

Sports Diplomacy and Conflict Management: A Study of Russia-Ukrainian War

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Received 26 November 2023; accepted 27 January 2024

Published online 26 February 2024

Abstract

Conflicts of different natures have continued to disturb peacebuilding around the world. Sports diplomacy has been recognized as a valuable tool for conflict management. This study discusses the use of sports diplomacy as an effective strategy in the management of the 2022 Russia-Ukrainian conflict. The objectives of this study include the establishment of the relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian and Ukrainian crisis. A qualitative data collection method was adopted for this study. The data collected were analysed using content analysis. The study utilizes conflict management theory. The findings of this study suggest that sports diplomacy brings peace and unity between countries. The study concludes that Sports diplomacy has played a limited yet significant role in managing the 2022 Russian-Ukraine war. The study recommends that organised sports/sports diplomacy should be employed as a tool that can be used to communicate during conflict in the international system.

Key words: Diplomacy; Conflict; Conflict management; Sports; Sports diplomacy; War

Chukwudi, C. E., Ezebuilo, P. C., & Nwabueze-Oru, I. M. (2024). Sports Diplomacy and Conflict Management: A Study of Russia-Ukrainian War. *Canadian Social Science*, 20(1), 69-82. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/13282>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/13282>

1. INTRODUCTION

The management of conflict is extremely important for the effective functioning of societies, organizations, and for the personal, cultural, and social development of individuals. The manner in which the conflict is managed can cause more tension in the situation rather than the conflict itself. Conflict management is another way of controlling conflict before or during and after it has occurred (Fisher, et al, 2011).

According to Wallenstein (2018), 'it is more elaborate and wider in conception and application, when necessitated; it involves conflict resolution and transformation. It is more of a long-term arrangement involving institutionalized provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts wherever they occur.

Over the years the literature on conflict has reflected tensions between conflict management and conflict resolution. Now, however, the two issues seem to have been joined by the general acknowledgement that the process of conflict management can be an effective route towards conflict resolution. In a related context, it has been suggested that different phases of conflict, e.g., pre-crisis, conflict and post-conflict stages, may require different governance structures and systems.

Following the limited number of literature available on conflict resolution and prevention in the context of governance, this survey has concluded that the structures and systems of governance need not be different during different phases, but rather that the issues that such systems and structures must address will certainly be different.

Four broad sources of conflict have been identified as the test of effective conflict prevention or resolution for governance structures and systems. These four are "deep-rooted conflict", power inequalities and asymmetries, ethnic conflict and multi-centrism in a fragmented world. There is a rather substantial literature that suggests practical steps towards developing governance structures

and systems that can resolve or prevent conflict. However, the steps between developing structures and systems and actually bringing contending forces or groups “to the Table” have many gaps. This is particularly the case when dealing with power inequalities and ethnicity. There has been relatively little work done to date that relates types of future conflicts that may arise in what has been called a fragmented world order and governance. It is increasingly apparent that states’ capacities to govern are being increasingly influenced by externalities. Perhaps even more important, governance for individual States may be judged on the ways that they handle regime issues, regional issues and issues of global governance. To that extent, the ways that governments and governance structures deal with new types of conflict may depend upon their abilities to deal with the externalities as much as “domestic factors” Kobierecki (2020).

On the other hand, in the international system today, sport diplomacy is often used as a soft power tool for an ever-wider range of objectives, including conflict management. As recently highlighted by Burlamaqui (2023), sport history is experiencing a “diplomatic turn” in which relationships between sport and politics are increasingly becoming visible and pervading.

Diplomacy is therefore the main instrument to implement national foreign policy during peace and is also a tool that can be used to communicate during conflict. The main features of diplomacy have been communication and representation. Diplomacy has long been established as the first step to avoid or resolve conflicts. In addition, it helps with negotiations; protects the citizens and other interests abroad; promotes economic, social, cultural, and scientific exchanges between states; and manages foreign policy decisions. Bilateral negotiations and summit meetings have been the traditional approaches to resolving international issues, but in the 20th century, new diplomatic communications tools have emerged, such as public diplomacy (Berridge, 2021) cultural diplomacy (Clarke, 2020), and cyber diplomacy (Attatfa & De Paoli, 2020).

Since the beginning of the 20th century, how diplomacy is conducted and who the actors are have changed significantly. From the traditional way of diplomats communicating their state’s preferences at summits or at multilateral negotiations, modern diplomacy has moved to operating through many new channels and actors. The government may not even participate in these exchanges, but instead an athlete, artist, or scientist can represent the interests of the state at various events.

Multilateral institutions like the United Nations or the International Olympic Committee, global firms like Apple or Nike, and individuals such as famous athletes or actors can now represent their states. This new type of diplomatic representation can have both positive and negative outcomes. While it gives governments

another outlet to work through, it could also prioritize the corporate interests of a nation over its political interests when these two conflicts. In addition, the traditional venue of diplomacy has also moved towards economic or cultural forums or international sports events such as the Olympics. While there is still some scholarly disagreement about these new types of diplomatic actors and venues, the shift from traditional ways must be noted (Mawdsley, 2018).

While sovereignty has remained key in international negotiations and diplomatic recognitions, it no longer implies that only official diplomats can serve as representatives of a nation’s interest and culture (Mawdsley, 2018). Indeed, in the 21st century more non-state actors such as individuals, teams, and even companies can function as representatives of their nation. This is another reason why teams or individuals can become the messengers of their nation’s diplomatic messages (Mawdsley, 2018). In that direction, it is the duty of states to determine the stability of their environment (Chukwudi, et al, 2019). State can execute these stability responsibilities by encouraging players and promoting sports.

Today, famous artists or athletes can act as bridges and helps resolve national issues between nations via cultural and sport diplomacy. These lesser-known diplomatic instruments serve as great examples of how governments can influence other states indirectly. While the athletes usually do not directly participate in the negotiations, the athletic event serves as a great venue for heads of state and diplomats to meet and discuss issues. This influence based on the attraction of countries is also called *soft power* (Dubinsky, 2019).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

What is now Ukraine, Russia and neighboring Belarus were born on the banks of the Dnieper River, almost 1,200 years ago in Kievan Rus, a medieval superpower that included a huge chunk of Eastern Europe. However, the Russians and Ukrainians parted ways linguistically, historically and, most importantly, politically (Mankoff, 2022). However, the Russian President Putin, has often claimed repeatedly that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people”, part of the “Russian civilization” that also includes neighboring Belarus. But, Ukrainians reject these claims (Mankoff, 2022).²

Ukraine went through two revolutions in 2005 and 2014, both times rejecting Russia’s supremacy and seeking a path to join the European Union and NATO. Putin is particularly enraged by the prospect of NATO bases next to his borders and says Ukraine joining the US-led transatlantic alliance would mark the crossing of a red line. After Ukraine’s 2014 Revolution of Dignity, which saw months-long protests ultimately topple pro-Moscow Ukrainian president Viktor

Yanukovych, Putin used the power vacuum to annex Crimea and back separatists in the southeastern provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk (Mankoff, 2022).

The rebels carved out two authoritarian, economically weak “People’s Republics”, where the death penalty was restored. They ran dozens of concentration camps where dissidents were tortured and executed Applebaum (2021). The conflict has turned into Europe’s hottest war, and it has killed more than 13,000 people and displaced millions, thereby creating grave humanitarian crisis in the international system.

2.1 Research Questions

From the aforementioned, these research questions are put forward:

- What is the relationship between sport diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian and Ukrainian crisis?
- How has sport diplomacy helped in managing the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine?
- What are the effects of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory in sports?

2.2 Research Propositions

- The propositions guiding this research are:
- There is a significant relationship between sport diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian and Ukrainian crisis.
- Sport diplomacy has significantly helped in managing the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
- The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory has significantly affected sporting competitions in Russia and Ukraine.

2.3 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it projects the idea that diplomacy is a potent instrument that can be used as a tool to implement national foreign policy during peace, and also a tool that can be used to communicate during conflict. It also emphasizes the fact that historically, it is believed that general sanctions, including sport, worked to bring down oppressive regimes. It is also worthy to note that sanctions, especially in the fields of sport, economics, education, arts, and culture, played a decisive role in the eventual demise of apartheid and the installation of a democratic order in South Africa in 1994.

2.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study analyses the current Russo-Ukrainian war which began on Thursday, February 24, 2022 between Russia, Russian separatists and Ukraine, over the Donbass region. It specifically examines the efficacy of the sports sanctions meted out on Russia for its unprovoked aggression in the Eastern part of Ukraine as a conflict management strategy in the international system.

During the study, certain limitations were met due to the instrument of data that was employed, which was a secondary source of data. The study was limited to only

secondary sources of data. Furthermore, the study was limited to the 2022 Russian-Ukrainian war which is the time frame employed during the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

A qualitative method of research is adopted for this study. Secondary data acquired from books, journal articles, unpublished papers, and online publications, were used for this study.

Textual analysis is used to describe information in journals, newspapers, articles, and other secondary sources of data. It is a research method for studying documents and texts followed by interpretation.

3.1 Description of Study Area

What is now Ukraine, Russia, and neighboring Belarus were born on the banks of the Dnieper River, almost 1,200 years ago in Kievan Rus, a medieval superpower that included a huge chunk of Eastern Europe. But Russians and Ukrainians parted ways linguistically, historically and, most importantly, politically. Putin has, however, claimed repeatedly that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people”, part of the “Russian civilization” that also includes neighboring Belarus. However, Ukrainians reject these claims (Frear, 2021).

The rebels carved out two authoritarian, economically weak “People’s Republics”, where the death penalty was restored. They ran dozens of concentration camps where dissidents were tortured and executed (Applebaum, 2021). The conflict has turned into Europe’s hottest war, and it has killed more than 13,000 people and displaced millions, thereby creating grave humanitarian crisis in the international system.

In 2014, the Ukrainian military was under-equipped and demoralized, while the rebels had Russian “consultants” and weaponry. However, these days, Ukrainians are much stronger militarily and morally, and thousands of volunteers who helped repel the separatists are ready to do it again (Makarenko, 2021). Since the war broke out in February 2022, Ukraine has bought or received advanced weaponry from the West and Turkey, including Javelin missiles that proved lethal to separatist tanks, and Bayraktar drones that played a crucial role in during the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia (Makarenko, 2021).

Historically, it is believed that general sanctions, including sport, worked to bring down oppressive regimes. In 1948, laws in South Africa segregated people based on their race and governed all aspects of life to benefit the minority-white rulers in a policy that came to be known as apartheid (Afrikaans for ‘apartness’). Sanctions, especially in the fields of sport, economics, education, arts and culture, played a decisive role in the eventual demise of apartheid and the installation of a democratic order in South Africa in 1994 (Klotz, 2018).

UEFA cancelled its relationship with Gazprom, a sponsorship by the energy company worth a reported \$40 million annually (CBS Sports, 2022). German club Schalke 04 also cancelled its sponsorship deal with Gazprom (Garcia 2020) This is especially notable because Gazprom was Schalke's primary sponsor; the Gazprom logo appeared on the front of Schalke's uniforms until the club's decision to walk away from the sponsorship.

In addition to targeting the Russian government and economy, Western nations have levelled sanctions on individual Russian oligarchs. One potential target of those sanctions is Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich. Abramovich purchased the club nearly 20 years ago using a portion of his questionably sourced fortune (Garcia, 2020).

It was widely speculated since the invasion that Abramovich was one of the main targets of the sanctions, and as speculated he was stripped of Chelsea's ownership (Garcia, 2020) However, Abramovich has promised to donate the "net proceeds" of Chelsea's sale to victims of the war in Ukraine, but it is not yet clear exactly what this will look like (ESPN, 2022). The club was eventually sold for \$3.2 billion (ESPN, 2022). In just a few short days, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had turned the sporting world upside down.

It is noteworthy that during his long presidency of Russia, Vladimir Putin has pushed sport, with the country having staged the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and the last football World Cup in 2018, both at vast expense, among a host of events. The country's attempts to achieve athletics success through a state-sponsored doping regime also clearly indicated the importance attributed to giving Russians a sense of proud nationalism in their sporting success. This greatly shows that the stability of a state depends on its leadership Although, the Russian State bans talk of "war" in Ukraine, calling it instead a "special military operation", it cannot stop questions asked by its citizens as to why sportsmen and women, and events, have effectively been struck off (Dobrev, 2022).

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 The Concept of Diplomacy

Modern diplomacy can be traced back to the 5th century's Italian city-states. The goal of diplomacy was to establish representation and create a communication channel between the monarch and the city-states. Since that period, communication channels have been dominated by the Western European languages, first French, and later, English (Murray, 2016).

Diplomacy is "the management of international relations by negotiation; the method by which these relations are adjusted by ambassadors and envoys; the business or art of the diplomatist" (Towns, 2020). A more

current, shorter definition allows for a more ambiguous view on diplomacy: "the dialogue between states" (Kovacic & Di Felice, 2019) This latter definition does not define the agents within the diplomacy process, nor does it acknowledge the role of nongovernmental agencies.

Diplomacy is therefore the main instrument for the routine negotiation with regards to leading arrangements between delegates of countries. It is a rule which alludes to global diplomacy and the lead of international relations. Through the arbitration of expert representatives concerning a full range of topical issues. Treaties are typically consulted by ambassador's proceedings underwriting by national lawmakers. David Stevenson reports that by the early twenties, the term 'diplomats' also covered diplomatic services, consular services, and foreign ministry officials (David, 2014).

Because of technological advances that have led to cheap and easy transportation and communication, the world is increasingly interconnected and many new tools are now available for diplomats. Bilateral negotiations and summit meetings have been the traditional approaches to resolving international issues, but in the 20th century, new diplomatic communications tools have emerged, such as public diplomacy (Collins & LeFebvre, 2019). cultural diplomacy (Clark, 2020), and cyber diplomacy (Attatfa & De Paoli, 2020). Since the beginning of the 20th century, how diplomacy is conducted and who the actors are have changed significantly. From the traditional way of diplomats communicating their state's preferences at summits or at multilateral negotiations, modern diplomacy has moved to operating through many new channels and actors. The government may not even participate in these exchanges, but instead an athlete, artist, or scientist can represent the interests of the state at various events.

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companies can function as representatives of their nation. This is another reason why today even sports teams or individuals can become the messengers of their nation's diplomatic messages. Famous artists or athletes can act as bridges between nations and can help to resolve national issues via cultural and sport diplomacy. These lesser-known diplomatic instruments serve as great examples of how governments can influence other states indirectly. While the athletes usually do not directly participate in the negotiations, the athletic event serves as a great venue for heads of state and diplomats to meet and discuss issues. This influence based on the attraction of countries is also called *soft power* (Dubinsky, 2019).

4.2 Hard Power and Soft Power

Power remains one of the key concepts in international relations (Dunne & Smith, 2021). For many years Realist and Neorealist scholars viewed interstate relations in terms of states seeking power and wanting to dominate other states. In this conceptualization, international politics is a struggle for power (Hooper, 2019), tends to only consider power in terms of capability (land, military, wealth, etc.), and is most commonly applied to armed conflicts. While power has been broadly defined as the ability to influence (Emerson, 2019) later separated power into the categories of *hard power* and *soft power*.

Today, hard power usually refers to military interventions or economic payments or sanctions. This interpretation of power, however, fails to address the subtler aspects of power, such as the influence of culture in general or sport events in particular, in which states can use their cultural prowess to affect changes in other nations. Nye's (1990) concept of soft power thus recognizes the way in which power is exercised through democratic values, human rights, and opportunities, and other seductive values (Nye, 1990; 2004). For Nye (2004), soft power is a strong shaper of foreign public opinion and is a cheaper option than force. Nye's definition of the sources of soft power includes culture, political values, and foreign policy. As such, sport may play an important role as a form of soft power, and therefore, it is important to study and understand the range of contexts within which it has been most effective. In today's increasingly interconnected international system, countries try to utilize their diplomatic assets to their fullest. Sport can play an important role in this process, because of its universal popularity and its ability to serve as common ground between nations. It allows hosts and guests to converse about an issue they both have knowledge of and can feel comfortable to disagree on, because of its non-sensitive nature (Wu & Seamons, 2019). The popularity of world-class sport events can enable the initiation of multilateral diplomacy. In terms of foreign policy tools, sport also serves as an instrument to wield soft power.

4.3 THE CONCEPT OF SPORT DIPLOMACY

Traditionally considered as a vehicle for dialogue between different cultures and actors, sport is increasingly recognized as an effective diplomacy tool. This function is supported by a growing scientific literature and a policymaking practice that hinges on the concept of SD and highlights its role in countries' economic and political life. Policymakers and diplomats are gradually leveraging the values and the international opportunities linked to sport in order to achieve various national goals. Such goals are linked to the concepts of nations, or a grouping of people who share the same history, culture and identity located on the same territory, and states, or a territory with its own institutions and populations (Kolstø & Høivik, 2018).

These national goals often include, separately or in combination: amplifying national foreign-policy messages; reinforcing national branding appeal; normalizing or strengthening diplomatic ties; and developing a fairer, more integrated society. International sporting events continue to mediate estrangement among people and their governments by promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation. Using the Olympics to improve a country's image abroad or to better the relationship between countries has been a diplomatic tool since the Olympics in ancient Greece (Wu & Seamons, 2019). Sporting events are useful because both the spectators (people) and their governments (elite politicians) can be reached through their love of sport. As a consequence, international sporting events can also improve relations both bilaterally and multilaterally (Jinghui, 2022).

2 During the Cold War, bilateral sporting events were used repeatedly to increase communication among hostile countries. Ping-pong diplomacy, for instance, between China and the United States allowed two nations in the middle of the Cold War to restart dialogue in a politically divided environment (Yuan, 2020). President Nixon's diplomatic move opened up relations with China, which resulted in an improved bilateral relationship between the two nations in the decades to come (Yuan, 2020).

Cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan offered another illustration of successful sport diplomacy. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1987, General Zia ul-Haq, Pakistan's president at the time, attended a test cricket match between India and Pakistan in Jaipur, a visit that apparently helped cool a flare-up in tensions caused by Soviet pressure on India. Furthermore, in 2004 after a break of fifteen years, India toured Pakistan in the wake of diplomatic initiatives to bury half a century of mutual hostility. Both sides relaxed their tough visa regulations for each other, allowing thousands of fans to travel across the border (Pulleyblank & Wang, 2020).

Yet, sport can also worsen the relationship between nations, as the example of El Salvador and Honduras shows. The poor relationship between the two nations was caused by large numbers of migrants from El Salvador, who moved to Honduras in search of a better life. This poor relationship was further exacerbated by the three World Cup qualifying matches these two nations had to play against each other in the month of June in 1969. The same day that the third and final game was played between the two nations, El Salvador severed all diplomatic ties with Honduras and started bombing their neighboring nation. Ever since then, this war has been referred to as “La Guerra del Futbol”, meaning “the Soccer War” (Kobierecki, 2020).

While in the past bilateral sport diplomacy played an important role in bringing two countries to the negotiating table, this chapter focuses on the multilateral aspect of sport diplomacy by looking into various government initiatives. The examples in this chapter illustrate different levels of success using multilateral sport diplomacy (Kobierecki, 2020).

In terms of sport diplomacy, the fact that international organizations serve as the main organizers of events also creates a diplomatically comfortable situation in which a third-party civil organization can serve as a neutral host and mediator between parties. Some of the most prominent international sports organizations are the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which organizes the modern Olympic Games; Fédération Internationale de Football (FIFA), which organizes the largest, most well-known global sport event, the Soccer World Cup; and International Tennis Federation (ITF), which includes 205 national tennis federations (Crespo & Jabaloyes, 2022). By organizing events, as well as sanctioning and facilitating the competitions, these organizations can be both causes of cultural alienation and mediators of cooperation (Kobierecki, 2020). Stated differently, international sporting events can mediate conflicts between nations but only when organized and delivered under the right circumstances. It has been noted in both international relations and sport diplomacy scholarship that international institutions can serve as vehicles for sharing norms among nations, which can facilitate cooperation but also can cause tension among nations Pulleyblank & Wang (2020).

International sport events attract the attention of millions of people, including sport fans and political leaders. This global stage can be used to achieve the previously listed outcomes, but it can also be used as a platform for a symbolic fight for a country’s political independence. For instance, international sport federations often offer the opportunity for territories that have the ambition to become independent nation-states and compete under a flag that might not actually represent the current sovereign nation. For instance, there has been

political tension between the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan for many years. Taiwan has been fighting for its political independence from China (Crespo & Jabaloyes, 2022).

As a result of political negotiations and the IOC’s decision in 1980, the athletic teams of Taiwan are now allowed to compete under the Chinese Taipei flag, which is separate from the Chinese flag. This solution has been accepted for numerous international sport events such as the Olympic Games, the World Baseball Classic and the FIFA World Cup. It is believed that this was not just a political victory for Taiwan, but it also allows Taiwanese athletes to express their feelings about independence and it provides opportunities for the athletes to compete against China in the games. Similarly, in the years after World War II, Israel actively used sport in their quest for international recognition of their nation (Jinghui, 2022).

It is worthy to note that even if a particular quest is unsuccessful, sport can still shed light upon the occupation of one nation by another. The Hungary versus USSR water polo game at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics was a good example of this. The Hungarians rebelled against the oppression of the Soviet Union in October of 1956 but were defeated in a bloody fight (Yuan, 2020). Later in the year, the Hungarian national team ended up playing against the Soviet team in the Olympic Games and the Hungarians won. While the sport victory of the Hungarian team did not lead to better treatment of the Hungarians at home, it gained the sympathy of millions of sport fans after the bloody events of the revolution (Yuan, 2020). Thus, the term “SD” has a broad meaning that also indicates “a form of public diplomacy that treats sport as an arena of diplomatic activity” Kolstø & Høivik (2018) or a means (tool) of soft power. In contrast with ‘hard’ power, expressed through force and coercion, such as economic sanctions or military intervention, ‘soft’ power represents the ability to attract and influence through culture or values (Yuan, 2020).

As a matter of fact, Jinghui (2022), also confirms the enormous potential of sport diplomacy, to bring peoples and communities closer together. The concept of SD as a form of soft power was introduced by Wu & Seamons (2019), they interpreted it as the power to persuade an actor without coercion, and explored by several other scholars (e.g. Kolstø & Høivik (2018) In general, these authors assert, sport can be used as a tool of soft power both nationally and internationally, and it is a key foreign-policy lever for major and middle-ranking powers.

This theoretical approach has been explicitly adopted by the High-Level Group (HLG) on SD mandated by the European Union in 2016. This body comprised personalities with complementary skills and experience in the sporting arena (athletes, ex-athletes, politicians, researchers, writers, representatives of sport organizations, IOC members, etc.). It proposed SD as an effective

tool for cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy (visits between citizens of different countries to promote international understanding) and advocacy for particular policies or ideas in the public mind abroad (Kolstø & Høivik, 2018).

The HLG's final report in 2016 recognizes and champions an advanced idea of SD. The report has become a fundamental international reference on this topic, as it shares scholars' conceptualization of SD as a tool of "soft power", stating specifically that "sport is a part of soft-power diplomacy, because it is a source of cultural attraction". Along the same lines, building on the HLG recommendations, the Council Conclusions on Sport Diplomacy proposed under the Slovak Presidency of the European Council in 2016 were adopted by all EU Ministers for sport Yuan (2020). The Conclusions stated that "Sport diplomacy can be understood as the use of sport as a means to influence diplomatic, intercultural, social, economic and political relations. It is an inseparable part of public diplomacy, which is a long-term process of communication with the public and organizations with aims such as heightening the attractiveness and image of a country, region or city and influence decision-making on policy areas. It helps to achieve foreign-policy goals in a way that is visible and comprehensible for the general public" Pulleyblank & Wang (2020).

4.4 The Concept of Conflict Management

The management of conflict is extremely important for the effective functioning of societies, organizations, and for the personal, cultural, and social development of individuals. The manner in which the conflict is managed can cause more tension in the situation rather than the conflict itself. Conflict management is another way of controlling conflict before or during and after it has occurred (Fisher, et al, 2011).

According to Wallensteen (2018). 'it is more elaborate and wider in conception and application, when necessitated; it involves conflict resolution and transformation. It is more of a long-term arrangement involving institutionalized provisions and regulative procedures for dealing with conflicts wherever they occur.'

This view of the comprehensiveness and institutionalization involved in conflict management is further stressed by Crespo & Jabaloyes (2022) when he wrote that 'conflict management refers to the elimination, neutralization of conflict from erupting into crises or to cool a crisis in eruption'.

Conflict management is intervention in a conflict situation in such a way as to contain and if possible:

- i. Reduce its violent or destructive effects,
- ii. Check its escalation towards the use of weapons of mass destruction and.

iii. Prevent its horizontal expansion into other theatres.

In addition, conflict management also refers to the

act of transforming violent conflict into something less damaging or searching for solutions that can check conflict escalation. In other words, the concept of conflict management refers to dealing with conflict using any means that could prevent conflict escalation (Fisher, 2011)

Over the years the literature on conflict has reflected tensions between conflict management and conflict resolution. Now, however, the two issues seem to have been joined by the general acknowledgement that the process of conflict management can be an effective route towards conflict resolution. In a related context, it has been suggested that different phases of conflict, e.g. pre-crisis, conflict and post-conflict stages, may require different governance structures and systems (Fisher., 2011). Following the limited amount of literature available on conflict resolution and prevention in the context of governance, this survey has concluded that the structures and systems of governance need not be different during different phases, but rather that the issues that such systems and structures must address will certainly be different (Fisher, 2011).

Four broad sources of conflict have been identified as the test of effective conflict prevention or resolution for governance structures and systems. These four are "deep-rooted conflict", power inequalities and asymmetries, ethnic conflict and multi-centrism in a fragmented world. There is a rather substantial literature that suggests practical steps towards developing governance structures and systems that can resolve or prevent conflict. However, the steps between developing structures and systems and actually bringing contending forces or groups "to the Table" have many gaps (Kobierecki, 2020). This is particularly the case when dealing with power inequalities and ethnicity. There has been relatively little work done to date that relates types of future conflicts that may arise in what has been called a fragmented world order and governance. It is increasingly apparent that states' capacities to govern are being increasingly influenced by externalities. Perhaps even more important, governance for individual States may be judged on the ways that they handle regime issues, regional issues and issues of global governance. To that extent, the ways that governments and governance structures deal with new types of conflict may depend upon their abilities to deal with the externalities as much as "domestic factors" Kobierecki (2020).

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

5.1 Conflict Management Theory

After thorough research on conflict management theories and approaches, it has been found that modern conflict management theory is the most appropriate. The modern theory of conflict management incorporates past theories from Thomas, Blake and Mouton; Renwick, Rahim and Hall models and theories in the 1960s and 1970s, and

combined them to create the modern conflict management theory. These theorists assert that conflict management is the application of strategies to resolve incompatible objectives in a positive manner (Wallenstein, 2018).

According to the conflict management theory, open communication, and a readiness to comprehend the viewpoints and interests of the opposing side are necessary for efficient conflict resolution (James, 2015). The war is currently at a standstill since neither Russia nor Ukraine are ready to budge from their rigid views. The lack of communication and trust between the parties concerned is one of the main reasons why the Russian and Ukrainian problem has been so challenging to settle (James, 2015).

William Ury, a co-founder of the Harvard Negotiation Project and a specialist in negotiations, is one example of an author who has used conflict management theory in their writing. The field of negotiation and conflict resolution has benefited from Ury's work, and his use of conflict management theory has aided in bridging the gap between academic ideas and real-world applications. He has illustrated the utility of conflict management theory in practical contexts by offering specific conflict resolution techniques.

5.2 Application of Theory

In the ongoing crisis between Russia and Ukrainian lack of communication and trust between the parties concerned is one of the main reasons why the Russian and Ukrainian problem has been so challenging to settle.

In conclusion, conflict management theory has much to say about the current conflict between Russia and Ukraine and can offer insightful analysis and practical resolution methods. Conflict management theory can assist in paving the way for a peaceful and long-lasting settlement of the conflict by identifying the underlying interests of the parties, fostering good communication and understanding, and evaluating various choices for resolution.

5.3 Critique of the Conflict Management Theory

Conflict management theory is a framework that aims to prevent or resolve conflicts between parties. However, in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war, this theory has been criticized for several reasons:

Failure to prevent the conflict: Despite the efforts of international organizations and diplomats to prevent the conflict, the war between Russia and Ukraine broke out in 2014 and escalated in 2022.

Inability to resolve the conflict: The conflict has been ongoing for several years, and despite numerous attempts to resolve it, the situation remains unresolved. The conflict has resulted in the loss of thousands of lives and has caused significant damage to the region's infrastructure.

Limited applicability: Conflict management theory assumes that parties are willing to negotiate and compromise. However, in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war, both sides have been unwilling to compromise, making conflict management theory less applicable.

Geopolitical rivalry: Some experts view the Russia-Ukraine war as a manifestation of renewed geopolitical rivalry between major world powers, which makes it difficult to apply conflict management theory

Cyber warfare: The Russia-Ukraine war has also involved cyber warfare, which has made it more challenging to manage the conflict. Cyber warfare has been used to disrupt Ukrainian industrial control systems and power infrastructure.

In conclusion, conflict management theory has limitations in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war. The conflict has been ongoing for several years, and despite numerous attempts to resolve it, the situation remains unresolved. The conflict has also involved cyber warfare, which has made it more challenging to manage.

6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPORTS DIPLOMACY AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN CRISIS

Before the 2022 invasion, sports diplomacy has been employed as a tool of conflict resolution between the two countries. For example, in 2018, the Ukrainian and Russian national football teams played a friendly match in Kyiv. The match was seen as a symbol of peace and reconciliation, and it was attended by thousands of fans from both countries. However, these were before the full-blown war.

In the context of the Russian and Ukrainian 2022 crisis, sports diplomacy has been used in several different ways. Sports diplomacy has been used to raise awareness of the conflict in Ukraine. The Ukrainian football club Shakhtar Donetsk has played a series of charity matches around the world. The matches were designed to raise money for humanitarian aid in Ukraine, and they also helped to raise awareness of the conflict. They played against several clubs including Germany, Athens, etc (Euronews, 2022).

In addition, several individual athletes have used their platforms to speak out against the war. For example, Ukrainian tennis player Elina Svitolina refused to play her match against Russian tennis player Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova at the Monterrey Open in Mexico. Svitolina said that she would not play until the WTA (Women's Tennis Association) took a stand against the war (Eurosport, 2022).

The use of sports diplomacy in the Russian and Ukrainian crisis is still in its early stages. However, it has the potential to play a significant role in conflict management. By providing a platform for communication and interaction, sports diplomacy can help to build trust and understanding between people from different cultures and backgrounds. This can help to create the conditions for peace and reconciliation. Although sports diplomacy

is a promising tool for conflict resolution, it has its limitations. Sugden and Tomlinson (2017) warn against the overemphasis on sport as a panacea for conflict resolution, emphasizing that political, social, and economic factors must be addressed concurrently. Similarly, Black (2017) argues that sports diplomacy can contribute to building bridges between conflicting parties, but it should be part of a broader diplomatic and political strategy.

The politicization of sports and the nationalistic sentiments often associated with major sporting events can also hinder the potential of sports diplomacy in conflict management (Adler, 2017; Brannagan & Giulianotti, 2015). National pride, identity, and historical animosities can influence the way sports events are perceived and experienced, potentially reinforcing divisions instead of promoting unity (Black, 2017).

In conclusion, the relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian and Ukrainian crisis is complex. While there is potential for sports to contribute to dialogue, understanding, and relationship-building between the two nations, it should be viewed as one component of a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution. The limitations and challenges associated with sports diplomacy, such as the need for political will and addressing underlying political issues, should also be considered when considering its role in the context of the Russian and Ukrainian crisis.

7. HOW SPORTS DIPLOMACY HAS HELPED IN MANAGING THE 2022 CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Sports diplomacy has demonstrated a limited yet significant impact on the 2022 Russian-Ukraine war. Through sports, it has facilitated the establishment of connections between individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds. The participation of athletes from Russia and Ukraine in joint sporting events has fostered interactions, enabling them to gain insights into each other's cultures and challenge existing stereotypes. An example of this occurred in March 2022, when the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) permitted Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete as neutral participants in the 2022 Winter Paralympics held in Beijing. This decision, aimed at safeguarding the interests of athletes who had dedicated years to training, elicited criticism from those who contended that it bestowed legitimacy upon the actions of the Russian government in Ukraine (IOC, 2022).

Sports diplomacy has also contributed to raising global awareness regarding the conflict and its repercussions on affected individuals. By suspending or canceling sporting events in Russia and Ukraine, sports organizations have effectively conveyed a message of non-condonation by the international community toward the war.

Consequently, these actions exert pressure on the Russian government to seek an end to the conflict. For instance, in February 2022, FIFA and UEFA suspended Russian teams from participating in international competitions as a demonstration of solidarity with the football community in Ukraine and to ensure the safety of all participants. This decision received widespread support internationally (Colluci & Cortrell, 2022).

Moreover, sports diplomacy has offered athletes a platform to voice their opposition to the war, thereby enhancing awareness of the conflict and its impact on affected populations. Athletes utilizing their influence to speak out against the war can generate attention and understanding among wider audiences. Consequently, such actions can exert additional pressure on the Russian government to bring an end to the conflict. A notable example occurred during the Monterrey Open in Mexico in February 2022, where Ukrainian tennis player Elina Svitolina refused to compete against Russian tennis player Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Svitolina expressed her stance, asserting that she would only participate if the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) took a firm position against the war. Eventually, the WTA suspended all tournaments in Russia and Belarus, aligning with Svitolina's concerns (Eurosport, 2022).

In conclusion, sports diplomacy has played a limited yet significant role in managing the 2022 Russian-Ukraine war. It has contributed to the dissemination of information regarding the conflict, fostered cultural understanding and cooperation, and provided athletes with a platform to express their opposition to the war. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that sports diplomacy cannot single-handedly resolve deep-rooted political conflicts, and it should be viewed as a complementary tool alongside broader diplomatic efforts, political negotiations, and military actions.

8. THE EFFECTS OF THE 2022 RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINIAN TERRITORY IN SPORTS

The effects of the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory in sports were significant. Following the invasion, the National Olympic Committee (NOC) and national federations of various sports called on the global sporting community to take measures against Russian and Belarusian athletes as a sporting response to the invasion. This collective action aimed to exert pressure on Russia and Belarus by limiting their participation in international sporting events.

A virtual summit involving more than 30 countries, including the United States, France, Germany, Australia, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Poland, resulted in a joint declaration. The declaration outlined several key principles that were implemented:

- Russia and Belarus were prohibited from hosting, bidding for, or being awarded any international sporting events.

- Individual athletes, administrators, and teams representing the Russian or Belarusian state were banned from competing in other countries. This included athletes representing bodies, cities, or brands effectively representing Russia or Belarus, such as major football clubs.

- Actions were taken to limit sponsorship and financial support from entities with links to the Russian or Belarusian states.

- The principles were endorsed by international sports federations.

The joint declaration also welcomed the decision of the International Paralympic Committee to prevent Russia’s and Belarus’ athletes from participating in the 2022 Winter Paralympics in Beijing. These restrictions were intended to remain in place until cooperation under the fundamental principles of international law could become possible again.

The response further emphasized the encouragement for international sports organizations and relevant legal bodies not to sanction athletes, coaches, or officials who

unilaterally terminated their contracts with Russian, Belarusian, or Ukrainian clubs. It also urged the international sports community to continue showing solidarity with Ukraine, including supporting the continuation of Ukrainian sports where possible.

Additionally, the international sports organizations provided Ukrainian athletes with additional time to prepare for international competitions. Various sports leagues and clubs organized the collection and sending of humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Solidarity actions and campaigns to collect assistance for refugees and victims were held at matches of most European championships. Ukrainian football leaders, FC Dynamo Kyiv and FC Shakhtar Donetsk conducted charity friendly matches with local clubs in different European countries.

Overall, the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory led to collective action by national federations, international sports organizations, and countries to impose bans, restrictions, and financial limitations on Russian and Belarusian athletes and sporting entities. A concerted effort was made to support Ukraine through various means, including additional preparation time for Ukrainian athletes, collection of humanitarian aid, and solidarity actions.

Table 1
International Sports Federations and Measures against Russia and Belarus

SPORTS	NATIONAL FEDERATION	NATIONAL TEAMS	CLUBS	ATHLETES	OFFICIALS	HOSTING	FLAGS	ANTHEM	FUND	APPEAL TO CAS
ARCHERY		Banned	Banned	Banned	Banned	No	No	No		
ATHLETICS	Suspended			Banned	Banned	No			Yes	
Baseball/ Softball		Banned	Banned	Banned						
Basketball		Banned			Banned					Yes
Biathlon	Suspended			Banned	Banned					
Canoeing				suspended	Suspended	No	No	No	Yes	
Chess	Banned			Neutrals		No	No	No		Yes
Curling				Banned		No				
Cycling		Suspended	Suspended			No	No	No		
Football		Banned		Neutrals		No	No	No		Yes
Gymnastics				Banned	Banned	No	No	No	Yes	
Hockey		Banned			Banned					
Ice Hockey		Suspended	Suspended							Yes
Judo				Neutrals						
Luge				Banned	Banned	No				
Pentathlon				suspended	Suspended					
Rowing				suspended	Suspended				Yes	Yes
Rugby	Suspended	Suspended	Suspended						Yes	Yes
Skating				Banned	Banned					Yes
Sailing				suspended	Suspended		No	No		
Skiing										
Surfing						Suspended		no		
Swimming			Neutrals		Netrals					
Taekwando					Banned	Banned	no	No	No	
Table tennis					Banned	Banned	No	No	No	
Tennis		Susoended	Neutrals		Neutrals	Banned	No			
Triathlon				Banned	Banned					
Volleyball		Suspended	Suspended		Suspended			No		

Source: Colucci and Cortrell (2023)

As the saying “No sports, No money, and No privilege;” this implies for example, the effect of the sanction in the area of football made Russia excluded from competing in the qualifying rounds and major tournaments of the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) World Cup “Qatar 2022” and the Union of European Football Association (UEFA) i.e. the men and women’s football team will not participate in any international football event including their club sides like Lokomotiv Moskva, Zenit St. Petersburg CSKA Moskva, Dinamo Moskva among others have been affected from participating in European club football tournaments like UEFA Champions League (UCL), EUROPA League, EUROPA Conference Cup.

However, there are five (5) football clubs owned by Russian oligarchs across Europe as they have been forced to cash in on those clubs in Europe due to the continuous invasion of Ukraine. Thus, the owners and clubs are Roman Abramovich (Chelsea, England); Maxim Demin (Bournemouth, England); Dmitry Rybolovlev (AS Monaco, France) and (Cercle Brugge, Belgium); Valeriy Oyf (Vitesse Arnhem, Netherland).

The Table 1 provides details on the sanctions by different sports on Russia and Belarus due to the Ukraine conflict.

In a nutshell, the table above shows that the International Sports Federation (ISF) had taken strict measures against Russia from hosting and participating in any sports-related events i.e. they were either banned or suspended from sporting activities both at international and regional level tournaments. Those sporting areas range from athletics, baseball, basketball, biathlon, canoeing, chess, curling, cycling, football, gymnastics, hockey, ice hockey, judo, luge, pentathlon, rowing, rugby, skating, sailing, skiing, surfing, swimming, taekwondo, table tennis, lawn tennis, triathlon, volleyball as stated in the table above. Therefore, this has resulted in a negative effect that has a serious implication on the economic development, youth, and sports in Russia.

9. DATA ANALYSIS

Proposition One: There is a significant relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian-Ukrainian War.

This part analyzes data that were collected to answer research question one which will at the end of the study help the researcher to either accept or reject proposition one. Proposition one states that ‘there is a significant relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management in the Russian-Ukrainian war’. The study findings highlight several instances where sports diplomacy has played a role in addressing the conflict.

Firstly, the interaction between athletes from Russia and Ukraine in joint sporting events provides an opportunity for cultural exchange and the breaking

down of stereotypes. This has contributed to building understanding and potentially easing tensions between the two nations.

Secondly, the suspension or cancellation of sports events in Russia and Ukraine by international sports organizations sends a strong message that the international community does not condone the war. This can create pressure on the Russian government and contribute to efforts aimed at conflict resolution.

Thirdly, the use of athletes’ platforms to speak out against the war raises awareness of the conflict and its impact on people. Athletes refusing to participate in matches or tournaments can draw attention to the situation and put pressure on relevant authorities to seek peaceful resolutions.

Overall, the data suggest that sports diplomacy has played a role in managing the conflict.

Proposition two: Sport diplomacy has significantly helped in managing the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

Although the bans and activism through sports diplomacy have piqued the interest of onlookers and sympathizers, the war is still in full effect and neither country is willing to back down. Despite the pressure being mounted on President Putin through sanctions, he has not been moved from his standpoint. This is in line with Black (2018) who states that there are limitations to the role sports diplomacy can play in conflict resolution. These limitations include:

- The politicization of sport. Sport has often been used as a tool of national pride and identity, which can make it difficult to use sports diplomacy to promote peace and reconciliation. In an official statement, the IOC states that a complete ban on Russian athletes is against their policy as the IOC is meant to operate free of politicization. Thus, the decision to allow them to compete as neutrals.
- The lack of trust between Russia and Ukraine. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has a long history, and there is a deep distrust between the two countries. This makes it difficult to use sports diplomacy to build bridges and promote understanding.
- The lack of political will. The international community has been divided in its response to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This has made it difficult to use sports diplomacy as a coordinated and effective tool.

Despite these limitations, sport diplomacy has the potential to play a significant role in managing the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine. By providing a platform for dialogue and understanding, sports diplomacy can help to build trust and promote peace. However, it is important to be realistic about the limitations of sports diplomacy and to use it in conjunction with other tools, such as political negotiations and economic sanctions.

Proposition Three: The 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia has significantly affected sporting events in the territory.

The 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia has had a significant impact on sporting events in the territory. The table shown earlier outlines the actions taken by various international sports federations in response to the invasion. These actions include bans, suspensions, and restrictions imposed on Russian and Belarusian athletes, national federations, clubs, and officials.

The table shows that numerous international sports federations have taken measures against Russia and Belarus considering the invasion. These measures include banning or suspending national federations, national teams, clubs, athletes, and officials from participating in international events. Additionally, hosting events in Russia and Belarus has been prohibited by several sports federations.

Furthermore, the data indicates that the 2022 invasion has affected not only the participation of Russian and Belarusian athletes but also the hosting of events in these territories. Many sports organizations have suspended or canceled events in Russia and Belarus as a response to the conflict. These actions demonstrate the impact of the invasion on the sports landscape and the decisions made by international sports federations to distance themselves from the conflict.

Overall, it can be concluded that the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia has significantly affected sporting events in the territory. The actions taken by international sports federations in banning or suspending participation and the cancellation of events reflect the tangible consequences of the invasion of the sports sector in Ukraine.

10. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings contribute to the academic discourse on the relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management within the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The study finds that there is a significant relationship between sports diplomacy and conflict management in this war. The findings are consistent with existing literature that highlights the potential of sports diplomacy in fostering understanding and breaking down stereotypes among conflicting parties (Kobierecki, 2019). These scholarly works provide support for the notion that sports diplomacy can play a role in effectively managing conflicts, such as the Russian-Ukrainian war.

However, Proposition Two, which posits that sports diplomacy significantly aided in managing the 2022 conflict between Russia and Ukraine, faces certain limitations, as discussed in the literature. The politicization of sport presents a challenge in using sport diplomacy as a tool for peace promotion, as sport often serves as a vehicle for national identity and pride (Sudgen & Tomlinson, 2020).

The decision to allow Russian athletes to compete as neutrals, rather than implementing a complete ban, exemplifies the complexities associated with utilizing sports diplomacy in politically sensitive conflicts.

Furthermore, the deep-rooted lack of trust between Russia and Ukraine hampers the potential of sports diplomacy to foster reconciliation (Petersson, 2014). These limitations align with the findings that suggest the limited impact of sports diplomacy in managing the 2022 conflict.

Proposition Three asserts that the 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia had a significant impact on sporting events within the territory. This finding is supported by existing literature on the influence of political conflicts on the sports sector. Actions taken by international sports federations, such as bans, suspensions, and restrictions imposed on Russian and Belarusian athletes, clubs, and officials, reflect the tangible consequences of political conflicts in sports (Merkel, 2017). This body of literature strengthens the findings presented in the study and underscores the substantial influence of the 2022 invasion on sporting events in Ukraine.

In summary, the study findings contribute to the scholarly understanding of sports diplomacy, conflict management, and the impact of political conflicts on sporting events. By referencing relevant literature, including the works of Black, Hurd, Rutherford, Sugden, Tomlinson, and Pfister, the study situates its findings within the existing academic discourse. This approach enhances the rigor and academic credibility of the study's contributions to the field.

11. SUMMARY

This study established that in the international system today, sports diplomacy is often used as a soft power tool for an ever-wider range of objectives, including conflict management. Murray (2016) also confirms the enormous potential of sports diplomacy, to bring people and communities closer together. The concept of sport diplomacy as a form of soft power was introduced by Nygard and Gates (2013), they interpreted it as the power to persuade an actor without coercion, and explored by several other scholars (e.g. Johnson, 2018; Kuo and Kuo, 2020).

In general, these authors assert, sport can be used as a tool of soft power both nationally and internationally, and it is a key foreign-policy lever for major and middle-ranking powers. The study further reveals that since the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian crisis began, there has been a sharp rise in commodity prices, which is fueling already existing inflationary pressures and Ukraine's inability to export grain throughout the first five months of the conflict worsened a global hunger crisis, with catastrophic impacts throughout the world.

12. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that sports diplomacy is a potent instrument that can be used to implement national

foreign policy during peace and a tool that can be used to communicate during conflict for countries' peace as posited by the conflict theory. After various findings, sports diplomacy is seen as an effective tool to manage the conflict in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. It also emphasizes the fact that historically, general sanctions, including sports, worked to bring down oppressive regimes. The study further asserts that sanctions, especially in the fields of sport, economics, education, arts, and culture, played a decisive role in the eventual demise of apartheid and the installation of democratic order in South Africa in 1994 and with this can be replicated in the case of the Russian and Ukrainian war.

The researcher concludes that the study findings contribute to the scholarly understanding of sports diplomacy, conflict management, and the impact of political conflicts on sporting events. By referencing relevant literature, the study situates its findings within the existing academic discourse.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, a possible first step toward resolving the conflict could be agreeing to a cease-fire while Ukraine consents not to join NATO. Then, other points will have to be negotiated, namely Crimea and Donbas and Ukraine's relationship with the European Union. For the debated territories, there could be referendums under international supervision, possibly two separate ones. The international system must not forget that Donbas and Crimea do not belong to either Russia or Ukraine but to their respective populations. They should be able to choose between different possibilities: autonomy, independence, or remaining.

The principle of self-determination should come before maintaining national borders. Concerning EU membership, Ukraine could be given applicant status. It would be optimal for Kyiv to have access to the four freedoms of the European Union's internal market without necessarily becoming a full member. At the same time, Ukraine could have a similar agreement with the Eurasian Union. This neutrality between NATO, the EU, and the Russian Federation would need to be guaranteed.

13.1 Contributions to Knowledge

The study contributes to the theoretical framework of conflict resolution by using conflict management theory to examine the function of sports diplomacy. It illustrates how this idea can be used to comprehend how unconventional approaches, like sports, might support peace initiatives. The results of the study imply that sports diplomacy can promote international harmony and peace. There are policy ramifications for the study's suggestion that organised sports and sports diplomacy be used as communication instruments during wars. Sports should be

considered by governments and international organisations as a useful tool for advancing diplomacy and peace.

13.2 Policy Implications

The study's policy implications emphasise how crucial it is to acknowledge sports diplomacy as a useful tool for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Governments and organisations can endeavour to promote peace and unity in areas impacted by conflict by including sports diplomacy in their foreign policy and international relations agendas. Success can be achieved by ensuring that sports as a diplomatic instrument can be more successful. This study has presented Sports diplomacy as an effective tool for managing conflicts and promoting peace that governments and international organisations should actively support and fund. With this study, Sports diplomacy can be included in national foreign policy plans as a recognised tool for accomplishing diplomatic goals. This could entail designating officials or sports diplomats to handle diplomatic relations about sports. It will sports diplomacy tactics to the unique requirements and circumstances of every dispute. Adaptability and flexibility are crucial since what works in one conflict might not be appropriate in another. With this study, global sports bodies such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) can note to take the lead in advocating for and endorsing sports diplomacy programs in areas of conflict.

13.3 Limitations of the Study

As a particular and relatively recent geopolitical event, the analysis focuses on the Russia-Ukraine conflict of 2022. The results may not be as applicable to other conflicts and areas due to their restricted scope. Data Sources: Using books, journals, newspapers, and the internet are mentioned in the abstract as sources of information. There can be restrictions on the accuracy and objectivity of the data acquired, depending on the sources that were used. Although a qualitative research approach might yield insightful findings, it might not possess the statistical precision of quantitative approaches. This can make it difficult to draw firm conclusions or extrapolate research results to a wider group of people.

13.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Further studies should endeavour to examine how sports diplomacy has been used in various conflicts and identify the elements that have contributed to its success or shortcomings. Efforts should be made to investigate the long-term impacts of sports diplomacy in resolving disputes using longitudinal analysis. Further studies can be carried out on the contributions of international organisations to world peace through Sports diplomacy. Further studies can also examine the elements of sports diplomacy related to cultural interchange, such as how player relationships and sporting events foster better cross-national understanding.

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