



## The relationship between sports diplomacy and Nigerian foreign policy: A reiteration of the application of the 2009 national sports policy

Yusuf Kamaluddeen Ibrahim\* | Mohd Afandi Salleh | Salah Adam Khalifa Idris

Faculty of Law and International Relations, University Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kuala Terengganu,  
Terengganu, Malaysia.

\*Corresponding Author Email: [yusufkibrahim04@gmail.com](mailto:yusufkibrahim04@gmail.com)

### Abstract:

The inclusion of sports in the political domain of states has improved diplomatic ties among states in the comity of nations, though Nigeria's foreign policy framework remains Africa-centric. The goal of this article is to examine Nigerian sports diplomacy as a tool for pursuing its foreign policy. The study employed a qualitative approach and adopted liberal theory, which provides a comprehensive framework for examining the fundamental factors that influence a state's foreign policy. Nigerian foreign policy stipulates that the security and protection of Nigeria's independence as a sovereign nation, the protection of its nationals and their welfare, the enhancement of its reputation, and the holistic implementation of the 2009 National Sports Policy are all needs that must be met. The current study's findings revealed that participating in or hosting international tournaments has a positive impact on a country. Nations that triumph in international sporting events, such as the Olympics and World Cups, do so by showcasing their brands, resolving disputes, and attracting foreign investment. The findings also showed that, to remedy the country's flawed sectoral policies, Nigerian sports infrastructure and services could not be managed solely by the government and instead required the establishment of public-private partnerships.

### Article History

Received:  
21-Mar-2025

Revised:  
05-Sep-2025

Re-revised:  
08-Dec-2025

Accepted:  
10-Dec-2025

Published:  
01-Jan-2026

**Keywords:** Nigerian Foreign Policy, National Sport Policy, Sport Diplomacy, Diplomatic Ties, Foreign Policy Tools, Interstate Conflicts, Foreign Investment.

**How to Cite:** Ibrahim, Y. K., Salleh, M. A., & Idris, S. A. K. (2026). The relationship between sports diplomacy and Nigerian foreign policy: A reiteration of the application of the 2009 national sports policy. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 10(1), 20-44. <https://doi.org/10.47264/idea.lassij/10.1.2>

**Copyright:** © 2026 The Author(s), published by IDEA Publishers Group (LASSIJ IDEA-PRCS).

**License:** This is an Open Access manuscript published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0) International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



## 1. Introduction

The political and sporting cohabitation dates back to the 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C., after the company of Armistice or Ekecheiria was formed in primitive Greece via an international treaty, authorized by three kings – Cleisthenes of Pisa, Lycurgus of Sparta, and Iphitos of Elis – in their attempts, the whole Greek states accorded the reliable tolerance or sanctuary of athletes in Olympia. Following the rebirth of the Olympic Games in 1896, politics resurrected sports at the turn of the twentieth century. Within a short time, the games had evolved into venues of political influence and national competitions. They invented the Olympic Games, including football, tennis, and cricket, to showcase sport for diplomatic purposes (Saliu & Llundji, 2022). The so-called “Christmas truce” in World War 1 (1914 – 1918) calmed warring parties and increased the sport’s popularity (Brown & Seaton, 1994; Schober, 2021). The ensuing three narratives temporarily replaced several aspects of the nexus between politics and sports, forging closer links between Sino-American relations in the 1970s, a situation familiar to the role of sport in promoting peace (Kramareva & Grix, 2021; Grix & Brannagan, 2024). For instance, five United States (US) wrestlers traveled to Iran to compete in the Takhti Global Cup, accompanied by their interpreters. Before the Iranian Revolution, it was the first official diplomatic visit to Iran, and as a result, an American flag was raised in Tehran (Merkel, 2016; Matviyenko, & Gryshuk, 2024).

Nigeria’s foreign policy goals were numerous and ambitious at the time of independence. The preservation of the Nigerian state’s national sovereignty and integrity, enhancement of Nigeria’s economic and social well-being, the improvement of Nigeria’s stance in the international community, supporting national unity, and the complete political, social, cultural, and economic emancipation of Nigeria and Africa (Agyemang et al., 2024). However, Umaru Yar’Adua’s regime successfully reviewed such foreign policy goals and developed a new set of goals, which comprises the need to promote a more positive image of Nigeria and strengthen ties with other nations by winning over their goodwill; seek closer ties with established and evolving powers; and support fast and maintained economic growth and advancement, among other things. The explicit goal of this study is to improve Nigeria’s connections with the external world by providing a clearer picture of the nation, strengthening its capabilities, and reviving its poor reputation in the international community, thereby advancing other foreign policy goals (Okeke, 2022).

The same Yar’Adua government amended the 1989 edition into the 2009 National Sports Policy (NSP), with the primary goals of leveraging sporting accomplishments to improve Nigeria’s reputation in the world system, luring major global sporting events to Nigeria, and maximizing their positive effects on tourism and the economy. Such was crafted in response to the need to improve Nigeria’s reputation. However, the 2009 (NSP) had lofty goals. Still, it has not achieved them because Nigeria’s sports teams have not performed well in major global sporting events, such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. It has not made it easier for Nigeria to host either of these two crucial global sporting competitions since the policy was

created. As a result, this study aims to investigate the reasons behind Nigeria's poor results in the key global athletics events and its inability to submit a competitive proposal to host them, which limits the ability of the 2009 NSP to advance Nigeria's foreign policy (Okeke, 2022; Ugochukwu & Chidiobi, 2024).

Furthermore, the ministry weakened, including during the 2002 World Cup, hosted by Japan and South Korea, when Nigeria was unable to advance past the group stage. According to the December 28, 2011, Prime-Time report, the Nigerian Football Team (Super Eagles) failed to improve in the most recent FIFA rankings; the Eagles are ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in Africa and 43<sup>rd</sup> overall. Nigeria's decline from 11<sup>th</sup> place at the beginning of 2011 marked the end of a dismal stretch, and 2011 was regarded as the worst year for Nigerian football. As such, Samson Siasia, the Nigerian Eagles' former coach, was fired for the Eagles' failure to advance to the 2012 African Cup of Nations, hosted by Equatorial Guinea/Gabon. The Nigerian women's team, which had never lost in Africa, was unable to meet the qualification threshold for both the African Games and the Olympics. This development had never occurred since the beginning of the Nigerian female games.

In a similar vein, Adewoye (2020) affirmed that Nigeria was ranked 29<sup>th</sup> in the FIFA rankings on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019, which is entirely unacceptable, given that the country's highest position was in 1994, when it rose to fifth place after winning the African Cup of Nations. Additionally, Nigeria struggled to advance past the group stage at the tournaments in Russia (2018), Brazil (2014), and South Africa (2010), and failed to qualify for the 2006 World Cup (Efebeh, 2021). However, the paper aims to scrutinize the formulation and implementation of the 2009 (NSP) in pursuing Nigerian foreign policy advancement, through the instrumentalization of sports diplomacy in the Nigerian public diplomacy terrain in advancing its national interest, reviving its enviable reputation, restoring its regional and continental hegemony or superiority, and elevating its image in the international sphere.

### **1.1. History of sports in Nigeria and its policies**

According to the Nigerian Sports Policy, sports are organized social and physical activities undertaken for exercise and leisure. Informal competitive sports emerged among the ethnic communities living in the villages. A rampant phenomenon that initially began as a simple form of leisure and entertainment activity subsequently transformed and became so well-known that socio-political and business circles in the country could not ignore it. Initially, formal sports were introduced to Nigeria by missionaries, and over time, both traditional and formal sports developed into systems now overseen by bodies such as sports leagues, councils, and, at the highest level, the National Sports Commission. Interschool tournaments, known as Empire Day events, heralded the beginning of organized sports in Nigeria around 1910. The establishment of mission schools across various regions of Nigeria aided the development of emerging sports and the elevation of existing ones. Even though most of the sports were unfamiliar to Nigerians, they were nonetheless welcomed because they benefited the common

objectives, including entertainment, social interaction, recreation, and the advancement of variety in all its forms. The late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe set the tone for the country's first international events by competing in the 440-yard dash at the 1934 Commonwealth Games and Empire Day in London (400 meters) (Adenuga et al., 2009).

Furthermore, Nigeria provided financial support for its athletes competing in the 1950 Commonwealth Games in Hamilton, Canada; the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki, Finland; and the 1965 first All-African Games in Libreville, Congo. Nigeria continued to engage in such competitions (except for the 1976 Montreal Olympics, the 1989 Edinburgh Commonwealth Games, and the Kuala Lumpur 1998 Commonwealth Games in Malaysia) due to political reasons influenced by the intense apartheid administration in South Africa. Nigeria decided to abstain from the 1976 Commonwealth Games and Olympics as a result of the boycott by the African countries. Similarly, Nigeria was unable to participate in the 1998 Commonwealth Games because it was excluded from the Commonwealth. In Nigeria, the administration and practice of sports have evolved into a significant and emerging field, playing a crucial role in the nation's economy and creating jobs. The federal government of Nigeria became actively involved in the administration, supervision, and marketing of sports as a result of the Russian Axis Power's dominance in international sports and its distinctive institutional practices. The National Sports Council was established in 1962 pursuant to such laws. Sports administration at the regional and national levels is the responsibility of the sports council and the National Sports Commission (Adenuga et al., 2009).

The historical development of the National Sports Commission (NSC) is presented in the following manner: the National Sports Commission (NSC) was established as the top federal government body in charge of overseeing, managing, and organizing sports in Nigeria. As such, the NSC was appointed to a cabinet ministerial position and promoted to a ministry in 1975. However, after Order 7 was approved in 1991, the NSC resurfaced as a parastatal under the Ministry of Youth and Sport. The NSC was disbanded in 1995, and the Sports Ministry once more took charge of sports management. By December 2006, the NSC had taken over management of the former Federal Ministry of Sports and Social Development (FMSSD) under the Obasanjo government. The previous government had 34 National Sports Federations. The Federal Ministry of Sports (FMS) and the National Sports Commission (NSC) anticipated that the NSC would significantly hamper the expansion and development of sports. The 1989 NSP, Nigeria's amended sports policy, was either ineffective or never implemented, which had a significant negative effect on the sports management system (Adenuga et al., 2009).

Historically, football was played by traders and students in Nigeria, as missionaries brought the sport to the Nigerian populace. Thereafter, it was widely accepted, and in 1945, Mr. Mulford was nominated as the director of the Nigerian Football Association (NFA), Nigeria's sports governing body. The NFA secured legal protection by Decree 101 of 1991, which established it as a parastatal within the former Federal Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Social Development. The Nigerian Premier League Board, which oversees professional football, was

---

established following the expansion of football programs in Nigeria. The National Institute of Sports was founded in 1974 and, by Decree 31 of 1992, was granted the status of a parastatal institution, committed to research and education in all elements of sports. Notably, the following are the strategic goals the NSP shall pursue: to use sport as a tool to promote international cooperation and harmony. Use sporting success to boost the country's reputation on the global stage. Encourage and enhance the most outstanding athletes, coaches, strategic officers, sports scientists, sports medicine professionals, and managers (Adenuga et al., 2009).

Moreover, it transformed Nigeria into an essential venue for international events, benefiting the nation's economy and tourism. Explore a supportive environment for companies manufacturing athletic equipment. Use athletics to reduce antisocial behavior. Encourage the use of sports to generate revenue and employment. Offered those with physical disabilities the opportunity to participate in their preferred sports. Encourage all forms of private investment in the sports sector. Ensure the adoption of information technology to collect sports data for effective planning and information exchange. Encourage the three levels of government to build sports and recreation facilities. Ensure that sports funding is consistent, adequate, and appropriate at all times. All branches of government should support the expansion of school and institutional sports events. Ensure that sports are trained as a required subject in all types of educational institutions (Nursery, Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary). Encourage broader inclusion in sports and leisure activities to adopt physical activity to enhance residents' overall health and fitness. In relative terms, the policy's core components are governance and management. Sponsorship/Finance. Technical Special Development Training. Facilities and Apparatus. Athletic Identification and Growth. Tourism, Sports, and Culture. Sports and Safety, Physical Challenges, Environment, Global challenges, Information, and National orientation, among others (Adenuga et al., 2009).

## **2. Theoretical framework**

Any assessment of sports as a tool for diplomacy must be grounded in the larger context of foreign policy and international relations. Realism, liberalism, and the more extreme Marxist viewpoint are the three basic theoretical stances in the academic discipline of international relations (Mingst, 1999). Some of these theories are primarily concerned with security and trade, global terrorism, the armed forces, foreign policy, and economic ties, so it initially appears that sports have no place in them. Realists are not appealing as evaluators of the diplomatic value of sport because they pay too little attention to the role of NGOs in a global system characterized by insecurity and ambiguity. As a result, the realist perspective can contribute only minimally to a better understanding of the role of international sport in world politics. This paradigm would be overly restrictive, as it cannot account for the nuances and intricacies of the Nigerian people's existence within a flawed, inadequate, and insignificant sports system. The Marxist paradigm encompasses a comprehensive theoretical framework that realism does not. The strategy accounts for the influence of non-state actors and the significance of non-security issues, but it largely focuses on economic structures, disparities,

and development. The Marxist model offers only a small window of opportunity for evaluating the efficacy of sport as a diplomatic resource due to the latter's limited economic impact in the Nigerian context, even though many aspects of international sport are undeniably highly commercialized and fuelled by the egotism of global governing systems and the corporate benefits of sponsors and multinational firms.

Sports diplomacy in international relations and its heavy reliance on state engagement were best described by liberal theory. International and non-government organizations, as well as the frequently cross-cutting channels that unite them, are included in the liberal view of international relations, a tremendously theoretically all-inclusive umbrella not just for countries. Similarly, Harris et al. (2021) assert that liberalism places a strong emphasis on institutionalist efforts to understand politics to create institutions that promote cooperation, prosperity, and human rights. This school of thought emphasizes three factors that encourage greater collaboration and fewer conflicts between states; international organizations like the U.N., which develops an avenue for peaceful conflict resolution; and global trade; as when nations are intimately connected via trade, there is a reduced likelihood of going to war with each other; and strengthening of democracy, in which established democracies refrain from going to war. Liberals contend that international organizations are essential to interstate cooperation. By establishing appropriate international organizations and increasing interconnection, states might reduce the likelihood of war (including through economic and cultural interactions). Interdependence primarily consists of three components. States connect through a variety of cultural, financial, and commercial channels; security is usually not a top concern, and military resources are rarely used. Liberals also stress that global diplomacy can be a potent weapon for promoting open dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution among nations (Jarvie, 2021), emphasizing that, with the right institutions and diplomacy, nations can work together to foster development while limiting disagreements. Liberalism, derived from the Latin word *liber*, meaning "free," and initially associated with the concept of liberty, is one of the main schools of international relations theory. The main problems it aimed to solve were how to achieve enduring peace and cooperation in international relations, and what approaches could help it succeed.

Supporters of liberalism frequently hold the view that cooperation may advance democracy. A number of classical liberal philosophers, including Immanuel Kant, Giuseppe Mazzini, and Jeremy Bentham, prophesied that the creation of international institutions would help governments foster cooperation, peace, and confidence. International sport is fuelled by global entities that comprise states as participants. Governments interacting locally or globally through organizations such as FIFA and the NFF, as well as two states cooperating during a sporting relationship, are examples of sports diplomacy. Although liberal theory in sports diplomacy has a significant influence on this research, the liberal perspective has a notable drawback. Sports are inherently competitive, and because politics and sports are closely related, states use them as a form of soft power. International sporting events are seen as "soft power," although governments have used them to spread propaganda. Moreover, both the

“authoritarian” and “democratic” regimes have included sport in their propaganda to foster a sense of unity and advance their own interest. States have found ways to use sports to develop diplomatic ties by highlighting their potential and prowess, and doing so is much less risky than going to war. In this regard, liberalism plays a crucial part in the practice of sports diplomacy in international affairs and offers a theoretical but tentative justification for it (Giri, 2020).

As each succeeding government reframes its interests as national interests, this could lead to policy changes. Despite the shortcomings listed above, this study adopted the theory because it provides a comprehensive framework for examining the underlying factors that influence a state's foreign policy. The security and preservation of Nigeria's independence as a sovereign state, the protection of its citizens from domestic and outside aggression, the advancement of citizenry welfare, and the uplifting of its stance as the force to be reckoned with within the African continent and the international system, are all needs that must be ensured, according to an analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy goals. The report, however, argues that sports diplomacy is a crucial instrument for advancing Nigerian national interests. According to Qadeer (2021), every state's actions in the global system are focused on acquiring power and using that authority to uphold and further its national interests when dealing with other countries. Therefore, Nigerian national interests can be well safeguarded and advanced if sports are given a prominent role in the creation and execution of Nigeria's foreign policy.

### **3. Methodology**

This section provided a general overview of the research methodology, the study adopted a qualitative approach and employed Liberal theory as well as subscribed secondary/library sources including published documents sources such as journal articles, books, reports, and newspapers among others to grasp the Nigerian soft power approach in its foreign policy pursuit through sports diplomacy in its diplomatic rapport with the comity of countries in the international system. In this regard, Creswell (2012) asserts that the qualitative research approach investigates a problem and develops a thorough grasp of that specific topic. However, the adaptation of this method with its Liberal theory employment is sufficient to explore the descriptive and qualitative nature of the study in order to grasp the magnitude and processes of sports diplomacy in shaping a country's foreign policy and how Nigeria can emulate to pursue and better strengthen its national interest diplomatically in the international arena.

### **4. Data and results**

#### **4.1. Critical assessment of the approaches of foreign policy in Nigeria since independence**

The fundamentals of the Nigerian foreign policy according to Halidu et al.,2022 reveal that the country's foreign policy precepts and objectives at the time of independence comprised

---

preserving its territorial and sovereign integrity; advancing its citizen's social and economic well-being; improvement of Nigeria's reputation and status in the international community; upholding unity as well as complete cultural, economic, political and social of Nigeria and Africa; ensuring the rule of law; promoting international cooperation, which contributes to the centralization of world security and peace, ensuring reciprocated respect and alliances among the populace, mitigating inequity in the global structures that tend to demoralize the ambitions of evolving nations, and the pursuit of international peace founded on the values of freedom, equity, and respect for all people.

The initial four mentioned above can be considered the fundamental and ongoing goals of Nigeria's foreign policy, while the rest are subsidiary goals that may change with changes in administration. This is evident from a critical review of the aforementioned aims, and every administration is responsible for taking all reasonable steps to safeguard and advance them. The safeguarding of the Nigerian State's autonomy and the maintenance of its territorial integrity had to be the focus of every policy adopted by succeeding Nigerian administrations. It is undeniable that each administration's primary or paramount responsibility is to advance the welfare of its citizens. In light of this, Nigeria's interactions with other nations should be instrumental in advancing Nigerians' social and economic well-being. Nigeria is no different in the ambition of each citizenry, as well as every nation-state, to be awarded a position of distinction. Moreover, since Nigeria's independence in 1960, Africa has been a key and persistent goal of Nigeria's foreign policy (Ojo et al., 2024).

The idea that these four core goals are interconnected, and the belief that achieving them is not mutually exclusive, have led successive Nigerian administrations to use similar tactics to accomplish them consistently. Assessment of the foreign policy thrust of previous Nigerian administrations will show the wide-ranging idea that if policies are dedicated to transforming Nigeria into the prestigious champion of the African continent, Nigeria's sovereignty could be ensured, the standard of good neighborliness would ensure her safety, and the royalties that come with being a continental champion would translate into welfare advantages for her populace. Therefore, Nigeria has made a significant investment in the African continent from the First Republic to the current Fourth Republic. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (ADB), the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) were all founded with significant contributions from Nigeria. Nigeria was also on the front lines of the anti-colonial campaign, which helped several African States, such as Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, South Africa, and Mozambique, liberate themselves from the oppressive yoke of colonialism (Wogu et al., 2015).

Nigeria, however, stands head and shoulders above all other African nations in maintaining peace in conflict zones around the globe, particularly in Africa. According to Mercy & Ade-Ibijola (2022), Nigeria ranks fourth among participants in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations worldwide. Nigeria has aided crisis-ridden nations across the African continent,

including Guinea-Bissau, Congo, Liberia, Sudan, Chad, Mali, the Ivory Coast, and Sierra Leone, in resolving their conflicts and restoring peace and order. Furthermore, according to Aluko, (1981); Attah et al., 2022 and others also highlighted additional contributions made by Nigeria to securing and strengthening Africa, such as the 1975 donations of \$13.5 million to Angola, \$2 million to the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa in 1976, the formation of a \$800 million Nigeria Trust Fund through the African Development Bank (ADB) to assist African nations in carrying out crucial projects; the financial of the \$90 billion peacekeeping operations in 1980s Chad; the financing of over \$12 billion peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and Liberia in the 1990s; the funding of \$500,000 to Namibia's South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in 1976; the budget of \$20 million to the 1977 Zimbabwean liberation movement; more than \$82 million funded the peacekeeping operations in early 2000s Sudan, the 2012 Tuareg rebellion in Mali was put down with the aid of more than \$34 million, and ECOWAS took on more than 60% of the financial burden.

Nevertheless, even with the substantial investment Nigeria has made on the African continent, particularly in establishing organizations at the regional and continental levels to accelerate continental development and peacekeeping operations, she has yet to genuinely reap the benefits of these investments in ways that advance her vital national interests. Internal separatist movements in Nigeria, with supporters and financial support from abroad, are a continuing danger to the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Still, Nigeria is regarded as one of the world's poorest countries (Mercy & Ade-Ibijola, 2022). According to Chidozie et al. (2020), Nigeria has a poor global reputation, and whether it is the continent's leader among African nations, such as South Africa and Egypt, remains debatable. Even many of the nations in which Nigeria has made a significant investment to her harm continue to view her with contempt. It is documented that in 2009, when Nigeria was vying for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, Sierra Leone and Liberia, where Nigeria heavily funded their bids for independence from internal and international colonialism, several Nigerians suffered. Billions of naira were spent to preserve peace and security for their populace, but the effort failed to end the conflict in Nigeria (Ojo et al., 2024).

Subsequently, it has become imperative to step back and re-evaluate our foreign policy goals and the methods we use to achieve them. As stated by Garba (2022), "We should question ourselves, to what extent does such foreign policy profit Nigerians?" They stressed how much Nigeria's foreign policy contributed to ensuring food was available in every household. Even though her foreign policy goals are admirable and quite aspirational, this study reiterates the need for her to vary her approaches to achieving them. It is not an issue that Nigeria plays a key part in establishing regulatory entities in Africa or that she aided in crisis resolutions across the continent, but turned problematic when she undertakes in what Weiler, & Sanubi, (2019) refers to as "megalomaniac spending" of the countries resources to make other African nations safe and convenient while her citizenry is afflicted with abject poverty and daily confronted with the repercussions of insecurity. However, this study suggests that using sports is a highly effective means of achieving Nigeria's foreign policy goals. As numerous examples from

---

around the world have demonstrated, Nigeria's foreign policy goals are best advanced by leveraging the extensive media coverage accompanying athletic events.

#### **4.2. Economic impact of sport diplomacy**

Internationally, sports are a significant source of income for companies and brands. Sporting events provide a platform for showcasing products through billboards, sports venues, stadiums, and television ads, serving as a conduit for firms to gain visibility and reach a global audience with significant purchasing power and disposable income. Additionally, companies choose to sponsor sporting events to attract new customers. They assert that sponsorship agreements significantly influence African athletes' success in sports. International businesses recognized Africa's sporting prowess and leveraged collaborations and investments to capitalize on it. To modernize sports facilities, acquire sports equipment and training services, and support the growth of sports, instructors, athletes, clubs, and administration, they have leveraged sponsorship agreements. International airlines like Emirates, sports betting companies like Betway Group, and multinational companies like Coca-Cola, Adidas, Nike, and British American Tobacco have all acquired stakes in sports. Hosting large-scale athletic events is a major driver of local economic growth. Such has become increasingly relevant due to the World-South diplomatic strategy adopted by nations such as China, Brazil, and South Africa. The financial benefits to the host nation are the primary drivers of bidding and hosting. Developing countries are making additional claims about their entitlement to host international tournaments and to receive rewards for doing so. Hosting the World Cup and the Olympics entails significant expenses, as well as the potential for substantial benefits for business relocation, tourism, and foreign investment. On the financial front, FIFA requires that the countries hosting the World Cup construct at least eight and ideally ten contemporary stadiums with seating for 40,000-60,000 spectators (Grix et al., 2019). As major sporting events spur local development, sports diplomacy also seeks to advance infrastructure goals by hosting tournaments.

Following the use of sports as a tool for advancement, aided by multinational firms such as Adidas and Nike, international organizations such as UNICEF and the Red Cross, and sports organizations such as the IOC and FIFA, sports development aid projects have gained popularity worldwide. According to Barreira et al. (2022), to incentivize third-world countries to send athletes to the Olympic Games by offering cash and technical aid to their national Olympic commissions, the IOC launched the Olympic Solidarity program for African nations in 1973. Fortunately, 2005 was designated the International Year of Sport and International Growth by the United Nations to increase public awareness of sports as a tool for development assistance. Sports now play a more significant role in global development initiatives. The staging of sporting mega-events, on the other hand, helps improve infrastructure, create job opportunities, attract steady private investment, recruit athletes, and contribute significantly to a nation's economic development. As a result, one could characterize the impact of sports on society and the economy as multi-dimensional (Arpit, 2014). Sports are rarely among the main

factors statisticians consider when determining GDP, making it challenging to gauge their effects on Nigeria's GDP. Fortunately, the industry is part of the leisure and hospitality sector, which, in 2019, 2020, and 2021, generated 0.19, 0.31, and 0.33 percent of Nigeria's GDP, respectively. As a result of limited financial and investment resources, sports influence remains below 1 percent (CSEA, 2021).

Similarly, Yame Kale, the federation's statistician, stated that sports' economic impact on Nigeria is negligible, accounting for just 0.005 per cent of the country's GDP. According to remarks made during the pre-summit webcast for the 25<sup>th</sup> Nigerian Economic Summit, the global sports industry is worth \$500 billion. However, they contributed only 0.005 per cent of Nigeria's GDP, an unsustainable share. He described sports as a small industry in the nation but emphasised that it has the potential to spur economic growth. In a similar vein, Sunday Dare, Minister of Youth and Sports Development, stated in his remarks at the event that the sports industry, a labour-intensive, developing sector, is now being recognised as a business venture with the potential to spur economic advancement beyond entertainment. Dare emphasised that the industry would need a \$500 million annual investment to produce N12 trillion over the next five to ten years (Usman, 2020). According to Barreira et al. (2022), the Norwegian Confederation of Sport (NOC) initiated its Sports for All program in Tanzania in 1938 and continued it until 1990. Increased participation in sports in Darus Salam was one of the program's goals, and this was in line with Norway's foreign policy goals. The concept of female representation in sports was not yet fully grasped in Tanzania; therefore, a cultural clash ensued. However, over the course of the initiative, Norway provided about 12 million Norwegian Krone. Additionally, because the Olympic Games involve more officials, fans, and competitors, they garner a larger audience than the World Series, the Super Bowl, or even the World Cup. Since the Olympics have a wider profile, they focus more on improving infrastructure, attracting tourists, and generating revenue. Renovating public transportation systems, building roads and airports, and even developing transportation systems are all examples of infrastructure development.

Furthermore, fewer developing countries incur tremendous costs in building modern telecommunications networks. Due to the need for material acquisition and transportation, such developments create employment possibilities and the prospect of export. Long-term advantages result from improvements in the host nation's media commercials and transportation infrastructure. This creates new opportunities for trade and foreign investment. In this regard, de Oliveira Vasconcelos (2021) asserted that foreign policy, culture, investment attraction, tourist promotion, and brand export all take into account a country's most realistic, competitive, and appealing strategic goals. In addition to drawing attention to his nation, the sporting tournament also promotes trade. Football-related firms have a lot to gain commercially from the World Cup, especially those with substantial market shares such as Nike and Adidas.

Additionally, CBC (2010) reports that Adidas earned \$800 million during the 2006 World Cup. Conversely, the bulk of soccer balls is made in Pakistan, Thailand, China, and India. In this

sense, Pakistan was the world's top maker of soccer balls, which were 75% hand-sewn, in the late 1990s, with China and Thailand coming second and third, respectively, as significant producers of machine-sewn soccer balls (International Labour Rights Fund, 1999). The popularity of soccer balls was expected to increase Thailand's exports of apparel and athletic gear. The World Cup is significant in South Africa, alongside the 2003 Cricket World Cup and the 1995 Rugby World Cup, due to the global attention and large broadcast audience it attracts. South Africa's electricity, transportation, telecommunications, and social facilities were affected by the game because they had to be expanded and improved. Despite the global recession, this contributed to economic growth and strengthened the investment environment.

The 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia brought in approximately \$1.26 billion in television rights. The estimated costs for infrastructure construction and sports-related and non-sport-related expenses totalled 55 billion USD, placing Sochi in the top tier of winter resorts (Müller et al., 2022). The funds were utilised to advance Russia's technological capabilities and facilities. Additionally, it will strengthen Russian economic investment and increase Russia's appeal overseas. Cost overruns and inflation characterised the Sochi Games, and although corporate and public sponsorship were involved, the final budget exceeded expectations. According to Webb and Richelieu (2022), who share this opinion, Montreal's 1976 Summer Olympics accrued debt that took three decades to pay off. After officials projected a cost of millions of dollars, the city incurred billions of dollars in debt, the greatest cost overruns in Olympic history. Estimated expenses for the 2012 London Olympics were expected to total 4 billion USD, but they ultimately exceeded 19 billion USD, placing Britain in a similar financial predicament (Zimbalist, 2021). Moreover, after the Olympics, the government was unable to secure rugby or soccer teams as the stadium's anchor tenants, necessitating taxpayer funds for stadium upkeep. It costs money to update venues for unique outdoor events like bobsled runs and bicycle races. Large stadiums are required to accommodate the seating capacity for major sporting events, such as the Olympics, especially those hosting the opening and closing ceremonies. Sometimes venues with a capacity of 100,000 spectators or more are required for the Summer Olympic Games. It took time to organise a sporting event after submitting a bid. Land values and building costs increased during this time, fostering competition among bidders. It was essential to grasp the actual costs of advancement to align with participants' plans when seeking public approval. When costs exceeded the budget, taxpayers were responsible for maintaining the infrastructure.

The management of a program by an NGO that received financial support, publicity, technical assistance, and networking support from the government, advancement organisations, and sports federations is carried out in cooperation with many sports and advancement NOGs. Sports and other development activities are thus seen as non-political and effective frameworks for bringing together opposing and conflicting parties in the development policymaking process. Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and Right to Street Football World are affiliated with Sports Plus and other sports NGOs. Sport has been a significant target for both public and private investment, including funding, grants, collaborations, and publicity, due to

the relationship between sport and good health (Placentino et al., 2021). When such investments lead to increased consumption of nutrient-dense foods and beverages and to better physical activity, they are advantageous. Sports, on the other hand, frequently constitute a risk to the intended recipients' development. Some international partners may use their influence to promote their own interests, while other multinational companies have been accused of using their sponsorships to boost their profiles. Also, Kobierecki (2020) claims that tobacco companies continue to support numerous sporting events worldwide, particularly in less developed countries with more lax rules on advertising and sponsorship, and higher smoking rates than in industrialised countries. Because many people are inclined to consume the product rather than appreciate the sponsors that support sporting events, this has detrimental effects on the general population.

Additionally, some businesses fund international athletic events. The association between sports and sponsorship can also help to raise awareness of unhealthy products, including fast food, alcohol, tobacco, supplements, soft drinks, and gambling. During major sporting events, such as the 2012 London Olympics and the FIFA World Cup, logos of fast-food, soft-drink, and beer companies, including KFC and McDonald's, were prevalent. A brand's strategy for selling its products and demonstrating its enthusiastic sponsorship of an event is the conspicuous presentation of its trademarks during athletic events. Campaigns to outlaw or restrict tobacco sponsorship in sports, including those supported by World Health Organisation (WHO) investigations and European Union (EU) laws, have been effective, if not entirely successful. Under EU law, tobacco companies are not allowed to sponsor sporting tournaments. Even though cigarette advertising is still permitted in China and Monaco, it was first outlawed in 1970s Germany and has since spread throughout the world. Also, based on Maldonado et al. (2019), the sponsorship of Formula 1 (F1) racing is not permitted as an indirect tobacco advertising strategy under the 2005 European Union Tobacco Promotion Directive. Excluding Scuderia Ferrari, most F1 cigarette sponsorships in the EU have ended. In 2007, a barcode sign replaced the Marlboro emblem, which Ferrari claimed better represented the car than a Marlboro advertisement.

#### **4.3. Nigeria's performance in the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup finals**

Besides advancing national integration and unification, sports have played significant roles in enhancing Nigeria's stature and reputation on the international stage. The study scrutinises the effects of sports diplomacy on Nigeria's foreign policy (i.e., international sports organisations and their primary competitions). Such sports institutions are the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which oversees the Olympic Games, and the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), which oversees the World Cup for men's football. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were the first Olympics in which Nigeria took part as a sovereign nation. At the event, Nojim Maiyegun, a young Nigerian boxer, helped elevate Nigeria's image on the international stage by winning a bronze medal. Such an accomplishment raised Nigeria's profile as a prospective sporting regional power and strengthened its position as a sovereign

nation (Yahaya, 2019). Even though Nigeria was unable to bring home any medals from the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, her presence was a significant assist to her efforts to protect her indivisibility at a time when the Civil War seriously threatened her territorial integrity and sovereignty. A second young Nigerian, Isaac Ikhuoria, also triumphed in a bronze medal in the boxing competition at the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, putting Nigeria on the medals table. The fact that all Nigerians, regardless of their ethnic or regional connections, felt a sense of pride in the accomplishment not only improved Nigeria's reputation in the world system but also significantly aided the Nigerian States' recovery after three gruelling years of civil war.

Similarly, a such developmental achievement which established Nigeria as the champion in Africa in the international sporting arena, was able to mobilize other African nations to embargo the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal to pressure the world system into designating South Africa rogue nation until she ended her offensive racial discrimination policy of apartheid regime, which reduced black Africans to second-class citizens in their home country (Efebeh, 2021). It is essential to reaffirm that the 1976 Olympics lack the triumphs of the preceding and subsequent Olympics, which may be related to Nigeria's boycott of the Games (Sikes et al., 2019). Additionally, it is essential to remember that this boycott was a turning point in the struggle against racial discrimination and colonialism in the African continent and considerably aided the Nigerian states' primary foreign policy goals. First and foremost, Nigeria's prestige as a significant player on the world stage of sports and politics was greatly enhanced. Second, it strengthened Nigeria's claim to be the champion of all African heritage, as it signalled that it would not stand by. In contrast, any African nation is exposed to discriminatory behaviour. Even though the military governed the Nigerian State, all of these accomplishments were made possible by sports.

Nigeria failed to win a medal at the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games, even though its participation made a significant foreign policy statement. The United States (US), alongside its allies, boycotted the Olympics in opposition to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan (Cohen, 2020). Nigeria's participation demonstrated that it was not beholden to the dictates of the US and its European associates. In the same vein, Nigeria's participation in the 1984 Olympics, held in Los Angeles, served as further confirmation of its determination to remain independent of both the Western Bloc, led by the US, and the Eastern Bloc, led by the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union also rejected the 1984 Olympics in retaliation (Storm & Jakobsen, 2020). Nigeria's involvement reflected a clear policy of non-alignment. Nigeria's participation in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics further solidified its reputation as a sporting nation. By winning a silver medal in the boxing competition, Peter Konyegwachie surpassed the accomplishments of both Maiyegun and Ikhuoria. The male 4x400-meter relay team from Nigeria also captivated the world by taking bronze. Nigeria won more medals at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, thereby raising its international status and prestige. Additionally, in the boxing ring, David Izonritei and Richard Igbinebu each won a silver medal. The male 4x100-meter relay team improved upon their 1984 record by capturing silver, while their female counterparts took home a bronze medal (Efebeh, 2021).

Nigeria, however, made a significant jump toward sporting stardom at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Women's long jump champion Chioma Ajunwa and the soccer team, termed the "Dream Team," both took home gold medals. Mary Onyali and Falilat Ogunkoya each took home a bronze medal in the 200 and 400-meter relay teams, respectively. At the competition, Duncan Dokiware also won a bronze medal in boxing. In addition to improving Nigeria's reputation abroad, this accomplishment also helped reduce political turmoil within the Nigerian state following the annulment of the results of the 1993 presidential elections, in which MKO Abiola, the nominee of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), was reputedly declared the winner. Abiola was detained by the Abacha military government in 1994 after he attempted to reclaim the mandate he claimed had been granted to him by Nigerian citizens at the time. Such occurrences led to mass protests within the Nigerian state, and the excellent performance of the Nigerian delegation at the 1996 Olympics was an enormous contributor to the upkeep of law and order within the country as the "motivating factor" and pride that come with country's sports teams' participation in international competitions strengthened Nigeria's prospect in a better future for the Nigerian state (Adeboye et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Gloria Alozie and Ruth Ogbeifo earned silver medals in the 100-meter race and the weightlifting competition, respectively, at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. Nigeria also brought home gold in the 400-meter men's relay. Nigeria's 400-100 and 400-meter relay teams helped the country win two bronze medals at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. The men's soccer club, the women's 4x100 relay club, and Blessing Okagbare in the women's long jump all took home silver medals at the Beijing-hosted 2008 Olympics. Chika Chukwumerije in taekwondo and Mariam Usman in weightlifting both took home bronze medals. Nigeria failed to win any medals at the 2012 London Olympics, but it achieved its first medal in the soccer competition at the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games, hosted by Brazil. After her outstanding achievement at the 1996 Games, Nigeria has experienced declining fortunes at the Olympics, which has hurt her international prestige and stature (Efebeh, 2021). Nigeria was a dominant force in sports, even though it did not participate in the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup until 1994. Also, at the 1980 and 1994 African Nations Cups, Nigeria triumphed, becoming the continental champions. She also competed in the Under-17 and Under-20 divisions of the FIFA Youth World Cup finals, where she frequently took first place. She managed to organise African votes in 1974 to elect Brazilian Joao Havelange as FIFA President in place of Englishman Stanley Rous, due to her powerful and persuasive credentials both on and off the field (Musikavanhu, 2020).

Moreover, this action significantly advanced Nigeria's foreign policy goals. First of all, it demonstrated her pedigree and substantial impact on the African continent, raising her stature and prominence in the international arena. Secondly, such a decision was a massive step towards Havelange's goal of eliminating colonialism and racial discrimination on the continent of Africa due to the pledge to exclude nations with such policies from competing in FIFA-organised events. The Nigerian national football team, the Super Eagles, took part in the senior World Cup Finals hosted in the U.S. for the very first time in 1994, shortly after winning the

African Cup of Nations. The Nigerian club disapproved of all oddsmakers after easily advancing from its group, which featured prominent football teams from Argentina, Greece, and Bulgaria, to the next stage of the competition. In stage 16, she came up just short against Italy, who went on to triumph in the championship. However, the team's exhibition of football artistry established Nigeria as a major force in global football and significantly raised its status and prestige within the global sports engine (Efebeh, 2021). She received numerous requests to play friendly football matches with major international powers, such as England, after the World Cup, which is excellent evidence of her increased prestige on the global stage. The transitional government, which the Babangida era had hurriedly formed on the eve of its forced removal from office in 1993, following the outcry over the annulment of the 1993 presidential elections, was ousted by the military government led by Gen. Sani Abacha in 1994. The MKO Abiola, who was purportedly the winner of the 1993 presidential election, was likewise detained by the Sani Abacha dictatorship and put under house detention.

Nigeria had lost favour with the international community as a result of such acts and other totalitarian actions by Abacha. As a result, the Super Eagles' achievement at the 1994 World Cup was more significant because it paved the way for constructive dialogue among the critical players in the world community. In a similar development, the Super Eagles' excellent performance also helped ease political pressure across the Nigerian State. The prevailing civil disturbance that entangled the Abacha regime's activities, including the detention of Abiola, lost steam as Nigeria, elated by the accumulated prestige from the Super Eagles' performance, rekindled its optimism and better Nigerian State. Nigeria also advanced to the 16th stage of the 1998 World Cup, held in France, defeating football superpowers such as Bulgaria and Spain. However, she was eliminated from the event after a dismissal loss to Denmark. Nigeria was unable to go past the group stages of the 2002 World Cup, which South Korea and Japan jointly hosted. Nigeria could not advance past the group stage at the 2010, 2014, and 2018 World Cups, which were held in South Africa, Brazil, and Russia, respectively. She was unable to even qualify for the 2006 World Cup in Germany (Efebeh, 2021). Nigeria's ability to leverage its FIFA affiliation and World Cup involvement to advance its international policies has declined.

## **5. Discussions and findings**

Every nation explores multiple ways to achieve its national interest through foreign policy. Such attainment takes different forms, and among them is sports diplomacy. Past and previous studies, assessed, investigate, evaluate, scrutinizes, and counter-emphasize issues such as sports diplomacy and public policy in foreign policy pursuit of national interest (Morgenthau, 1948; Arndt, 2015; Cull, 2008; Potter, 2002; Nye, 2004; Dubinsky, 2019; Kobierecki, 2019; Morozov, 2022; Lo, 2023; Dubinsky, 2023; Pack, 2024; Al-Muhannadi, 2024; Matviyenko et al., 2023). Some portion of such studies explored the full consolidation of sports into a comity of states' political affairs in attaining its national agenda (Levermore et al., 2017; Postlethwaite et al., 2022; Grix & Brannagan, 2024; Agyemang et al., 2024), and upgrading its position in

the global arena (Chalip, 2006; Pingman, 2010; Abdi et al., 2022; Banda et al., 2024). The following set stressed that the substandard of Nigerian state's sports institutions are a lack of public partnerships and privatization in the nations sports machine (PPP) (Akara, 2014; Aibbueku, 2002; Pfeffer, 1992; Oluwatoyin et al., 2021; Kayode, and Tunrayo, 2022), and the little changings in the foreign policy thrust (Nwanolue et al., 2010; Gambari, 1989; Anyaele, 2005; Kienka, 1990; Akara, 2014; Yahaya, 2019; Efebeh, 2021; Ogele & Okutalukwe, 2020). Additionally, some argue that endemic corruption, poor infrastructure, and ineptitude in Nigeria's sports sector undermine Nigeria's standing in the comity of nations (Akara, 2014; Oluwatoyin et al., 2021; Kayode & Tunrayo, 2022; Ojo et al., 2024). It is significant to understand that some portion of the literature confined sporting process from the perspective of effects and influence to ensure peace, create (or resolve) soured relations and crises among the comity of nations (Korr & Close, 2008; Heere, 2012; Golberg, 2000; Brown & Seaton, 1994; Jurgs, 2003; Penić et al., 2021), strengthen international integration, and entice public and private investment prospects (Nicholson, 1964; Pigman, 2010; Adenuga et al., 2019).

In summary, several aspects hinder the advancement of Nigerian sports and its capacity to serve as a diplomatic tool to advance the country's interests abroad, promote economic development, and solidify bilateral and multilateral ties. The present study introspects and highlights the effects and influence of sports as a political and diplomatic instrument in the international sphere, which if properly employed by a particular country will pave the way in terms of playing a crucial role in mending ruined or soured ties between states, enhancing external opportunities for a host country including trade, educational exchanges, foreign direct investment, tourism, and elevating national reputation or status, among others.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study explored the effectiveness of sports diplomacy phenomenon in Nigerian foreign policy plank in achieving its national interest, prospective outcome attainment, the policies that have hindered Nigerian victory in international sporting tournaments, as well as unravelling the Nigerian inability to fund and manage the sports sector, its services, and infrastructure without the insertion of private and foreign investors, and public partnership, to save what is left of declining economy chocked with endemic corruption, ineptitude, and deceits. Additionally, the study examined past studies on the influence of sporting prowess on a nation's supremacy over another in the comity of nations. To achieve national cohesion and prosperity within the international community, countries that have excelled in global sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup are encouraged to market their brands, reconcile strained relationships, and reduce hostilities between nations. The fundamental issues facing the development of national sports are infrastructure building, maintenance, and resource management. The following suggestions are deemed appropriate in an effort to alleviate the occurrence of ineffective implementation of the 2009 National Sports Policy:

---

Given the importance of Sports stakeholders to the effective integration of any sports policy, the government should ensure that every sports stakeholder is involved in the policy-making process at every level. To ensure that everyone involved in implementing the policy is aware of its existence and description, an effort should be made moving forward to make as much of the structure, publication, and presentation of all policy mandates as public as feasible. Sports administrators should make an effort to hire experts in a variety of sports-related specialisations, as their contributions can be crucial to the overall success of the sports program.

In an effort to ensure that Sports are used to advance the foreign policy goal of establishing an improved perception of Nigeria in the global world, the study suggested the urgent implementation of the 2009 National Sports Policy and quarterly collaborative monitoring of the Policy's execution to address the issues of poor cognisance of the Policy and detachment between the pertinent Ministries and Research Institutes. In a similar vein, the fourth arm of the administration, i.e., the Press, should be a proactive ally in educating the public, particularly sports analysts and foreign policy analysts, on the concept incorporated into the approved national sports policy as it has been recognized that the extremely low element of awareness regarding 2009 National Sports is a significant causative factor to it perceive ineptness.

The government of Nigeria should, at all stages, demonstrate its commitment and preparedness to ensure the Policy prevails by assuring the allocation of funds and other resources required for its successful implementation. Lastly, the study suggested the effective application and utilisation of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in the sports industry, as adopted in other economic sectors such as health, education, and transportation, to address such issues. Furthermore, the PPP strategy has been effectively adopted to organise, design, and maintain infrastructure to support broader sports growth in other nations. Nigeria should not be any different; therefore, a relevant PPP approach suitable for achieving the desired objective of optimal sports advancement in Nigeria should be identified and employed, taking into account Nigerian peculiarities.

### **Declaration of conflict of interest**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest(s) concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. There is no conflict of interest, whether financial or non-financial. The researcher(s) do not have any personal bias or affiliation in the matter under study.

### **Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication.

### **ORCID**

Yusuf K. Ibrahim     <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5392-984X>

Mohd Afandi Salleh     <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3601-1862>

### **Publisher's Note**

IDEA Publishers Group (LASSIJ IDEA-PRCS) stands neutral with regard to the jurisdictional claims in the published maps and the institutional affiliations.

---

## References

- Abdi, K., Fullerton, J., Deheshti, M., Kavand, R., Monibi, H., & Talebpour, M. (2022). Identifying the conceivable diplomatic outcomes of sport diplomacy initiatives. *International Area Studies Review*, 25(4), 322–337. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/22338659221120973>
- Attah, E., Amana, I., Abimaje, E., & Zekeri, S. (2021). Nigeria's Africa centre-piece policy: imperatives of a new paradigm in a globalised world. Available at SSRN 5285494. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=5285494](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5285494)
- Adenuga, G. A., Aluko, J. O., & Nwogwugwu, N. (2019). National Sports Policy Implementation and Nigeria's Foreign Policy. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*. ISSN, 2278–0211.
- Anyaele, (2005). Nigerian foreign policy in Ogo & Emakpo (eds), The evolution of Nigeria's Foreign Policy. <http://www.shvoong.com/books/1239-evolution-nigerian-foreign-policy/#ixzz2Q7miHmtr>.
- Agyemang, K. J., Ayenor, N. A., Hammond, M., & Bortey, J. N. B. (2024). Africa rising: turning sporting potential into success. *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 14(1), 117–130. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SBM-10-2023-0121>
- Akara, E. O. (2014). Sports marketing in Nigeria: governments' funding and sports development recommendations. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 3(1), 279–279. <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2014.v3n1p279>
- Aluko, O. (1981). *Essays on Nigerian policy*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Al-Muhannadi, A. (2024). How has sports diplomacy contributed to the growth of soft power and nation-branding in Qatar? *Journal of Politics and Governance*, 14(3), 1–21. <https://so03.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/jopag/article/view/276303>
- Arndt, R. T. (2005). *The first resort of Kings: American cultural diplomacy in the twentieth century*. Potomac Books, Inc.
- Barreira, J., Santos, F., Mazzei, L. C., & Galatti, L. R. (2022). The sports development and its socio-cultural and managerial aspects: an integrative review. *Motriz: Revista de Educação Física*, 28. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s1980-657420220097422>
- Banda, D., Ulrichsen, K. C., Al Khori, N., & Miseroy, J. (2024). Sport diplomacy and soft power through Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022: a case of Generation Amazing. In *The 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar* (pp. 219–232). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003453246>
- Brown, M. & Seaton, S. (1994). *The Christmas Truce: Western Front, December 1914*. Papermac Books.

- 
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Cohen, M. D. (2020). Political Parties, Australia and the US Alliance: 1976-2016. *Asian Security*, 16(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/14799855.2019.1681403>
- Cull, N. J. (2008). Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories. *The American Academy of Political and Social Science Annals*, 616(1), 31–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311952>
- Chalip, L. (2006). Toward a distinctive sport management discipline. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20(1), 1–21. <https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/20/1/article-p1.xml>
- de Oliveira Vasconcelos, D. (2021). China's State-Party Nationalism: seeking wealth and power under China's Dream of Great Rejuvenation | O Nacionalismo do Estado-partido da China: a busca por riqueza e poder no contexto do Sonho Chinês de Grande Rejuvenescimento. *Mural Internacional*, 12, e59051-e59051. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8675-6727>
- Dubinsky, Y. (2019). From soft power to sports diplomacy: a theoretical and conceptual discussion. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, 15, 156–164. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41254-019-00116-8>
- Dubinsky, Y. (2023). Nation branding and sports diplomacy in times of change. In *Nation branding and sports diplomacy: Country image games in times of change* (pp. 1–23). Springer International Publishing. [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-32550-2\\_1](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-32550-2_1)
- Efebeh, V. E. (2021). Sports as an instrument of foreign policy pursuit: a case of Nigeria. *World Scientific News*, 156, 119–129.
- Giri, P. (2020). *Sports diplomacy: means to engage, inform and influence* (Doctoral dissertation, Department of International Relations & Diplomacy). <https://elibrary.tucl.edu.np/home>
- Gambari, I. A. (1989). *Theory and reality in foreign policy making: Nigeria after the Second Republic*. Humanities Press. <https://www.africabib.org/rec.php?RID=048019984>
- Garba, D. (2022). Sixty years of Nigeria's Afrocentric foreign policy: achievements, challenges, and way forward. *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2).
- Goldberg, J. (2000). Sporting diplomacy: boosting the size of the diplomatic corps. *Washington Quarterly*, 23(4): 63–70.
- Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., & Lee, D. (2019). Sports mega-events and the concept of soft power. *Entering the global arena: Emerging states, soft power strategies, and sports mega-events*, 23–36. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7952-9\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7952-9_3)

- Grix, J., & Brannagan, P. M. (2024). Sports Mega-Events as Foreign Policy: Sport Diplomacy, “Soft Power,” and “Sportswashing”. *American Behavioural Scientist*, 00027642241262042.
- Harris, S., Dowling, M., & Houlihan, B. (2021). An analysis of governance failure and power dynamics in international sport: the Russian doping scandal. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 13(3), 359–378. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2021.1898443>
- Halidu, A., Emmanuel, I. U., & Ashimolowo, A. J. (2022). Nigeria’s Afrocentric Foreign Policy and the quest for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council (Unsc): prospects and challenges.
- Heere, B. (2012). *Het Olympisch speeltje*. Atlas-Contact.
- Jarvie, G. (2021). Sport, globalisation, and democracy. *The Palgrave handbook of globalisation and sport*, 673–691. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jurgs, M. (2003). *Der kleine Frieden im Grossen Krieg. Westfront 1914: Als Deutsche, Franzosen und Briten gemeinsam Weihnachten feierten*. München: Bertelsmann.
- Kayode, F. E., & Tunrayo, A. M. (2022). Management of sports budgeting and maintenance of facilities at the Kwara State Sports Council, Nigeria. *Indonesian Journal of Sport Management*, 2(1), 7–15. <https://doi.org/10.31949/ijsm.v2i1.1581>
- Kramareva, N., & Grix, J. (2021). Understanding public diplomacy, nation branding, and soft power in showcasing places via sports mega-events. In *Marketing Countries, Places, and Place-Associated Brands* (pp. 298–318). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Kienka, G. (1990). *Sports Administration in Nigeria*. International Tennis Academy Publisher. <https://doi.org/10.5901/ajis.2014.v3n1p279>
- Korr, C., & Close, M. (2008). *More than just a game*. Harper Collins. <https://cir.nii.ac.jp/crid/1970586434793190145>
- Kobierecki, M. M. (2020). Recognition of National football federations and the diplomatic role of FIFA. *Polish Political Science*, YB, 49, 158. <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=964990>
- Levermore, R., & Budd, A. (Eds.). (2004). *Sport and international relations: an emerging relationship*. Routledge. [https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu\\_dc/frontend/Info/item/dc:14082](https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu_dc/frontend/Info/item/dc:14082)
- Lo, A. A. (2023). Leveraging sports for public diplomacy outcomes: the case of Qatar’s FIFA World Cup 2022. *Anadolu Akademi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 5(1), 33-49. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/anadoluakademi/issue/76207/1266827>
- Matviyenko, V. M., & Gryshuk, R. Y. (2024). Sports diplomacy and soft power: analysis and prospects of application of world practices for Ukraine. *Actual Problems of*

- International Relations*, 1(159), 65–71. <https://doi.org/10.17721/apmv.2024.159.1.65-71>
- Mercy, A. A., & Ade-Ibijola, A. O. (2022). The role of the United Nations Security Council in the Mali crisis (2012-2021). *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, 5(3).
- Merkel, U. (2016). Sport as a foreign policy and diplomatic tool. In *Routledge Handbook of Sport and Politics* (pp. 56–66). Routledge. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315761930-12/sport-foreign-policy-diplomatic-tool-udo-merkel>
- Morgenthau, H. (1948). *Politics among nations: the struggle for power and peace*. Alfred A Knopf.
- Morozov, V. M. (2022). Network and Sports Diplomacy. In *network diplomacy: contributing to peace in the 21st Century* (pp. 245–254). Springer Nature Singapore. [https://scispace.com/papers/network-diplomacy-contributing-to-peace-in-the-21st-century-3razm75b?followup\\_question=What+is+Network+diplomacy%3F](https://scispace.com/papers/network-diplomacy-contributing-to-peace-in-the-21st-century-3razm75b?followup_question=What+is+Network+diplomacy%3F)
- Müller, M., Gogishvili, D., & Wolfe, S. D. (2022). The structural deficit of the Olympics and the World Cup: comparing costs against revenues over time. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 54(6), 1200–1218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X221098741>
- Mingst, K. (1999). *Essentials of International Relations*. W.W. Norton & Company. <https://hostnezt.com/cssfiles/internationalrelations/Essentials%20of%20International%20Relations%20Eighth%20Edition%20By%20Karen%20A.%20Mingst.pdf>
- Musikavanhu, R. R. (2020). Hosting mega events in Africa: fostering sustainable employment initiatives within the host community. In V. R. Kloutsiniotis & O. O. Akinboade (Eds.), *Sustainable human resource management in tourism: African perspectives* (pp. 103–119). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41735-2\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41735-2_8)
- Nwanolue, B. O. G., Osegbue, C., & Iwuoha, V. C. (2010). A postmortem analysis of Nigeria's foreign policy under Yar'adua's Administration. *Bassey Andah Journal*, 3, 48–73. [https://www.academicexcellencesociety.com/a\\_postmortem\\_analysis\\_of\\_nigerias\\_for\\_eign\\_policy.pdf](https://www.academicexcellencesociety.com/a_postmortem_analysis_of_nigerias_for_eign_policy.pdf)
- Nye, J. S., Jr. (2004). *Soft power: the means to success in world politics*. Public Affairs.
- Okeke, C. C. (2022). Globalisation and foreign policy of Nigeria: issues and challenges in Umaru Musa Yar'Adua's Diplomacy of Consequence. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences ISSN*, 2583, 2034. <https://doi.org.10.5281/zenodo.6423878>
- Oluwatoyin, I. M., Olanrewaju, I. T., & Sofyan, D. (2021). Sports indices predicting the sustainability of sports development in Kwara State. *Kinestetik: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Jasmani*, 5(1), 54–63. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jk.v5i1.14573>

- Ogele, E. P., & Okutalukwe, C. T. (2020). The changing nature of Nigeria's foreign policy: whose interest? *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 4 (7) 2454–6186. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/bcp/journal/v4y2020i7p577-584.html>
- Ojo, O. S., Olusegun, A. O., & Tikon, B. (2024). Analysis of communication and sports administration in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research and Library Science*. <https://nightingalepublications.com/index.php/nijadsr/article/view/213>
- Pack, S. M. (2024). Nation Branding and Sports diplomacy: country image games in times of Change. *Journal of Sport Management*, 1(aop), 1–2. <https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/39/1/article-p70.xml>
- Penić, S., Drury, J., & Bady, Z. (2021). Collective resilience. In *the Shadow of Transitional Justice* (pp. 197–214). Routledge. <https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/51207/9781000475593.pdf?sequence=1#page=210>
- Pfeffer, J. (1992). *Managing with power: politics and organisations*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Potter, E. H. (2002). *Cyber-diplomacy: managing foreign policy in the twenty-first century*. McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Postlethwaite, V., Jenkin, C., & Sherry, E. (2022). Sports diplomacy: an integrative review. *Sport Management Review*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14413523.2022.2071054>
- Placentino, U., Sogari, G., Viscecchia, R., De Devitiis, B., & Monacis, L. (2021). The new challenge of sports nutrition: accepting insect food as dietary supplements in professional athletes. *Foods*, 10(5), 1117. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods10051117>
- Pigman, G. A. (2010). *Contemporary diplomacy. representation and communication in a globalised world*. Polity.
- Qadeer, A. (2021). The power politics of sports in international relations and their effects on cricket. *Margalla Papers*, 25(2), 84–90. <https://doi.org/10.54690/margallapapers.25.2.75>
- Saliu, H., & Lljunji, V. (2022). Cultural diplomacy of Kosovo after the declaration of independence. *Information and Media*, 93, 62–76. <https://www.cceol.com/search/article-detail?id=1067807>
- Schober, M. (2021). The Christmas Truce of 1914 is an example of "the interruption of violence". In *Zeugnisse der Unterbrechung von Gewalt im Krieg-Grundlegung einer theologischen Ethik des nicht suspendierten Zweifels* (pp. 1–15). Universitätsverlag. <https://ixtheo.de/Record/175531339X>

- 
- Ugochukwu, M. O., & Chidiobi, O. C. (2024). Sport in national integration and cohesion in Africa: focus on football development in Nigeria, 1945-2008. *Interdisciplinary Journal of African & Asian Studies (IJAAS)*, 10(1). <https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/ijaas/article/view/4500>
- Wogu, I. A. P., Sholarin, M. A., & Chidozie, F. (2015). A critical evaluation of Nigeria's foreign policy at 53. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(2), 138–147. <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/RHSS/article/view/19136>
- Weiler, F., & Sanubi, F. A. (2019). Development and climate aid to Africa: comparing aid allocation models for different aid flows. *Africa spectrum*, 54(3), 244–267. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002039720905598>
- Webb, A., & Richelieu, A. (2022). Seeing is believing: Special Olympics events and the society of the spectacle. *Event Management*, 26(3), 473–492. <https://doi.org/10.3727/152599521X16192004803539>
- Yahaya, J. U. (2019). An overview of Nigerian foreign policy in consolidating African development.
- Zimbalist, A. (2021). Triumphalism and the Olympics: a review essay of Max Donner's *The Olympic Sports Economy*. *Journal of Olympic Studies* (2021) 2 (1): 122–126. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jofolympstud.2.1.0122>