



POLICY BRIEFING: SPORT AND SOFT POWER

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Introduction

1. Sport and Soft Power is the latest policy briefing commissioned by the Academy of Sport at the University of Edinburgh. The objectives of this specific research partnership with ICR Research are twofold: (i) to foster an evidence-based reassessment of sport and soft power and the role of sport in UK Foreign policy and (ii) to challenge, create and make change happen.
2. To do this we will continue to bring together people, data, and diverse disciplines to spark the unexpected and to help the world of sport prepare for the future. The policy briefing is a contribution to a proposed Edinburgh Futures Institute - Academy of Sport conference on Sporting Futures to be held in 2024.

Aim of this paper

3. This policy paper considers the intersections between sport and soft power in contemporary UK foreign policy. It discusses current policy, reviews how the concept of 'soft power' is situated within key documents, and identifies where sport is seen as a valuable, or potentially valuable, contributor.
4. Specifically, it questions the utility of continuing to use the term soft power, other than as a necessary rhetorical shorthand for forms of activity which do not rely on hard (military or economic) power. It suggests that the term soft power is of declining relevance to both policymakers and academics, proposes some reasons for this, and suggests an alternative approach.
5. Finally, the paper suggests that sport can productively connect to foreign policy through a nuanced approach, which connects it, where possible through evidenced impact assessment, to specific foreign policy priorities especially economic growth, promotion and nation branding, security and resilience, international development, and building deeper, long-term relationships in specific geographies.
6. The paper is based on:
 - a. A review of recent UK policy documents.
 - b. A workshop discussion with academic and practitioners hosted by the University of Edinburgh's Academy of Sport in early May 2023.
 - c. A series of interviews with international experts on Sport and Soft Power, Economics, and Public Policy.
7. The research has generated two outputs:
 - a. This policy brief, and
 - b. An outline proposal about practical next steps and funding.

The target audience for the policy brief is policymakers (broadly defined) and the proposal is designed for consideration within, initially, the University of Edinburgh's Academy of Sport.

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Key findings

8. The findings from the three evidence sources are:
- a. Review of Soft Power and Sport Policy Documents
 - It is at least debatable whether soft power plays a significant role in UK foreign policy in 2023.
 - Despite positive references in the Integrated Review (2021) and the Refresh (2023), Soft Power is seen as a false binary to 'Hard Power' and the two concepts are combined as "Smart Power".
 - No strategy for how this is to be achieved, or major resource allocation is proposed.
 - The potential value of sport is acknowledged, but there are no specifics.
 - b. Workshop
 - There is a belief in the potential value of sport to foreign policy but work on this needs to be taken forward on the basis of an improved evidence base and a focal point for cross-government coordination.
 - The evidential need includes analysis of benefits, mapping of assets and opportunities, costs, and risks.
 - c. Interviews
 - There is a strong prima facie case for sport being included as a mainstreamed component of foreign and development policy, due to its potential to address the priorities identified in the Integrated Review: shaping the international environment (messaging in support of UK values and the rule of law), supporting the development of regional and bilateral relations, and SDG delivery.
 - This reflects sport's scale, reach, profile, association with national identity, and economic importance.
 - A stronger, evidence-based, and data-driven, narrative needs to be developed.
 - The greatest gain is likely to come from improved coordination and a strategic approach, enabled by enhanced capability and improved Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

Analysis

9. This paper does not aim to be comprehensive. It focuses on UK foreign policy as a competence of the UK Government and does not include the work of the devolved administrations,[i] cities, or the sports activities of the British Council.[ii] Nor is it a systematic, academic, literature review. Rather it is targeted towards a policy audience, recognising that the end point of this process will be a "Green Paper" which will "...set out for discussion, proposals which are still at a formative stage" [iii] It aims to identify the key issues and questions relating to sport that are potentially relevant to policymakers. It therefore focuses on grey literature, with academic literature referred to where relevant.

Structure

10. The paper is structured into three sections:

a. Soft Power and Sport in UK Foreign Policy: this section describes the part that soft power and sport play in contemporary UK foreign policy at different levels: global; regional; national.

b. Existing UK Foreign Policy: Reframing Soft Power and the Role of Sport: argues that 'soft power' is primarily a rhetorical term, that it is helpful to use it in limited circumstances only, and that sport's potential is better seen when it is connected explicitly to foreign policy priorities which require a cultural relations approach. This is particularly relevant to Sustainable Development Goals.

c. Recommendations: these recommendations summarise the practical steps that could be taken in the light of the key findings.

Soft Power and Sport in UK Foreign Policy

11. Sport has long been used as a factor in foreign policy in two main ways. It has been connected from its beginnings in the mid-late nineteenth century to nationalism and nation-state rivalries. It has also been, since the Olympic Games (from 1896) promoted as fulfilling a broader role of enhancing intercultural communication and fostering goodwill across nations. These apparently contradictory interests and impulses – national interest and normative universalism – still characterise the relationship between foreign policy and sport.[iv]

12. In the early 21st century, the field has expanded. Nation-states are faced today with global challenges that are transnational in nature, global in range, play out at every level from the local to the global, and involve multiple actors and interests. Foreign policy practitioners now have to be more sensitive to, and adept at handling, concerns that surface across a range of cultural and social flows.

13. As sport functions at all these levels, and has touch points with multiple interests and agendas, it is from time to time co-opted proactively into foreign policy. Examples would include promoting national reputation or values, bridging political divides and promoting diplomatic relations, sports exchanges to promote goodwill, mega sports events, or sports for development or peace.

14. Sport also generates a need for foreign policy responses. Examples include Olympic Games boycotts, sports sanctions, diplomatic sports visits, or sports-related conflicts over ownership or representation.

15. Effective policy is thus required for both proactive and responsive intersections between sport and foreign policy,[v] especially given the high profile and importance to the UK of some of the relationships involved.

Soft Power in UK Foreign Policy

16. It is at least debatable whether soft power plays a significant role in UK foreign policy in 2023. It does have its advocates, who see it as essential, especially to the promotion of British values, and it is worth noting that they agree that its scope includes sport, along with media & culture, education, and ‘people to people’ links.[vi]

17. The evidence from recent policy statements, however, is unconvincing. On 9 February 2023, Lord Wallace of Saltaire asked His Majesty’s Government “...whether they remain committed to maintaining the quality of the components of the United Kingdom’s soft power, as listed in chapter 2 of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (CP 403), published on 16 March 2021.” [vii]

18. The Minister of State at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon gave a slightly ambiguous answer: “My Lords, the Government remain absolutely committed to harnessing the range of UK influence to advance our interests overseas”,[viii] citing the work of the BBC, scholarship programmes, cultural events and diplomacy, but making no mention of sport.

19. “Global Britain in a competitive age, The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy” [ix] to which Lord Wallace refers, refers in paragraph 37 of chapter 2 to soft power: “Finally, the UK will also bring an integrated approach to working with others around the world – that is, we will combine hard and soft power, harness the public and private sector, and deploy British expertise from inside and outside government in pursuit of national objectives.” [x] Later in the document, in the section “Strategic Framework” there are two pages devoted to soft power, which include the first and only reference to sport (major events, the EUROs, the Premier League, and Wimbledon). [xi]

20. The 2021 Integrated Review was 'refreshed' in 2023 in: "Integrated Review Refresh 2023 Responding to a more contested and volatile world". [xii]The 2023 document recognised that since 2021 the pace of geopolitical change and the extent of its impact on the UK had increased, largely due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, combined with China's more aggressive stance. These, alongside more long-term threats, had increased the risk that the international order would become more favourable to authoritarianism: "We are now in a period of heightened risk and volatility that is likely to last beyond the 2030s." [xiii] The refresh includes a list of commitments, including "xii The Government will seek to maximise UK soft power, including by working with the British Council and BBC World Service." [xiv]

21. There are, however, no additional resources to help deliver this commitment (apart from £20 million for the BBC World Service), nor, in the long list of other strategies is there a soft power strategy[xv] - although given the Government's view of soft power institutions as independent, this is perhaps not surprising. Indeed, it may be the case that as soft power is already 'done' by a range of civil society institutions, a coherent national policy or strategy with resources attached is not required, as it is, to some extent, already there, in the activities of these institutions which operate at varying lengths of arm from the Government, and it would not be appropriate for the Government to seek to be more directly directive of them. There is also a view that as the UK is already so successful in soft power terms, a strategy is not required.[xvi]

Sport in UK Foreign Policy

22. The Government sees its main role in relation to sport (as to other soft power assets) as enabling, creating an environment in which "...independent organisations, assets and networks in every part of the UK can flourish; assist them in building mutually beneficial international relationships; and harness, where possible, their outputs for global goods." [xvii] There is no mention of any financial or practical support.

23. While the refresh acknowledges that the Premier League is a 'strength' alongside the British Council and the BBC,[xviii] that is the only mention of sport in the document.

24. Soft power is only one element of contemporary international relations, and by no means seen today as the most important. Scholars tend to agree, arguing that the concept has "...not translated into scholarly or policy impact" as "...references to soft power are vague and undefined, referring to any use of culture or ideology in a state's foreign policy and leaving unclear soft power's relationship with hard power." [xix] Sport is acknowledged in the most up to date statements of UK foreign policy, but only as one of several elements of soft power, and by no means the most important.

25. Finally, it is worth noting that notwithstanding the relative indifference of UK foreign policy to soft power and to sport, there is a considerable body of mostly academic literature on "Sports Diplomacy". This could give the impression that there exists a significant area of soft power/sport-driven foreign policy practice. Assertions such as: "The international exposure, the focus on culture, and peaceful values in sports make it a useful tool for countries to use soft power to achieve international goals and improve their public diplomacy." [xx] are frequent (see also: Murray (2018),[xi] Postlethwaite et al (2022),[xii] Santos (2021),[xxiii] Parrish (2022),[xxiv] Pigman and Rofe (2014),[xxv] among many others). However, if we are looking for empirical confirmation of 'sports diplomacy' playing a major role in recent UK foreign policy statements, we are looking in vain. There is no space to discuss the validity of the term Sports Diplomacy here, other than to note its absence from current policy.

Existing UK Foreign Policy: Reframing Soft Power and the Role of Sport

26. Having noted the relative absence of the term 'soft power', and any significant awareness of sport in the Integrated Review Refresh, it is also worth noting that many areas of current foreign policy remain where 'soft power' approaches are required. There are also many areas of foreign policy where sport could make a positive contribution. The issue is more one of how the priorities of foreign policy are framed, the concepts and language that are used, rather than one of substance.

27. The Integrated Review Refresh continues the emphasis on the integration of all foreign policy assets from the 2021 Integrated Review (there is after all a rather heavy clue in the name). As Lord Wallace said (see para. 15), the Refresh is about 'smart power' as defined by Joseph Nye: "Effective strategies in the real world are a mix of hard and soft power, and that combination of hard and soft power in effective ways is what I call "smart power.""[xxvi]

28. The 2021 Integrated Review and the Refresh both recognise that the UK cannot shape global agendas on its own. Neither the UK's hard power, nor its soft power, are influential enough either singly, or in combination. Commentators broadly welcomed this new realism, noting that despite the stated ambition of increased defence spending, and the UK coming #1 in soft power rankings, there is a retreat in the Reviews from previously exaggerated views of the UK's global role: "Even with the new emphasis on defence funding and the lofty talk of reengaging Asia, the cultural hubris that Britain (and other Western powers) are often accused of is mostly missing." [xxvii]

29. This makes sense for a middle power like the UK which, especially post-Brexit, needs cooperation and well-managed competition: "...our ambition is to build even stronger relationships with our ... allies and partners based on values, reciprocity and cooperation across our shared interests."[xxviii] These priorities require a closer alignment between foreign, security, and economic policy. It could be argued that they also require a values-based approach, along the lines of normative power: "...power which is ideational; involving principles, actions, and impact; as well as having broader consequences in world politics." [xxix] If the UK wishes to have like-minded friends in an increasingly competitive world, it helps if they share its values.

30. The pragmatism of this approach is reflected in the areas where 'soft' action is needed in the Integrated Review Refresh. Sport is potentially important there, both proactively and reactively:

a. Shaping rules, norms and standards: normativity is intrinsic to sport in three main ways: the rules of the game, the expectations of spectators, the undertakings of large sports organisations (IOC, FIFA, etc).[xxx] "Nowadays there is a seemingly naturalised, normative and instrumental view of ... sport policy, with a presumption of links between sport and various democratic, economic, educational, societal ... values."[xxxi] Sport could have a valuable role here either through initiatives to help cement existing values-based relationships, or to enable engagement in contexts where political values are not shared. Sport can of course also be used to express foreign policy positions for example through sports sanctions.

b. Tackling state threats: to the UK's democracy, economy and society (principally from Russia and China). There are potential intersections between state threats to democratic values and forms of social participation (such as sport), channels for disinformation, diaspora relations...[xxxi] More directly, there is the question of the relationship between other countries' 'soft power' strategies and sports ownership.

c. Engaging proactively: in (geopolitical) areas (Euro-Atlantic, Indo-Pacific and the Gulf) of growing importance to both global prosperity and security, through sustainable, enduring and long-term commitments and partnerships. There are obvious opportunities for sport to play a part.

d. Education and skills: investment in research and development (R&D) and the attraction of talent to the UK. Again, there are obvious opportunities for sport to play a part.

e. Working with 'middle power' countries: see (a) and (c) above but working alongside other efforts in relation to specific countries, with whom we may not always agree.[xxxiii]

f. International development, where the Integrated Review Refresh proposes the pursuit of long-term partnerships "tailored to the needs of the countries we work with, going beyond our Official Development Assistance (ODA) offer to draw on the full range of UK strengths and expertise." [xxxiv]

31. In addition, the economic value of sport is considerable, and increasing,[xxxv] and there are numerous ways in which sport, economic growth and foreign policy interact. These include the impact of hosting international events, with attendant job creation and infrastructure investment. Countries may also use foreign policy tools, such as trade agreements, investment treaties, and diplomatic relations, to promote their sports-related exports and attract foreign investment to their sports industries. Such investments can have implications for foreign policy and diplomatic ties between countries.

32. There can also be significant externalities or spillover effects generated by the leveraging of sport in foreign policy. These can be both positive or negative, so Governments, policymakers, and economists need to have the right data, analytical frameworks, and policy tools to address them in order to promote efficient and socially desirable outcomes.

33. This consideration of the potential role of sport in UK foreign policy suggests that it may be time to stop talking about sport in relation to soft power in general (and perhaps about sports diplomacy), and rather to focus on questions of what sport can hope to achieve in relation to more specific foreign policy goals as one ingredient in an integrated 'smart' approach. Whether this is desirable, depends on what would be achieved by doing so, what theory of change would be required, a clear understanding of impacts, outcomes and beneficiaries, and an evidence base to inform and validate activity.

34. Such a turn would require a number of things. Firstly, situate sport in relation to the foreign policy priorities where it can make the most impact - the list above suggests some, but it does not aim to be definitive, and each case should be considered on its merits (see below). Secondly, recognise that some people - including political decision makers - continue to talk about soft power as a shorthand. That may require adopting the term when engaging with specific audiences, recognising that language can often condition responses. Thirdly, understand how the UK system of 'soft power' works in terms of policy levers and institutions.

Impact: the case of Sports Mega-Events

35. At the national level, perhaps the main way in which sport is used in foreign policy, is through Sports Mega Events (SMEs). "As part of the strategic shift from employing "hard" to "soft" power, states have increasingly used sport in general and sports mega-events in particular." (Grix and Lee (2013),[xxxvi] (Grix and Brannagan (2016)[xxxvii].

36. The mega-event had its recent apogee in the UK at the 2012 Olympics.[xxxviii] The then FCO, in evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee, predicted that the London Olympic and Paralympic Games would have "a profound impact on the UK's international reputation".[xxxix] The FCO's first objective in supporting the Games was to serve the: "National interest: To contribute to UK foreign policy goals by using the profile of the Olympics to promote British culture and values at home and abroad. To cement Britain's reputation as a valuable bilateral partner and a vibrant, open and modern society, a global hub in a networked world." [xl]

37. The impact of the Olympics on the reputation of the UK proved hard to assess. Research on the impact of the Games upon the reputation of the UK and London, in the UK and beyond,[xli] confirmed that the reputational benefits were local rather than national – mainly to London as a city, to East London in general and Stratford in particular. The impact was not only due to the Games, however, but to a link being formed between the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee.

38. The reputational benefits of mega-events appear to vary, depending on the perceived existing reputations of host cities. Such events do more good to some than to others, though they are always risky. For some host cities (and countries), ‘soft power’ benefits such as international prestige and boosts to attraction are likely to be decisive. There is evidence that this applies to Beijing and to China, which celebrated the Games as the country’s arrival as a major power on the world stage.[xlii] Japan’s hosting of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics was a great success for Japan. At the same time, this build-up of soft power also cleared the way for the development of greater hard power by Japan.[xliii]

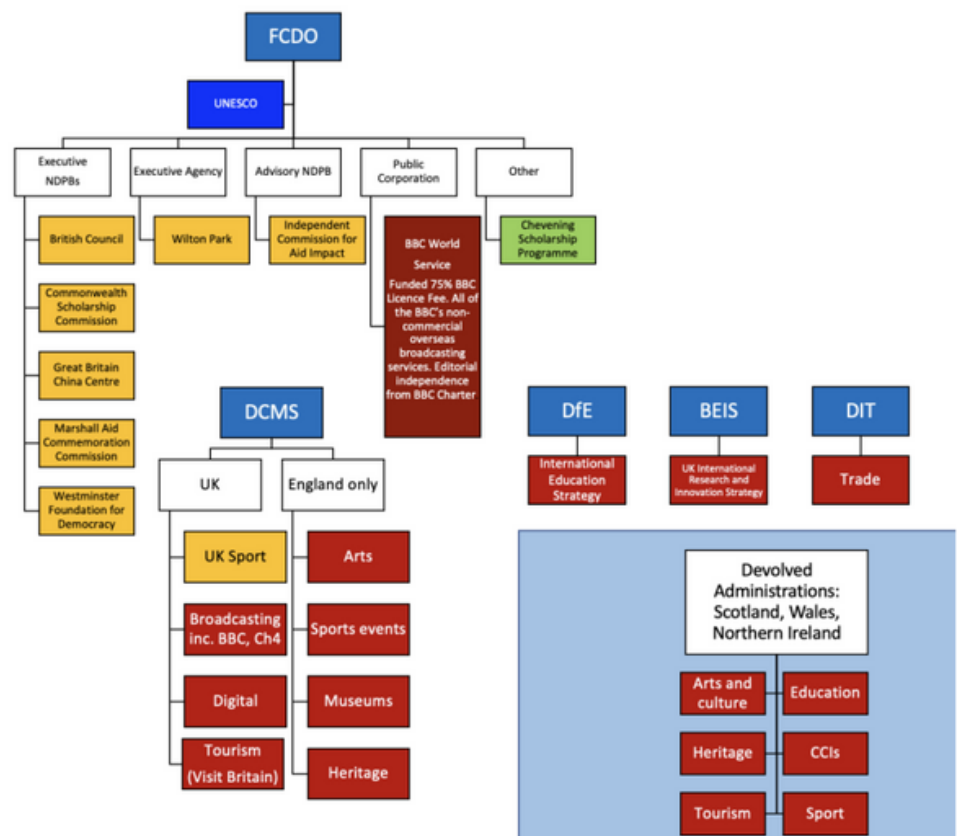
39. The rationale for SMEs in foreign policy turns on other criteria – civic pride, economic growth and social development. These benefits are problematic. There is no space here to review the extensive literature, except to note that the nature of the multiple impacts of mega-events (positive and negative) are well known.[xxliv] Also, some commentators are claiming that SMEs appear to be losing their appeal. While events have long been funded by governments on the promise that they can act as a catalyst for economic growth, that approach is questioned, especially in fiscally conservative contexts, reflecting often difficult relations between hosts and sport governing bodies, whose own reputations are often open to criticism.[xlv]

Other areas of Impact

40. SMEs are of course not the only channel through which sport can contribute to foreign policy. The list above suggests others. They are all worthy of exploration as they all have the potential both to address foreign policy goals, and to add value domestically.

The UK system

41. The UK does not currently have a coherent system of policy and institutional structures to support an overarching approach to the deployment of sport in foreign policy. Instead, it has a system characterised by complexity, ambiguity, and a set of path dependencies which limit its capacity for strategic development and innovation. This can be seen from the organigram on the right [xlvi] which illustrates the key governmental institutions and organisations involved:



42. Compared to other countries, the UK lacks clear governance and accountability for its public diplomacy arrangements.[xlvi] There is no clear Ministerial responsibility, clear accountability to the legislature, central coordination, and no coherent policy or strategy. Rather, responsibility is spread among a number of bodies, themselves operationally independent from Government to varying degrees. As noted above, this lack of direct Government control may be a strength in that organisations can plausibly be presented as ‘independent’ thanks to their arm’s length status, and therefore, more trustworthy than the institutions of competitors, especially those from more authoritarian regimes. This is a legacy of the historical circumstances which gave rise to the BBC and the British Council in the early 20th century.

43. Institutionally, foreign policy (which is a function of the UK Government), led by the FCDO, involves multiple stakeholders including Whitehall departments, devolved administrations, and a range of delivery bodies with multiple agendas. Absent clear Government policy and a democratic mandate for policy, strategy thinking is in effect sub-contracted to agencies which can lack capacity and capability, and are often driven by KPIs which focus on commercial return rather than policy or strategy. It is hard, therefore, to see how Government can make effective use of sport in foreign policy, if that is to be based on an overall policy and strategy which simply does not exist, and probably cannot exist for the foreseeable future.

44. If that analysis is accepted, this paper suggests that if sport is to realise its potential in foreign policy, it firstly has to be clear why it should do so, given the current policy context, and the issues posed by current institutional arrangements. The final section of this paper proposes some questions for discussion which aim to point a way forward.

Recommendations

45. There is a need to clarify what role sport can realistically play in UK foreign policy.

Today, UK Sport’s efforts are focused on ensuring that “... the UK remains a world-leading, influential player, using our expertise and influence to shape the future of performance sport on the world stage.” [xlviii] UK Sport at its recent annual International Relations Seminar (March 2023) [xlix] discussed major issues affecting the international sporting system. Such activity undoubtedly contributes to some of the goals of public diplomacy, such as the development of partnerships, networks, people to people relationships, research (knowledge exchange), and international standard setting. The beneficiaries of such work are within sport, though there may be spillover effects, and there is potential for intersection with foreign policy goals, though that is not the primary purpose.

There is undoubtedly scope for sport to play a more active role in relation to supporting and enabling foreign policy goals where the national interest rather than sport is the primary beneficiary. The process of clarification should consider:

- The evidence base, including the development of a Theory of Change (see below) and Logic Model, the potential of data-led approaches to improve planning, decision making and understanding of impacts, a mapping of the baseline of UK’s sport’s soft power assets, comparative work to learn from other countries, and improved Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) arrangements. Particular attention should be paid to the measurement of long-term impacts, to the externalities of major events (especially in relation to SDGs), and to social capital.
- Lead responsibility within Government at UK level, and what arrangements need to be put in place to ensure enhanced co-ordination across multiple stakeholders, and integration with other foreign policy levers.
- The scope: recognising resource constraints, there is a need to clarify what can be taken forward within existing resources, prioritisation of effort, and what can be done, where, and how, in support of foreign policy goals.

- Recognising and understanding the many intersections between the global and the local, foreign and domestic, in sport.
- The narrative: clarifying the UK's narrative around the role of sport in foreign policy, including alignment with wider narratives around geopolitical events and global challenges.

46. A Theory of Change for sport in foreign policy would be a conceptual framework that outlines how sport can be leveraged as a tool to achieve specific foreign policy goals. It would involve a systematic approach to the identification of the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of sport-based initiatives in these areas, with the aim of understanding the pathways through which sport can contribute to desired changes. An evidence-based Theory of Change is essential to understand the contribution of sport to foreign policy.

47. Work should be put in hand to develop understanding of the value sport adds to foreign policy. Some work is already in hand: "Through comparative studies DCMS would like to understand where the UK sits on the international stage. ... DCMS would like to understand what best practice looks like globally and where more focus might be applied to support our sectors further." DCMS goes on to say that: "Whilst evidence on the short-term value of hosting major events is readily available, there is currently limited evidence on the longer-term benefits of hosting major events. We want to generate evidence to assess both the economic and social legacy of large-scale major sports events." [1]

There is thus existing interest in understanding the value of sport in a global context and in relation to SMEs. However, there is no current stated interest in assessing what the economic value (if any) of sport to wider foreign policy goals might be. This is worth further consideration.

48. Based on the above, identifying and clarifying the main opportunities and challenges for sport in foreign policy, and how to address them.

This paper suggests that the Integrated Review (2021) and the Refresh (2023) identify opportunities for sport if it can find a way to reframe its narratives and its efforts onto specific foreign policy goals, rather than onto often misunderstood theoretical concepts such as 'soft power'.

Suggested Citation

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Endnotes

- [i] See for example recent efforts to develop a 'Sports Diplomacy Strategy for Wales': <https://wales.britishcouncil.org/en/creating-sports-diplomacy-strategy-wales>
- [ii] See: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/society/sport>
- [iii] See: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmwib/wb100529/wgp.htm>
- [iv] Maguire, J., Sport in Foreign Policy, Issues, Challenges and Opportunities, ifa, 2015.
- [v] Effectiveness, as in any other area of foreign policy, requires a clear understanding of national interests, informed decision-making, strategic thinking, multilateral engagement, flexibility and adaptability, domestic support, coordinated implementation, and regular evaluation and adjustment. These requirements help ensure that foreign policy decisions are well-informed, coherent, flexible, and aligned with a country's national objectives, and are effectively implemented to achieve desired outcomes.
- [vi] See, for example: Twigg, S., Soft Power and the UK's 'force for good' ambitions, 2021, sourced from: <https://fpc.org.uk/soft-power-and-the-uks-force-for-good-ambitions/>
- [vii] See: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2023-02-09/debates/F123869E-BB74-472A-A9EF-EB96DC779CD2/SoftPower>
- [viii] Ibid.
- [ix] CP 403, March 2021, see: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age_the_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf
- [x] Ibid.
- [xi] Ibid, p.50.
- [xii] Integrated Review Refresh 2023 Responding to a more contested and volatile world, CP 811, March 2023, see: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1145586/11857435_NS_IR_Refresh_2023_Supply_AllPages_Revision_7_WEB_PDF.pdf
- [xiii] Ibid. p.7.
- [xiv] Ibid. p.14.
- [xv] "It is supported by a series of published sub-strategies, including the 2021 Defence Command Paper, the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy, the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy, the National Cyber Strategy, the National Space Strategy, the Strategy for International Development, the UK Export Strategy, the British Energy Security Strategy, the Net Zero Strategy, the Arctic Policy Framework and the UK Government Resilience Framework." Ibid. p.6.
- [xvi] See the UK's consistently high ranking position in the various Soft Power indices since 2010. The Brand Finance Global Soft Power Index 2023 ranks the UK as 2nd in the world.
- [xvii] Ibid. p.49.
- [xviii] Ibid. p. 53. The comparison is not valid. The Premier League is a private company, wholly owned by its 20 member clubs. The British Council is an executive body of the FCDO. The BBC is a public corporation of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- [xix] Peter S Henne, What We Talk About When We Talk About Soft Power, International Studies Perspectives, Volume 23, Issue 1, February 2022, Pages 94-111, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isp/ekab007>
- [xx] Dubinsky, Y. From soft power to sports diplomacy: a theoretical and conceptual discussion. Place Brand Public Dipl 15, 156-164 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41254-019-00116-8>
- [xxi] Murray, S., 2018. Sports diplomacy: Origins, theory and practice. Routledge.
- [xxii] Postlethwaite, V., Jenkin, C. and Sherry, E., 2022. Sport diplomacy: an integrative review. Sport Management Review, pp.1-22.
- [xxiii] Santos, N.D.A.E.S.F.D., 2021. The interplay of soft power and sharp power in sport diplomacy: A conceptual framework. Journal of Global Sport Management, pp.1-19.
- [xxiv] Parrish, R., 2022. EU Sport Diplomacy: An Idea Whose Time Has Nearly Come. JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies, 60(5), pp.1511-1528.
- [xxv] Allen Pigman, G. and Simon Rofe, J., 2014. Sport and diplomacy: an introduction. Sport in Society, 17(9), pp.1095-1097.

- [xxvi] Nye, Joseph, Harvard Kennedy School Insight Interview, July 2008, sourced from: <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/joseph-nye-smart-power>
- [xxvii] Moran, M. Foreign Policy, April 2021, sourced from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/16/the-united-kingdom-finally-acknowledges-its-hard-power-limits/>
- [xxviii] Integrated Review Refresh 2023, p.13.
- [xxix] See: Manners, *The Concept of Normative Power in World Politics*, 2009, sourced from: https://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/68745/B09_maj_Concept_Normative_Power_World_Politics.pdf
- [xxx] Alex Holzniekemper, *Norms in Sports: Athletes and Human Dignity*, 2018, sourced from: <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/norms-in-sports-athletes-and-human-dignity#:~:text=It%20is%20always%20worth%20keeping%20in%20mind%20that,is%20governed%20mostly%20by%20explicit%20rules%20and%20penalties.>
- [xxxi] Remco Hoekman & Jeroen Scheerder (2021) *Sport policy practice and outcome: theoretical and empirical approaches*, *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 18:2, 103-113, DOI: 10.1080/16138171.2021.1926772
- [xxxii] See, Tugendhat, I, *Defending democracy in an era of state threats*, 2022, sourced from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/defending-democracy-in-an-era-of-state-threats>
- [xxxiii] See: *Middle Powers in the Multipolar World - The Institute for Peace and Diplomacy*, sourced from: <https://peacediplomacy.org/2022/03/26/middle-powers-in-the-multipolar-world/>
- [xxxiv] Integrated Review Refresh, 2023, p.14.
- [xxxv] According to DCMS, *Sport contributed £17.0bn in 2019, accounting for 0.9% of UK GVA. The GVA of Sport has increased by 2.9% between 2018 and 2019 and by 20.4% between 2010 and 2019, in real terms.* Sourced from: <https://www.sportsthinktank.com/news/2020/12/dcms-economic-value-of-sectors>
- [xxxvi] Jonathan Grix & Donna Lee (2013) *Soft Power, Sports Mega-Events and Emerging States: The Lure of the Politics of Attraction*, *Global Society*, 27:4, 521-536, DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2013.827632
- [xxxvii] Jonathan Grix & Paul Michael Brannagan (2016) *Of Mechanisms and Myths: Conceptualising States' "Soft Power" Strategies through Sports Mega-Events*, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27:2, 251-272, DOI: 10.1080/09592296.2016.1169791
- [xxxviii] *Closely followed by the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.*
- [xxxix] See: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmfaif/581/58107.htm>
- [xl] *Ibid.*
- [xli] *London 2012 Games Media Impact Study*, Tony McEnery, Amanda Potts and Richard Xiao, ESRC Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science, Lancaster University, 2013.
- [xlii] *Legacy 2012*, Economist Intelligence Unit, sourced from [https://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/legacy-2012---understanding-the-impact-of-the-olympic-games-\(1\).pdf](https://www.sportsthinktank.com/uploads/legacy-2012---understanding-the-impact-of-the-olympic-games-(1).pdf)
- [xliii] Jessamyn R. Abel (2012) *Japan's Sporting Diplomacy: The 1964 Tokyo Olympiad*, *The International History Review*, 34:2, 203-220, DOI: 10.1080/07075332.2012.626572
- [xliv] Horne, J., 2022. *Sport, Spectacle, and Mega-Events*. *The Oxford Handbook of Sport and Society*, p.194.
- [xlv] Lauermann, J. (2022). *The declining appeal of mega-events in entrepreneurial cities: From Los Angeles 1984 to Los Angeles 2028*. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40(6), 1203-1218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23996544211066101>
- [xlvi] Diagram by the author, 2022.
- [xlvii] *The term public diplomacy, which describes an area of practice, rather than a theory of power, is preferred by the author to 'soft power'.*
- [xlviii] See: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/our-work/international-relations>
- [xlix] See: <https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2023/03/21/international-relations-seminar-2023>
- [l] See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcms-areas-of-research-interest/dcms-areas-of-research-interest>.