athletes rather than as punishment. This register is regarded as having been an effective instrument. The UN General Assembly adopted the International Convention against Apartheid in Sports on 10 December 1985. The IOC adopted a declaration against "apartheid in sport" on 21 June 1988, for the total isolation of apartheid sport.

Journalist Paul Martin writes the article “How Nelson Mandela looked to bring unity through sport,” that the President understood the power of sports and the “use sport as a political tool, first to make white South Africans feel more willing to relinquish their monopoly of power, and then to build multi-racial national bonds instead of bitterness and resentment.”¹⁰⁰ Even though, rugby “had been reviled by anti-apartheid activists for decades as the white man's game, the epitome of racial exclusion.”¹⁰¹ Mandela displayed “his exceptional political nous and instinct in recognizing the opportunity the World Cup offered, successfully gambling on throwing his energy behind the tournament and the Afrikaner-dominated Boks.”¹⁰² For example, small but significant concessions such as allowing the springbok logo to remain on the national jersey while adding a protea, South Africa’s national flower, were the ways that Mandela saw to avoid vilification of what white Afrikaner minority held dear and in that way, actively include them in this arduous process to reconcile and reunify reconciliation and reunification all South Africans. Even though, a single rugby game has not been able to erase decades of entrenched, government-fueled racism, Mandela saw in sports an opportunity to create an inclusive environment that will celebrate the commonalities shared by South Africans of all backgrounds rather than their differences.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Martin, “How Nelson Mandela looked to bring unity through sport,” *The Independent*, December 6, 2013, accessed November 27, 2015. <http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/rugby/rugby-union/news-comment/how-nelson-mandela-looked-to-bring-unity-through-sport-8988489.html>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Andrew England, “Mandela laid foundations for progress and reconciliation,” *Financial Times*, December 6, 2013, accessed November 27, 2015. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/304867bc-c848-11e2-8cb7-00144feab7de.html#axzz3slF1tSvh>

This chapter demonstrates through examples how diplomacy has worked in certain cases, but no others. In the following chapter, I will analyze the differences and attempt to explain the causes.

Chapter 5: Evaluation of Case Studies

On Chapter 4, I provided the historical background of six case studies in order to help enlightening the ways in which different governments have used sports to further their political ambitions both at home and abroad. However, and as I wrote in the previous chapter, sports diplomacy has experienced both extraordinary successes and failures. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate these cases and divide them in successes and failures and determine the causal factors that either enabled or impeded the use of sports diplomacy.

For successes, I will highlight how an adequate political context and engaged leadership contributed for the success of sports diplomacy. Even though some of these successes can be considered as partial, they played an integral part in ameliorating broken political relationships between countries with a contentious historical past. I will highlight the opening of a new era between China and the United States through Ping-Pong Diplomacy, the appeasement of tense environment through the Cricket Diplomacy between India and Pakistan and Nelson Mandela's thoughtful and calculated use of rugby as a tool of integration in post- apartheid South Africa.

In comparison, I will highlight the brief war between El Salvador and Honduras as an example of how sports can be used to exacerbate an already tense political situation. Both the Honduran and Salvadoran governments and their respective media utilized the three games that would qualify a team to the 1970 Mexico City World Cup to transfer to the football pitch the animosity between both government due to increasing border disputes, while appealing to both countries' nationalistic sentiment.

Successes in Sports Diplomacy

There are three goals that the three cases studies I'm highlighting as successes, where sports diplomacy produced positive results: the open of doors of new relationship in Ping Pong Diplomacy, the appeasement of tense relations in Cricket Diplomacy and the role of rugby as an integration instrument in South Africa. In the three cases share two common causes: an adequate political context and a proactive leadership.

The Ping Pong Diplomacy exchange between the United States and People's Republic of China represented the culmination of an extensive process which mended their relationship effectively broken for decades after the 1949 Chinese Cultural Revolution. U.S President Richard Nixon, his National Security Council director Henry Kissinger and the Chinese Communist Party's Chairman, Mao Zedong played a detrimental role in achieving this appeasement possible. For President Nixon, the amelioration of Sino-American relations represented his biggest challenge and became its biggest diplomatic triumph. During his 1967 presidential campaign, he wrote in the magazine *Foreign Affairs*, "We simply cannot afford to leave China outside the family of nations."¹⁰³

The escalating war in Vietnam made the United States government reconsider its foreign policy strategy towards the Communist governments in Asia "in the hopes that such a policy might lessen future conflict, undermine alliances between Communist countries, diplomatically isolate North Vietnam, and increase U.S. leverage against the

¹⁰³ "Nixon," PBS's American Experience, accessed December 11, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/nixon-foreign/>

Soviet Union.”¹⁰⁴. The timing seemed appropriate as the relationship between the Soviet and Chinese regimes was giving signals of stress as they started to ideologically diverge due to their different interpretations of Marxism- Leninism which included their coexistence with the West.

Starting in the early 1950s, the U.S government progressively eased travel and trade restrictions towards China while fully re-engaging in 1969 in high level ambassadorial meetings with Chinese officials after years of hiatus. At the same time, President Nixon also asked Pakistani President Yaya Khan to participate in these negotiations as a third party as Khan “was an attractive intermediary since he had good relations with the leaders of both the United States and the PRC, and he also provided a means to circumvent the U.S. Department of State, which Nixon feared might oppose or publicize his initiative.”¹⁰⁵ With the rapprochement continuing its acceleration with various trips of both Nixon and Kissinger to China to Mao’s acceptance of the possibility of a normalization came the Ping-Pong diplomacy which finally provided a public image to these negotiations which “improved Nixon’s chances of selling better relations with China to the average voter. Perhaps more importantly, the warming trend in Chinese-U.S. relations helped convince the Soviets to warm up their own relationship with the United States.”¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, Nixon and Mao’s governments signed the Shanghai which established the principles to normalization which answer the question of Taiwan which provided the basis to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1979 which was crucial in to the detente between the Soviet Union and the United States.

¹⁰⁴ “Rapprochement with China, 1972,” U.S Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed December 11, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/rapprochement-china>

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ “Nixon.”

In 2011, the India-Pakistan Cricket Diplomacy episode came at a time when the peace negotiations between the two countries had been halted for more than two years after the deadly 2009 terrorist attacks in Mumbai. As previously stated, since their independence from Britain, Indo-Pakistani relations have remained notoriously contentious. Cricket diplomacy has been utilized in several occasions as a way to appease especially during heightened tensions between both countries. The results of these exchanges have been mixed however, they have always provided the necessary opening to promote dialogue by bringing the two countries back to the negotiating table and restart a long drawn peace process.

The semifinal game between India and Pakistan during the 2011 Cricket World Cup presented an ideal opportunity to test once again the effectiveness of cricket diplomacy. This time around, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh extended the cordial invitation to Pakistan's Prime Minister, Yousef Raza Gilani to enjoy the game together which Gilani accepted. A decision that startled many political pundits, Singh himself described it as a "spur of the moment." This invitation preceded the beginning of a brand new round of talks between both countries about issues of national security were considered a modest beginning after years of inaction. A political stunt or else, the encounter which was described as informal represented a trust building exercise and showed the commitment by Singh and Gilani to try to achieve to restart negotiations.

This cricket diplomacy episode provided brief glimmers of hope such as the liberation of a Pakistani prisoner from an Indian jail and the agreement by Pakistan to allow an Indian judicial commission to investigate the Mumbai attacks in Pakistani territory. C. Raja Mohan, a senior fellow at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi,

praised Mr. Singh's gambit as he recognized that usually, results are seen when top leaders are directly engaged. As Mr. Mohan wrote, "right or wrong, India's Pakistan policy has always been driven by the gut instincts of the prime ministers rather than the carefully crafted approaches by the diplomatists," while adding that "if the mood at Mohali turns out to be good, Dr. Singh and Gilani might help give the dialogue at the bureaucratic level a much needed boost."¹⁰⁷

In South Africa, President Nelson Mandela used the 1995 Rugby World Cup as a way to jumpstart the lengthy process of reconciliation and integration between much reviled Afrikaner minority and the ostracized Black majority which apartheid destroyed them. Rugby was the Afrikaner sport par excellence which was at the same time, strongly rejected by the Black majority. As South African journalist Drew Forrest wrote about rugby's ties with Afrikaans culture, "the game has always been an Afrikaner Nationalist Project, a form of collective assertion against a hostile and uncomprehending world."¹⁰⁸

After his election in 1994, Mandela knew that in order for him to avoid a potential civil war in his country, he needed to include whites "...the moment he acceded to the Presidency in 1994, he made it an imperative to show that he was prepared to turn his back on old prejudices, that if South Africa were not to descend into civil war, reconciliation, not confrontation, had to be top of the agenda... Rugby was the means to

¹⁰⁷ Jim Yardley, "Cricket Offers Chance for India-Pakistan Diplomacy," *New York Times*, March 29, 2011, accessed December 13, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/30/world/asia/30india.html?_r=0

¹⁰⁸ Lynette Steenveld and Larry Strelitz, "The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa," *Media, Culture & Society* 20, no. 4 (1998): 610, accessed December 13, 2015, doi: 10.1177/016344398020004006

that end.”¹⁰⁹ According to authors Lynette Steenveld and Larry Strelitz, the 1995 Rugby World Cup, represented the opportunity for Mandela to build this nation-building project and due to a lack of a sense of communal culture and understanding that nation building is a nationalistic project, this tournament became the vehicle for the construction of a South African collectivity.¹¹⁰ In the same article, the writers highlighted the words the then- Minister of Sport, Steve Tshwete, when he said that in order to bring together a deeply divided nation, it was imperious to move away from the notion that rugby was an exclusive white Afrikaner men only sport while football was an only black game. South African rugby officials understood the concept and as a response, they enrapture that sentiment by creating the slogan, “One Team, One Country”.¹¹¹

Mick Cleary wrote in his article “Nelson Mandela seized the opportunity of the Rugby World Cup 1995,” that Mandela understood that the purposeful use of rugby could potentially play an integral role in his much larger nation building project. That’s why, as soon as he was sworn in as President of South Africa, he made sure he scheduled meetings with the then captain of the Springboks, Francois Pienaar. This alliance not only with Captain Pienaar but with other key members of the Springboks proved critical to Mandela’s larger plan. For the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the national team learned by heart the words to South Africa’s new national anthem “Nkosi Sikelele Afrika” while the old Afrikaner “Die Stem” was left behind.¹¹² Even the “Sowetan” newspaper showed its

¹⁰⁹ Mick Cleary, “Nelson Mandela seized the opportunity of the Rugby World Cup 1995,” *The Telegraph*, December 6, 2013, accessed December 10, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/nelson-mandela/10140763/Nelson-Mandela-seized-the-opportunity-of-the-Rugby-World-Cup-1995.html>

¹¹⁰ Steenveld and Strelitz, “The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa,” 610.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Cleary, “Nelson Mandela seized the opportunity of the Rugby World Cup 1995.”

acceptance of Madiba's plan and provided the Springboks' with a new name in Xhosa, the "Amabokoboko"¹¹³. Additionally, the team adopted the song "Shosholoza," a traditional South African mining song as the team's anthem.

Then, the iconic moment happened when Mandela, in full Springbok regalia, presented the championship trophy to Captain Pienaar at Ellis Park, the ultimate symbol of white oppression, and vigorously celebrated with the team the much coveted World Championship title. Mandela took an understandable risk by embracing this tournament in particular but as the seasoned politician he was, he understood that through his embrace of rugby, he would not only be able to somewhat dispel the fears that his election produced in the newly Afrikaner minority but give them an important role in the construction of the new South Africa. For the first time in decades, white and blacks came together to celebrate the Springboks and see each other not as rivals but as human beings. Daniel Idowu highlighted the impact of the 1995 Rugby World Cup as not only "the victory of the rugby team, but the inclusive atmosphere it helped to create. It was not the sport that helped to achieve social change, but the enabling environment, which it produced. Nelson Mandela, the South African Rugby captain Francois Pienaar and South Africans of all backgrounds used this as an opportunity to celebrate what they had in common rather than their differences. It also helped to bring together groups who ordinarily would not interact together."¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Daniel Idowu, "Nelson Mandela, the Rugby World Cup and social change," *Sports and Development*, last modified October 07, 2011, <http://www.sportanddev.org/en/newsnviews/news/?3634/Nelson-Mandela-the-Rugby-World-Cup-and-social-change>

President Mandela said it best at the official banquet concluding the tournament, “when the final whistle blew...the foundations for reconciliation and nation-building had been truly strengthened.”¹¹⁵

Failures in Sports Diplomacy

In his essay “Sporting Spirit,” George Orwell describes serious sports as having “nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.”¹¹⁶ As mentioned on Chapter 4, the four day war between El Salvador and Honduras was fought primarily due to unresolved border disputes between the two countries and due to the progressive influx of almost 300,000 Salvadoran citizens into Honduras escaping the poverty and the unbearable living conditions in densely populated El Salvador:

Most of these are campesinos who have industriously tended plots of land in previously undeveloped areas. They did well, and so did those who found jobs in Honduran factories. Resentment against them, however, developed among Hondurans, particularly in rural areas. Adding to the ill-feeling between the two countries was the fact that certain sections of the border have never been clearly defined.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Steenveld and Strelitz, “The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the politics of nation-building in South Africa,” 610.

¹¹⁶ George Orwell, “Sporting Spirit,” *George Orwell*, last modified September 24, 2015, http://www.orwell.ru/library/articles/spirit/english/e_spirit

¹¹⁷ Jay Mallin, “Salvador-Honduras War, 1969, ‘the Soccer War,’” *Air University Review*, last modified August 31, 2004, <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/airchronicles/aureview/1970/mar-apr/mallin.html#mallin>

Vincent Cable in his article “The Football War and the Central American Common Market,” delineates three reasons that can explain the animosity between Honduras and El Salvador: First, Honduras’ rampant unemployment rate especially among workers looking for employment in the manufacturing sector and service industry; second, the absence of land and the high birth rate in El Salvador caused large numbers to cross the border illegally and squat on unoccupied land in the isolated frontier regions of Honduras and third, the Honduran government’s implementation of an agrarian reform law which excluded Salvadorans while Salvadoran squatters were quickly evicted from areas selected for colonization.¹¹⁸

Then, it was not surprising that their historical rivalry translated to the football pitch during the three qualifying games to the 1970 Mexico FIFA World Cup between the two countries. Just as in the success cases presented on this thesis, both countries’ national leadership and their media played a key role in the rapid escalation of this crisis. The games were furiously contested both on and off the pitch with violence coming from both sides as these games were more than mere sporting events but they aimed to create points of national honor. After a young Salvadoran woman took her life after El Salvador’s loss during the first game, the Salvadoran media preyed on this situation and put forth propaganda chastising the Honduran football team and Honduras as a nation in its entirety. The Honduran team also suffered the same destiny as the Salvadorans reattributed the Honduras with the same treatment they experienced during the first game. The tensions escalated to such a level that local Honduran gangs started to terrorize

¹¹⁸ Vincent Cable, “The ‘Football War’ and the Central American Common Market,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 45, no. 4 (1969): 659, accessed on December 13, 2015, doi:10.2307/2613335

Salvadoran settlers trying to drive them out of their neighborhoods. If someone would refuse to leave, Hondurans burned their houses to the ground. The Salvadoran media again took advantage of the volatile situation and adopted a rather bellicose posture denouncing that the only way to “civilize” Honduras would be through force. The fearful environment created by these matches made an estimated 17,000 refugees fled Honduras back to El Salvador. The last match had to be celebrated in Mexico City for security concerns and after the El Salvador’s victory, diplomatic relations broke off immediately.

As Yuriy Veytskin, Claire Lockerby and Steven McMullen write in “The Soccer War,” the propaganda campaigns designed before and during the war, implied to three principles:

The newspapers and government understood that being a supporter of football is intrinsically an act of micro-nationalism. International football then magnifies this micro-nationalism on the grand stage of the World Cup qualifying matches. Finally, football is centered on the ideas of deprivation and frustration, which propaganda can easily fuel for a national cause.¹¹⁹

It is also important to note that the rampant inequality in both countries contributed to the escalation of tensions between these countries. El Salvador’s economy has always been in the hands of the 14 richest families who not only own the majority of the land in the country but also own the factories that were built during El Salvador’s industrial growth. On the other hand, rich Honduran landowners used Salvadoran immigrants as scapegoats in order to place the blame on them as to where the imbalance in land possession between the richest and poorest Hondurans.

¹¹⁹ Yuriy Veytskin, Claire Lockerby and Steven McMullen, “The Soccer War,” *Soccer Politics*, last modified 2013, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/the-soccer-war/>

Due to the importance of daily newspapers in countries where television was not accessible yet, these propaganda campaigns transmitted simple messages that not only alerted its readers but also compelled them into action. These propaganda campaigns “led to drastic changes in domestic policy, as demonstrated by the Honduran agrarian reform act of 1969 in response to the heavy influx of Salvadorans. Propaganda provoked the strategic bombing of pivotal petroleum refineries in El Salvador; it justified repressive military control measures; it obscured the problem of population growth. It led to the installation, by the OAS, of a force of military observers to patrol the common border.”¹²⁰ Additionally, the propaganda transmitted by national leaders and newspapers was a fundamental catalyst to this war as El Salvador’s army invaded Honduras to rescue Salvadoran immigrants from atrocities as based on reports from journalists and other sources.

By evaluating sports diplomacy’s successes and failure, it is important to highlight the upward curve that this field has. It may not resolve political issues in their totality however, they can produce incredible inroads in the relationship of countries that have traditionally clashed or can produce substantial societal changes. It happened in China, in India, in South Africa and in many other countries; therefore, we cannot just dismiss the clout of sports in politics.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 6: Sport Diplomacy's Future

In a blog post for the USC Center of Public Diplomacy, author Carrie Walters calls the practice of sports diplomacy as “the new comeback kid,” especially within the U.S Department of State in a post 9/11 world.¹²¹ The U.S government saw in sports an effective way to engage with Muslim youths around the world as a natural appeal more than travel exchanges, or the learning of the English language. It also displays what the U.S. is all about and reinforces democracy and freedoms allowed in society. Even though, the nature of sports can be considered highly competitive, as I wrote in previous chapters, the importance of sports diplomacy is that it opens doors that otherwise would have remained closed while engaging the foreign public in other ways. “Sports are considered a ‘soft entry’ for reaching the most isolated and underserved segments of society, especially youth.” Sports diplomacy forces us to see to the larger picture; competitive sports may seem as a zero sum game but sports diplomacy focuses on the shared experiences between people who share similar interests and it is about respect of diversity, leadership, teamwork and dialogue.¹²²

The sports-development partnership continues to gain legitimacy and poses an alternative in addressing current challenges that only sports can do. In 2014, the United Nations recognized the importance of the sports-development sector by granting it a day of remembrance to “raise awareness of the ideal position sport has to contribute towards the United Nations' objectives for development and peace,”¹²³ and dutifully recognize the

¹²¹ Walters, “Sports Diplomacy Is the New Comeback Kid.”

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ United Nations, “On International Day, UN Official Underlines Role of Sport in Promoting Development and Peace,” *UN News Centre*, accessed on December 17, 2015, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50504#.VnMEJUqDFHw>

“positive influence that sport can have on the advancement of human rights, and social and economic development.”¹²⁴ To put this into context, sports for peace initiatives are useful instruments that could yield positive results in peace-building efforts in a variety of ways that I have already discussed in this thesis. Sports can help to build bridges across groups with different social, economic and cultural differences by humanizing the other and highlighting the similarities and create a shared identity. From community sports programs to demobilization and disarmament efforts, sports can reintegrate former combatants to their communities especially child soldiers. Sports can be used also as a communication platform through celebrity athletes. The global popularity of sports elites makes it an ideal and extremely powerful mass communication platform that can be used to promote a culture of peace. It also creates a space for dialogue as seen in the ping pong and cricket diplomacy initiatives.

In “Sport and Peace: Social Inclusion, Conflict Prevention and Peace-building,” a thorough report published by the United Nations, highlights the intrinsic values of sports such as self-discipline, fair play, teamwork and respect for rules. By upholding these values, sports programs can provide individuals with the necessary skills and help them prevent violence and conflict in their lives and in their communities such as happened in El Salvador.

As an instrument for social inclusion especially of vulnerable groups such as refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons, sports can create a sentiment of camaraderie and belonging in individuals who share similar experiences while facing the same challenges of trying to start over in a new country. Sports cannot only soften

¹²⁴ Ibid.

these individuals' social, economic, cultural and personal impact of trying to adapt themselves into their host countries but it also involves members of the host country as a way to ease potential tensions. That's the undeniable and universal appeal of sports.

Through sports, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) can learn from one another regardless of their cultural background and by doing so, they are improving their opportunities to integrate. For example, in Tanzania, the National Republic of Tanzania's Sport Development Department has successfully developed sports projects to benefit Tanzania's refugee population. "Projects begin by mixing refugee children from different groups in supervised sport and play activities, encouraging them to form friendships across ethnic and cultural boundaries, and building conflict prevention messages and skill building. Parents are encouraged to become involved and participate as well."¹²⁵

Sports also provide 'disaffected, abandoned and homeless' youths living in low income communities with much needed alternatives to joining a criminal gang or an armed militia. They can develop healthy friendships while building their self-esteem and self-confidence, necessary leadership skills, and the value of team work. This is not just for pure recreation but to learn life skills. In Brazil, the program Luta Pela Paz (Fight for Peace) in Rio de Janeiro's Complexo de Maré neighborhood offers youths who otherwise would be involved in gang activity with the opportunity to enroll in a boxing club that not only offers classes but give them a well rounded educational experience in order for them to advance socially and economically. It allows them to speak about violence through a

¹²⁵ United Nations, "Sport and Peace: Social Inclusion, Conflict Prevention and Peace Building," accessed December 17, 2015, http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/sport/shared/sport/SDP%20IWG/Chapter6_SportandPeace.pdf

safe space. In Darfur, the international humanitarian organization “Right To Play Sport Works” uses sport and play programs to improve the physical and mental health of the children living in the refugee camps while they “promote peace-building and community cohesion and teach conflict resolution skills, focusing on teamwork, fair play, and inclusion and integration of different ethnic groups.”

I argue here that sports-diplomacy does have a bright future. Sports have been used for political reasons since time immemorial. For positive and negative purposes, from politicians to community activists, its enticing power is undeniable. Sports transcend borders and security rivalries and break the ice formed over years of silence. Sports provide a unique opportunity for quarrelling parties to sit at the negotiating table, provide a safe space for individuals that have experienced fear while being an important tool for integration and peace building. Sports may not directly resolve political tensions but they can definitely open doors that otherwise would be closed. Through campaigns for sustainable development, gender equality, or fighting global hunger, sports, if properly directed, have the capacity to move the most unmovable mountains.

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