

**DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF THE ACADEMY
OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

With the rights of manuscript:
C.Z.U.: 327:796(043.2)=111

POPOV ANTON

**SPORTS DIPLOMACY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN
POLICY AND A FACTOR OF „SOFT POWER”**

**561.01. Theory, methodology of political science; institutions and political
processes**

Abstract of the PhD thesis in Political Science

CHISINAU, 2022

The thesis has been drawn up within the framework of the
Doctoral School of the Academy of Public Administration

Doctoral advisor:

BENIUC Valentin

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, Associate Professor

Doctoral Guidance Committee:

SACOVICH Vasil

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, University Professor

ROȘCA Ludmila

Habilitated Doctor in Philosophy, Associate Professor

STEPANIUC Victor

PhD in History, Associate Professor, University Lecturer

The public defense of the doctoral thesis will take place on 29.06.2022, at 14.00, in the premises of the Academy of Public Administration, mun. Chisinau, str. Ialoveni, 100, room 301, in the meeting of the Doctoral Commission, approved by Order of the Rector of the Academy of Public Administration no. 05-dc from 22.04.2022

Doctoral Committee:

SOLOMON Constantin

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, University Professor, Academy of Public Administration – **chairman**;

BENIUC Valentin

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, Associate Professor, Doctoral School of the Academy of Public Administration, - **doctoral advisor**;

SACOVICH Vasil

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, University Professor, Academy of Public Administration, - **official reviewer**.

JUC Victor

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, University Professor, Institute of Legal, Political and Sociological Research, - **official reviewer**;

MANOLACHI Veaceslav

Habilitated Doctor in Pedagogical Sciences, University Professor, State University of Physical Education and Sports, - **official reviewer**

The doctoral thesis and the abstract can be consulted at the National Library of the Republic of Moldova, the Library of the Academy of Public Administration, the Scientific Library “Andrei Lupan”, as well as on the ANACEC website (<https://www.cnaa.md/>). The abstract was sent on May 27, 2022. Abstract sent out on 27 May 2022

Chairman of the Doctoral Committee:

SOLOMON Constantin,

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, University Professor

Doctoral advisor:

BENIUC Valentin,

Habilitated Doctor in Political Sciences, Associate Professor

Author:

POPOV Anton _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

1. CONCEPTUAL BENCHMARKS OF THE RESEARCH	4
2. CONTENT OF THE THESIS	9
3. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	21
4. REFERENCES	27
5. LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS ON THE THEME OF THE THESIS	30
6. ANNOTATION (in Romanian, Russian and English)	31

CONCEPTUAL BENCHMARKS OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance and significance of the research. Today, the world system of international relations is subject to serious changes, including under the influence of an ever-increasing number of non-state actors. In this regard, the decline of the state role and its structures occurs under the influence of the collapse of international relations based on the bipolar international system. In view of the situation created, the inability of the state and the traditional diplomacy to effectively manage this process of transition to a new world order is evident. Because of these processes, the state is forced to assign part of its foreign policy powers to non-state structures which on their turn represent important social spheres, such as performance sports, which by its position, are in the center of attention of all mankind. It should be noted that international sports organizations, in particular the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), International Sports Federations, according to their multinational role and status, are comparable to the well-known intergovernmental organizations. The representatives of these sports institutions are negotiating with the leaders of the states and governments, not only regarding the organization of major sporting events, but also being motivated by the need to adjust beneficial interstate relations, developing social infrastructure during preparations for World Championships and Olympic Games, and implementing major international projects related to youth issues.

In this context, the relevance and significance of the research topic is directly related to the role of performance sport as an instrument of foreign policy (denoted in the thesis by the concept of "sports diplomacy"). These indicators are also determined by the fact that the phenomenon under consideration plays an increasingly important role in international / inter-state relations, not only as a factor of "soft power", but also as an essential element of the ideological struggle. Awareness of the role of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a factor of "gentle power" is currently a fundamental prerequisite for the success of any State's foreign policy, in order to provide its security, to promote the country's image abroad and its commercial interests in international markets.

The relevance and significance of the research subject is conditioned by the need for a more in-depth understanding of the process of streamlining international activities through sport diplomacy as a component of public diplomacy and its dialectical link with the process of achieving "soft power" as factor in forming the positive image of the country. It deserves to be mentioned that in the Republic of Moldova, the research action of sports diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument and factor of "soft power" is undertaken for the first time.

Analysis of the state of research on sport diplomacy as a foreign policy tool and a factor of "soft power". The concept of "sports diplomacy" is relatively poorly thought out, and in connection therewith, the author found it necessary to investigate and introduce into the dissemination of research, in addition to individual conceptual provisions and conclusions set forth in the literature on the research topic, various theoretical and methodological developments of socio-political disciplines, including both general and specialized ones. In this sense, the author's analysis of the scientific literature on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach enabled him to better understand

the research subject, taking into account its new characteristics and identifying new knowledge. In other words, the literature reviewed, which forms the historical-narrative and theoretical basis for the research and that refers to issues of history and theory of politics, sociology, theory and diplomatic practice, is analyzed in terms of interdisciplinary / inter-theoretical approach, which has been found to be an effective methodological tool in current research.

Among the scientific sources of such a plan are the theoretical studies in the field of the theory of international relations: George Kennan [1], George Schwarzenberg [2], Carl von Clausewitz [3], Hans Morgenthau [4; 5], Raymond Aron [6], Arnold Wolfers [7]; sociology - Max Weber [8], Émile Durkheim [9], Talcott Parsons [10]; theory and practice of diplomacy - François Callier [11], Harold Nicolson [12; 13], Jules Cambon [14], Henry Kissinger [15; 16; 17; 18], V.I. Popov [19].

It is important to note that, the key components of our research subject: “sport”; “diplomacy” “public diplomacy” and, consequently, “sports diplomacy”; “foreign policy tool”; “soft power factor”; “development and promotion of the State’s image”, etc., they have been reflected in a variety of specialized bibliographic sources, particularly those from abroad. It is worth noting that over half a century ago, Western scientists began to study sport in conjunction with the state's internal and foreign policy and determine its place and role as a diplomatic tool. In addition, after Joseph Nye's work was published, they began to explore the sports diplomacy as a key factor in the implementation of “soft power” [20; 21; 22]. Among the significant works of this genre is Stuart Murray's monograph “Sports Diplomacy. Origins, theory and practice” [23], in which the author, analyzing the historical development of sport, especially the Olympic Games, comes to the unequivocal conclusion that sport has always been associated with politics.

Among the scientific monographs published in the post-Soviet space, the works that require more attention are those of V.I. Stoliarov “Спорт вне политики и в мире политики” [24]; A.S. Akseanova “Спорт как инструмент современных политических процессов и основа государственной безопасности “ [25], as well as the fundamental monograph by N.M. Bogoliubova and Iu.V. Nicolaeva “Спорт в палитре международных отношений: гуманитарный, дипломатический и культурный аспекты” [26], which became the basis for the development of a methodological-scientific/manual work, dedicated to university studies, with the title: “Геополитика спорта и основы спортивной дипломатии” [27].

As part of the Olympic theme, a special interest requires the work of Moldovan scientists Nicolae Vizitei and Veaceslav Manolachi “Идея олимпизма и спорт (философско-культурологический анализ проблемы)”, in which Olympism is considered as a philosophical principle of human life through the prism of “agonalia” (competitiveness) [28].

The principal hypothesis stated by the author in this research is that sports diplomacy is an effective tool for the foreign policy of the State, the achievement of its interests on the international scene, as well as an effective mean of “soft power”, in the condition of the continuous development of the performance sport, as well as achievement of great successes in international competitions.

The purpose of the thesis is to analyze the role and importance of sports diplomacy, the mechanisms of its enforcement in the implementation of the State's foreign policy and the protection of its national interests, as well as the construction of the positive image of the country on the international scene.

In accordance with the intended purpose of the study there were identified the following **objectives**:

- to analyze the scientific literature considering the dialectical relationship of sports, politics and diplomacy, as well as the historical development of political science discourse concerning sports diplomacy as a foreign policy tool;
- to disclose and analyze theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of the thesis subject;
- explore the political and diplomatic potential of sport, especially the theory and practice of the links between sport and politics;
- to explore the phenomenon of the expression of sport diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument and in this regard to systematically analyze the relationship between foreign policy, classical diplomacy, public diplomacy, sports diplomacy and "soft power";
- to consider sports diplomacy as a way of implementing "soft power" and preventing conflicts between States;
- to analyze Moldova's sport as a political and diplomatic instrument to shape the country's image in the international arena.

Methodological basis of the thesis. In this context, we note that the theory of international relations (implicitly the theory of the research topic itself) allows not only the scientific comprehension of complex processes and the acquisition of additional knowledge, but also the use of some of its dimensions and components as methods and ways of understanding and analyzing complex research issues. We emphasize that the professional sport and, in this sense, sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy, are surprisingly and at the same time explainable close to the nature of international relations, which, as you know, are based on national interest and classical diplomacy.

The basis of such a statement is that sport, as a significant social phenomenon, manifests itself as an uncompromising struggle - "the struggle of all against all", which doesn't take place on a battlefield, but in stadiums and gyms. In this respect, the paradigm of political realism is, in our view, more appropriate for the study of this subject. Considering international relations, proponents of this paradigm often resort to relevant examples of sport, operating with political analogies and metaphors. So, in his fundamental work "Peace and War between Nations", R. Aron notes that sports have similar characteristics with international relations, in particular: clear rules and a clear goal of the competition; a certain space for the game itself, in which a set number of players participate; a judge who evaluates the game with the help of the rules [6, p.25]. In his turn, A. Wolfers describes the relations between states on the international arena, resembling them with the position and movement of the balls on the billiard table, which "collide with each other" [7, p.340]. Given the fact that not all ball-states have the same "integrated content" and "hard cover", they act differently and produce

different movements on the table surface, as states on the international arena, thus causing collisions with unpredictable consequences.

The theoretical basis of the research includes, according to the context, the so-called liberal approach, which allowed the author to examine sport and its structures as actors in international relations and foreign policy instruments, which are also part of public diplomacy effectively manifesting themselves in the implementation of sports diplomacy. A special role in this regard belongs to the works of scientists-theoreticians: Joseph Nye "Мягкая сила" и американо-европейские отношения" [29]; Robert Keohane "Власть и взаимозависимость: переходный период мировой политики" [20]; Pierre Bourdieu "Социальное пространство и символическая власть" [30]; Alexander Wendt "Четыре социологии международной политики" [31].

The above represent a system of methodological coordinates, which makes it possible to more accurately use a variety of methods, techniques, methods and approaches in the process of studying various issues of the research topic. In this sense, the author applies in the analytical process the logical-intuitive and logical-formal method, which were used in the present research as procedures for accepting the logic of national and international law, of the norms in the field of sports. In addition, we mention the use of the operational-application method, which sums up various procedures and methods for detecting and highlighting the essential features of the object of study and forms of manifestation, through the so-called inclusive observation, examination of documents, sources, bases data, scientific-analytical materials and the statistical dimension. However, taking into account the extensive network of international sports structures, such as the involvement of states in the development of sport, especially performance sports, the author often uses institutional analysis and structural-functional approach to the object of study.

The scientific novelty and originality of the thesis. In the present research, for the first time in the Republic of Moldova, a complex approach of political science to the phenomenon of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a factor of "soft power" has been developed.

Based on the analysis of many facts and socio-historical processes, the author provides reasonable evidence that the professional sport has always been involved by the State in its foreign policy activities, as an effective tool of international relations and an effective means of forming its positive image on the world stage, as well as a certain space for its security, which is formed, among other things, by the original purpose of the Olympic Games, later the World Championships, designed to establish friendly relations between states. In addition, based on the many factors and various events viewed through the theoretical-methodological prism developed by the author, it is shown that the statement "Sport is out of politics" is just a slogan, which has meanwhile become a kind of political curtain for serious ideological, and in recent years, hybrid attacks between states and the socialization of various values, including (as shown by the 2020 Olympics), non-traditional ones.

In this context, based on a comprehensive study of the phenomenon of sports diplomacy and its dialectical relationship with the policy of the state, its foreign policy tasks to ensure its own security and its positive image on the international arena, the

author developed for the first time a number of scientific and practical recommendations regarding the conscious development of professional sport and its use (including by the government of the Republic of Moldova) in carrying out foreign policy projects, interstate relations and promoting "soft power".

The theoretical significance of the dissertation. This research is based on a fairly solid theoretical base, which can be viewed, including from the perspective of a complex approach - political theory, international relations theory, the theory and practice of classical diplomacy / public diplomacy and "soft power". In addition, the work itself is a self-sufficient theoretical development from the perspective of gaining new knowledge in the field of sports diplomacy. This thesis may well serve as a theoretical guideline for the development of other research subjects regarding the role of sport in international relations.

The practical significance of the dissertation. The scientific work itself can serve as the basis for the development of a university course for the specialties of political science or international relations. The conclusions developed by the author are of certain importance for politicians and managers involved in the management of professional sports, as well as for representatives of structures involved in foreign policy. Published scientific articles complete the existing bibliographic arsenal on international and diplomatic relations.

Publications on the topic of dissertation. The main theses of this scientific study, as well as conclusions and suggestions are the author's and are reflected in 12 scientific articles and speeches in a number of national and international journals and scientific and practical conferences.

Structure and scope of the dissertation. The work consists of an introduction, three chapters, each of which consists of three paragraphs, conclusions and recommendations, annotations in English, Romanian, Russian, a list of abbreviations and a bibliography. The total volume of the main text of the thesis is 137 pages.

The conceptual apparatus of the research is represented by the following key words: *international relations, world arena, diplomacy, national interest, strategic interest, "hybrid war", public diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, sports diplomacy, "stadium diplomacy", "football diplomacy", "hockey diplomacy", "cricket diplomacy", "pin pong diplomacy", "gentle power", "soft power", image of the state, negotiations, professional sport, Olympic movement, Olympic Games, World Cup.*

CONTENT OF THE THESIS

The **Introduction** reveals the relevance of the research topic, the degree of study of the problem, the purpose and objectives of the research, the working hypothesis, the research methodology, the scientific novelty of the work, the theoretical significance of the dissertation, its applied value and practical significance, the object and subject of research, approval of results and brief presentation of content.

The first chapter **ANALYSIS OF SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE AND THE THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC** contains an analysis of modern scientific discourse, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches to the research topic.

The first paragraph of the chapter – **The dialectical link between sport, politics and diplomacy in contemporary theoretical discourse** analyzes the scientific papers that constitute the empirical and theoretical basis of research, which can conventionally be divided into three main groups: the first is theoretical-general publications and theoretical-applied; the second - the works on diplomatic theory and practice; the third group reflects the theoretical-methodological aspects and the general analysis of the researched subject. We mention that the literature that constitutes the theoretical basis of the thesis, such as the one that refers to the history and theory of politics and international relations, to the sociology of sports and sports diplomacy, is examined through an interdisciplinary perspective. The sport in this context is analyzed from the perspective of its socio-political functions, its place and its role in the system of international relations.

In this context, based on a strict system of argumentation, the author attest that without a serious analysis and understanding of the general-theoretical approach in the field of international relations and diplomacy, it is impossible to determine the nature and depth of the dialectical connection between these areas of knowledge and sports as a social phenomenon, as well as to structure the conceptual apparatus of the subject of research, its basic principles and patterns. In other words, without a general theoretical background, it is impossible to analyse sport as a factor in political relations, but also as an instrument of the State's foreign policy.

It should also be clarified that this section of the scientific literature, reflecting the theoretical aspects of the subject of research, also contains a number of methodological elements that are an unconditional help in the research process. In a separate block, the main publications on the object of study are analyzed, as well as some additional sources of normative and statistical character.

Thus, the scientific literature that represents the general-theoretical content, is characterized by essential scientific components and tools of knowledge and awareness of sports diplomacy. Some of these sources, the authorship of which belongs to well-known and more modern authors in the field of political science and the theory of international relations, have, among other things, a peculiar educational and methodological function and represent a brilliant example of scientific synthesis and generalization of a large number of works, scientific categories and concepts.

Given that this research also includes the analysis of negotiations on the organization of international sports competitions, as well as planning and implementing various projects and programs with the participation of national and

international sports structures and international organizations dealing with youth issues, this work has taken into account the publications in which the international experience of these negotiations has been generalized, as well as the theoretical approaches of international negotiations.

The next bibliographic segment of the general-theoretical basis of this work is the sources representing the theoretical and methodological approach, constituting a kind of analytical matrix of the research topic, which the author completes with other theoretical-methodological visions much closer to the research topic and which have been reflected in a series of specialized publications.

We emphasize that the analyzed sources made it possible for the author not only to theoretically substantiate the research topic, to implement its operationalization in a balanced way, to identify and optimally use the conceptual range that made it possible to correctly articulate the analyzed processes and the main directions of development of the relationship between sports and politics, but also, in a certain sense, to simplify the complicated "constructions" of various forms of manifestation of the researched phenomenon, as well as the semantic content of complex categories and syllogisms resulting or used in the process of analyzing sports diplomacy as a tool of foreign policy and a factor of "soft power".

The next block of the analyzed scientific literature deals directly with the key components of the research topic: "sport"; "diplomacy" and its varieties – "public" and, accordingly, "sports" diplomacy"; "sport and politics", "sport as an instrument of foreign policy"; "soft power" factor, etc. In this sense, the analyzed sources should be interpreted in accordance with such areas as: sports diplomacy - a kind of public diplomacy; sports/sports diplomacy as a tool for solving foreign policy problems and sports diplomacy as a factor of "soft power". We emphasize that the source base of the research topic related to sports diplomacy has its own rather interesting historiography. In particular, Western scientists, for over half a century, have deliberately studied sport in conjunction with national and foreign policy and determining its place and role as a diplomatic tool.

In this context, of undoubted interest is the philosophical and cultural analysis of the Olympic movement and sports in general, proposed by Moldovan scientists. In particular, N. Vizitei and V. Manolachi consider Olympism as a philosophical principle of human life - through the prism of "agonalia" [28]. The authors interpret "agonism" as an innate quality of a person, constantly pushing him to competition. In this sense, it is emphasized that this manifestation of social behavior is part of human self-consciousness and human culture.

In the second paragraph – **Theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of sports diplomacy as a means of foreign policy**, the theoretical basis of the study was analyzed in terms of a three-pronged approach: the theory of international relations, theories of diplomacy/public diplomacy and the theory of "soft power". All three dimensions, each of which, in practical terms, manifests itself according to its essential characteristics, together represent a kind of virtual international environment for sports as a social phenomenon, which in turn manifests itself in as a "means" or "instrument" to achieve important goals related to the foreign policy interests of the state, its security and a positive image on the international arena.

Among these theoretical dimensions, the main one is certainly the theory of international relations, which in the best way allows us to analyze the functions of sports as an instrument of foreign policy of states and a factor of their “soft power”, as well as the foreign policy activities of sports organizations and structures, including National Olympic Committees (NOCs), the International Olympic Committee (IOC), national and international federations, primarily FIFA. In this context, the paradigm of political realism in international relations is notable for its clear theoretical and methodological effectiveness in revealing the research topic, in comparison with other schools of international relations theory. Although it should be emphasized that by applying a liberal approach to the analysis of the relationship between sport and international relations, an opportunity is created considering the institutions and structures of international sport as non-state actors, which in turn form a kind of “field” (according to the theory of P. Bourdieu) [30] or “environment” (according to the theory of Harold and Margaret Sprout) [23] for cooperation not only between themselves, but also with government agencies.

The liberal approach allows us to consider sport in general and its significant management structures (National Olympic Committees; International Olympic Committee; National and International Sports Federations) as actors of modern international relations, which are at the same time instruments of state foreign policy, as well as part of public diplomacy, effectively manifesting itself as sports diplomacy.

The various paradigms, methods, methodologies and procedures applied in the research process were selected by the author according to the need to examine one or another problem. Within the framework of this process, the accompanying methods of analysis are the “empirical” and “normative” approaches. The *first* involves the development and use in scientific circulation of the conceptual apparatus for describing processes, structures, institutions and cause-and-effect relationships; the *second*, based on the acquired knowledge, allows the study of the goals, values and norms that accompany the process of scientific knowledge. Despite the fact that these two approaches are in themselves valuable and significant for research, only the dialectical interaction between them produces the necessary effect of scientific analysis, which consists in creating a philosophical basis for research and, in fact, obtaining new knowledge.

Within the framework of the indicated methodological coordinates, using the appropriate conceptual apparatus, the author introduced into the analytical process a number of so-called “informal” methods for studying socio-political and international processes, the main of which are the traditional historical-descriptive and political-descriptive methods, which traditionally represent basis for the analysis of international relations, foreign policy and diplomacy. Due to the fact that both of these “dichotomies” contain the notion – “descriptive”, we specify that in this paper, the first of them reflects the method of factual analysis with strict respect for “historicism”, the second one is essentially a problem-political analysis of the interaction of sports as a social phenomenon with international relations, as a diplomatic tool and a factor of “soft power”.

In this regard, when analyzing this topic, the author used intuitive logics and formal logics methods, which have been included in the research process and

understanding of national or international law and rules / regulations (including sports), as well as an application-operational method, which includes different ways of analyzing various phenomena and processes. Here we can also include the so-called "inclusive" observation, the study of documents, various sources, databases, scientific and analytical materials, statistical dimensions. The methodological complex of researching international sporting events, examining, in this sense, international and diplomatic relations, includes such methods as textual content analysis (content-analysis), event analysis (events-analysis) and the so-called cognitive topography as a method of analyzing perceptions within "other" units of international sports process management.

An important method of researching this topic is a systematic approach, which methodologically manifests itself at the intersection of widely used formal and traditional informal methods, which are not just tools for analysis and multidimensional knowledge of the subject of research, but also the main means of logical arrangement of all the structural elements of this work. The category of a systematic approach is characterized by various concepts, the main of which - "system", "element", "structure", "environment", "function", "movement" were used in the development of this topic.

In this context, we note that several mainstream approaches are used in the study of the thesis topic: historical, political science, behavioral (psychological), conflictology, as well as the main provisions of the theory of international relations. These theoretical-methodological directions are included in the analysis process depending on the problems addressed, the goals and tasks expected. Such an interdisciplinary approach is primarily due to the complexity of the research topic, which implicitly contains such dimensions as politics, international relations, high performance sports, diplomacy, public diplomacy, and "soft power". Thus, for the analysis of the Olympic Movement and in general of performance sports, the historical approach was applied, and in order to highlight the role of the state in this process, such as the importance of political influence, it was necessary to analyze political science and so on.

The third paragraph - **Conclusions on the first chapter**, includes preliminary conclusions, according to which the bibliographic basis of the study includes works belonging to the category of a general theoretical or theoretical-cognitive order, which have a fundamental nature and serious scientific and methodological content; sources reflecting the historical and political approach, explaining the historical continuity of events through the prism of the theory of international relations; publications examining international relations and foreign policy from the point of view of sociological and philosophical approaches; conclusions of well-known experts in the history and theory of diplomacy and international negotiations, as well as works examining the relationship between sports and politics, the role of sports diplomacy in the process of organizing various international sporting events, as well as planning and implementing international projects and programs with the participation of states; scientific research sees sports diplomacy as a factor of "soft power", which assures national interests and protects the security of the State.

Taking into account that the subject matter of the research has been placed at the center of the attention of scientists, comparatively not long ago, we mention that its methodological tools are only being formed and are outlined with the process of research and take over different socio-humanistic disciplines. In this sense, the interdisciplinary approach is fundamental in this work and, along with system analysis, which methodologically manifests itself at the intersection of formal and informal research methods, plays the role of an effective tool for the logical arrangement of the topic under study.

The second chapter **THE POLITICAL DIMENSION OF SPORT AND ITS POTENTIAL IN DIPLOMACY** examines the relationship between sport and politics, reveals the potential of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and protection of national interests.

In the first paragraph **Interrelationship between sports and politics: theory and practice of the process** based on constructive arguments, the author states that the famous slogan "Sport is outside of politics" reflects certain efforts of international sports organizations, primarily the International Olympic Committee, to preserve historical traditions, remoteness of sport from politics as a symbol of peace and cooperation between peoples. On the other hand, the ever-expanding field of information, including new technologies and media, is intensely inducing in people's consciousness the indisputable link between sport and politics, intermittently disseminating information about international political scandals, especially during the arrangement and performance of the Olympic Games and World Championships.

The statement "sport and politics are incompatible" is refuted not only by the practice of international sports and its relations with the state, it is directly denied from a theoretical point of view. In this context, Lincoln Allison back in 1986 [32] deconstructed this concept in detail, designating it "as a myth of autonomy". He succinctly argued that "sport and politics cannot be isolated from each other". To understand the relationship between sports and politics, it is necessary to analyze the essence of these two phenomena, which, only at first glance, are distant from one another, are uncorrelated and do not enter into any causal relationship.

According to Professor I.V. Ponkin, the main interests of the state towards sports abroad are related to its own reputation and image, and their achievement is also manifested by transforming performance sports into an effective tool for achieving "intangible power" in the international arena, strengthening interstate relations, facilitating economic and trade relations [33].

In this context, it should be emphasized that sport undoubtedly has a powerful political potential in modern international relations and foreign policy of states. Being attracted in the sphere of the foreign policy of the state, the sport has a much wider connotation than the national one. In this regard V.V. Baranov noted that sometimes a simple local competition can be seen from the perspective of an international political event [34].

Pierre de Coubertin, Pierre de Coubertin, the author of the renaissance of the Olympic Games, advocating for the independence of sport from politics and politicians, through his many appeals and actions, *volens nolens* involved this global institute in achieving political goals of consolidating world peace and developing

international cooperation between states. In the “Ode to Sport” [35], which consists of nine parts, in fact nine appeals, sometimes called the ideological “nine”, Coubertin in the final part “O Sport, you are Peace!” predicts the ability of Olympic sport to establish “happy, friendly relations between peoples”; to teach “the young worldwide self-respect, and thus the diversity of national qualities becomes the source of a generous and friendly rivalry”. These words are an expression of the essence of international relations, the processes of globalization and the peaceful coexistence of peoples and states. Therefore, initially, from the moment of the revival of the Olympic movement, at the end of the 19th century, sport in general was intended to become an instrument of politics in general and of foreign policy relationships in particular. Due to this circumstance, “sport is outside of politics” remains only a slogan. Moreover, some researchers of the phenomenon of the relationship between sports, politics and diplomacy directly assert that today sport is an arena of political struggle.

In this paragraph, the Olympic Games were classified according to the principle of basic characteristics that have manifested themselves over a long historical time, through which, according to the author, the mechanism of the relationship between sports and politics is determined. The characteristics manifest themselves as follows: 1) at all times, states and governments have made certain efforts to influence professional sports, especially Olympic sports; 2) all the Olympic Games are distinguished by a concentrated expression of national pride, a manifestation of nationalism, and sometimes racism; 3) all the Olympic Games are distinguished by a high degree of political propaganda and a vivid manifestation of the state-national character of the participants; 4) most of the Olympics are distinguished by political demarches and boycotts as a sign of disagreement with the domestic or foreign policy of certain participating countries or their political regimes; 5) all the Olympics, without exception, are commonly described by the fact of the need to ensure special security measures not only for athletes and fans, but also for politicians and heads of state, as well as public figures of national and international scale.

Thus, by means of appropriate theoretical and empirical approaches, it was demonstrated that politics and the state are very sensitive to various opportunities to reproduce themselves and strengthen their identity in conditions of intense political competition, by using any large-scale and global events, such as the Olympic Games and Championships in particular. In this sense, all world sporting events and government policies are interconnected in the most natural way.

In the second paragraph **Sports diplomacy as an instrument of the state's foreign policy**, the phenomenon of “sports diplomacy” as a subject of study, its manifestation as an instrument of foreign policy, is analyzed in detail, through a systematic analysis of the relationship between foreign policy, classical diplomacy, public diplomacy, sports diplomacy and “soft power”. In this context, it is important not only the semantic continuity between these concepts, but also the functional aspect of the relationship and interdependence between them. In addition, given the fact that sport is an expression of the essence of “complexly constructed” social relations, the author determined the degree of its “presence” in these concepts and its role in determining their functions.

However, it should be noted that the introduction of the concept of "sports diplomacy" into scientific circulation and its use as a functional resource of foreign policy and diplomatic practice provoked quite a few controversial discussions. On the one hand, this "hybrid term", as Stuart Murray qualifies it [23], raises a number of legitimate questions: if sport and politics are incompatible, then how can sport perform as an instrument of the state's foreign policy; on the other hand, if diplomacy is the art of reaching a compromise between the subjects of international relations, then how does it combine with the uncompromising wrestling and nationalistic manifestations within the framework of international sports competitions. To resolve these formal contradictions, it is necessary, on the advice of Murray, to "better understand", from a theoretical point of view, the category of "sports diplomacy" [23].

Thus, the answer to these seemingly contradictory questions lies partly in determining the "angular" beginning, the place and the role of sports diplomacy in the system of international relations, which can be seen also through the causes of such diplomatic activity, exposed by the author: 1) the interdependence between sport and politics in the context of the gradual erosion of classical diplomacy, such as the need to apply new diplomatic technologies with the proliferation of non-state actors; 2) the rapid and global development of sport and its infrastructure, as a factor that facilitates the actions of the state in strengthening the communities and diverting their attention from the problems of domestic and international crisis; 3) the growing need to promote "soft power" actions and to prevent possible conflicts characteristic for XXth century; 4) the contribution of the global information system regarding the promotion of sport / performance sport as a socio-cultural and humanistic action, implicitly the increase in the global plan of the number of supporters that represent the entire social structure of the Globe; 5) the values that sport cultivates not only for athletes but also for its supporters - fairness, self-control, tenacity, respect for the opponent, precision, patriotism - traits that characterize even the qualities of a diplomat.

Despite the fact that "sports diplomacy" is part of "public diplomacy", both forms of manifestation of non-traditional diplomacy can equally be instruments of "soft power", as evidenced by the practice of contemporary foreign policy and a number of theoretical works included by the author in the scientific circuit. Regarding the notion of "sport", as a basic category of research, it fits perfectly into the semantic field of these notions, inducing a certain meaning and forming in certain connotations, notions and new categories, such as: "sport as an instrument of foreign policy", "sport as a diplomatic instrument", "sport as part of public diplomacy" or "sport as a "soft power" factor. In this regard, it is appropriate to talk about a more complex connection between these notions, such as "sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a factor of soft power".

The dialectic of the relationship between sports, politics and diplomacy is a kind of "hybrid" that arose as a result of the latent politicization of sports and the acquisition of certain diplomatic functions by it. Proceeding from this position, as well as the historical path of development of performance sports, the author defines some of the main functions of sports diplomacy: 1) the function of an instrument of foreign policy and public diplomacy; 2) the function of consolidating peoples and states around sports; 3) the function of forming a positive image of states; 4) the function of forming

original international platforms (within the framework of the World Championships and the Olympic Games) for informal meetings and negotiations of heads of states and governments; 5) the function of defending the state interests and protecting the rights and interests of accredited athletes as members of national teams participating in international sports competitions.

Based on the theoretical dimensions of sports diplomacy as a foreign policy tool and taking into account the publications of scientists and speeches of sports leaders in international scientific forums dedicated to sport and the Olympic movement, two diametrically opposed positions have been set in the field of sports diplomacy. On the one hand, most of the sources dedicated to performance sports and the Olympic movement in the Soviet bloc countries were positive and reflected the views of the officials of the International Olympic Committee, who in turn promoted the Olympic values initiated by P. Coubertin, elsewhere in the Western literature dedicated to these issues, were analyzed especially the negative sides of performance sports from the perspective of straining relations between states. Referring to the role of the Olympic movement in the spread of nationalism, the renowned American sociologist and philosopher Erich Fromm was deeply disturbed by the intensification of this phenomenon, inviting society to draw attention to “how the dissipation of nationalism unites the people who watch the Olympics, who are supposed to serve the cause of peace” [24].

In this context, the contradictions of perception of the importance of performance sports in international relations, clearly demonstrate the need for politicians and sports managers to be aware of two major issues: 1) the comprehensive fixation of processes in international relations, causes and premises of interstate conflicts and in this context the need to develop national sport, in particular performance sport, and to institutionalize it as a diplomatic instrument; 2) the need to seriously examine the issues related to sports diplomacy, the specificity of the functioning and interaction of sports organizations internationally, the place and role of consulates on the operational and effective protection of athletes in controversial international situations

In the third paragraph – **Conclusions on the second chapter**, the preliminary conclusions were formulated, which summarize the main dimensions of the chapter and reflect the essential characteristics of the interaction of sport, politics and diplomacy, expressed by the following syllogisms: a) the state policy is the impetus of administrative decisions and management, through which the mechanisms and guidelines for the activity are determined not only by state structures, but also by non-state structures, which represent also the sport / performance sport - subjects of the state policy and respectively political instruments for solving some issues related to the image and reputation of the state in the international arena; b) the Olympic movement, which became part of political relations after its rebirth (late 19th century), demonstrates not only examples of peaceful coexistence between peoples, but also their pride, their national superiority, and sometimes - examples of premeditated racism. In this sense, performance sport has gradually turned into fierce competition between states, which has also become a significant part of the so-called “hybrid wars”; c) the sport in the context of the above, is the expression of the essence of human nature, its aggression, which is manifested, including the natural tendency to dominate, control

and transform the world around in terms of their own interests. Being the expression of a fight of “all against all”, the sport at the same time, is endowed with essential diplomatic features, the efficiency of which is manifested to the maximum in public diplomacy; d) towards the beginning of the 20th century was established a serious historical-factual and theoretical basis, which allowed the “founding” of sports diplomacy and its inclusion in the system of defense of state interests in the international arena.

The third chapter **SPORT AND SPORTS DIPLOMACY AS A FACTOR IN SHAPING THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE AND APPLYING THE “SOFT POWER**, contains an analysis of sports diplomacy as a tool of soft power - from the general to the particular.

In the first paragraph **Sports diplomacy - an instrument of soft power' at the service of modern states**, sport as a political tool or an instrument of foreign policy is perceived as naturally as a diplomatic instrument or an instrument of public diplomacy, or a tool of “soft power”. In each of these connotations the meaning of “sport” does not change, only its function changes, being determined by the respective connotation. Sport as an instrument of “soft power” naturally fits into the palette of a number of other tools used to implement it. To these basic instruments, according to Professor A.V. Ceaevici, should include: public diplomacy, culture, education, tourism, means of communication [36, p.230].

From the perspective of E.M. Haritonova [37], using the “space approach”, “soft power” can be seen as one of the possibilities of constructing transnational political spaces, in which the role of the “field of force” towards which various international actors - state and non-state - are directed is the expression of “attractiveness”, which P. Bourdieu examines in his works [30; 38]. This view of sports diplomacy as a factor of intangible power is of interest in the fact that performance sports, including Olympic sports, are by definition transnational in nature and form that “political field” in which both state and non-state structures interact. Moreover, the sport par excellence, without any metaphorical approach, is the “force field” that attracts the whole world, due to its enormous emotional energy. Therefore, sport, especially performance sport, is, according to the author, not only a part or tool of “soft power”, it is an expression of its essence and at the same time its vivid manifestation.

With such characteristics, sport and soft power can be accepted as natural means of shaping and consolidating the image of the state, as well as "marketing" and "branding" tools for building a positive and sustainable image of the country on a global scale, achieving in record time, phenomenal results, taking into account the complex specifics of the object of advertising.

In addition, sport as a tool of “soft power” is inextricably linked with the “branding” of great athletes, who, in turn, are invited (in fact, they are included) in the global marketing turnover by world-class advertising campaigns. The tradition of advertising the names of the Greek “Olympionists” next to the name of Polis, of which he was a citizen, remains to this day a powerful driving force in the advertising of states. After all, the state promotes to the international sports arena not the achievements of the broad masses involved in public sports, but individual athletes who have achieved phenomenal results, who are responsible for representing the

country on the world stage. In this context, the main role in shaping the country's image is played by performance sport and its best representatives, who are patronized not only by the state, but also by the structures of professional sport, as well as various business campaigns.

In the context of using sport as a diplomatic tool and “soft power” tool, we mention that not only athletes, but in certain situations the very branch (genre) of sport contributes significantly to the achievement of sports diplomacy and building the country's image. It is recognized that for some countries some sports are associated with itself. This phenomenon is conditioned by a number of factors, including: the sport is very popular, is practiced by the majority of the population and has a large audience of fans; In this branch of sport, the country is a leader or even a monopolist in the preparation of a large number of champions and only it has the methodological “secrets” of this kind of sport. That is why football is often associated with Spain or Portugal; jiu-jitsu (Brazilian) with Brazil; hockey with Canada and Russia; cricket with India; ping-pong with China; car racing with Germany and so on. Such circumstances create the best conditions for the use of sport as an instrument of “soft power”.

Public and sports diplomacy as well as classical diplomacy are “bilateral” and “multilateral”. “Soft power”, the achievement of which is based on performance sports, is manifested in the same categories. However, as the sport becomes more popular and has a greater share in the world, the more it tends towards the category of multilateral sports diplomacy. In addition, the link between sport and intangible power is manifested both in informal negotiations between politicians and in contacts between supporters of different countries.

Of interest is another aspect of the manifestation of “soft power” - the branding of the “territory”. In this regard, it should be noted that the World Championships, mainly football, but also the Olympic Games, by definition, advertise for four years the country where these world sporting events will take place. In addition to the country itself, intensive branding takes place through national and international media, figuratively speaking “territories”, or “places” where these sporting events will take place. Most often, we localize the Olympics according to the main venue, for example, the Beijing, Moscow Olympics or the Olympics in Seoul, Tokyo, etc. In this case, we can consider two levels of “soft power”: at the country level and at the local level. The first is closer to political branding, the second is closer to economic. The choice of the level or procedure for achieving “soft power” from the perspective of sports diplomacy is made depending on the opportunity or advertising strategy.

Thus, performance sports and everything related to it - the act of negotiating, signing agreements on international competitions, obtaining performance sports results, forming the country's image in the world, promoting record-breaking athletes, informational assistance of sports competitions - all this falls within the notion of “sports diplomacy”, which in turn is a complex tool for achieving “soft power”, through which governments promote the most attractive sides of the country and national features of the people.

In the second paragraph **Moldova's sport as a political and diplomatic instrument to shape the country's image in the international arena**, the main stages of becoming and consolidating performance sports in the Republic of Moldova were

analyzed, implicitly of international sports relations and sports diplomacy, respectively.

For the Republic of Moldova, performance sports, immediately after the adoption of the Declaration of Sovereignty, became a serious means of media coverage of the new state in the world. After the founding of the Olympic Committee of the Republic of Moldova, a series of normative acts and conceptual documents were adopted, meant to contribute to the process of institutionalization and efficient functioning of sport in general and performance sport in particular. Not only formally, but also practically the Moldovan sport having the necessary potential and the respective attributions, gradually started to play the role of the foreign policy instrument and to manifest itself as a “soft power” factor of the Republic of Moldova on the international arena.

Thus, judging by the basic documents, the Moldovan sport as a whole, including the national sports structures, have the necessary legislative basis for a good and stable functioning. However, practice shows that due to the lack of due attention from the state, but also due to legislative shortcomings, sport has not yet become an effective tool of public diplomacy and image formation by achieving “soft power” in sports.

In the Republic of Moldova, sports diplomacy, more often and more interestingly, manifests itself outside the sphere of budgetary influence of the Moldovan state and outside the range of Olympic sports. This phenomenon is observed not only in the Republic of Moldova, but also in other post-Soviet republics, in which sports are also financed on a residual basis, but the need to use it as a diplomatic tool increases as it is necessary to systematically promote a positive image of the country among other countries and, most importantly, to establish certain relations between the parties that official diplomacy is unable to implement.

As the practice of sports diplomacy convinces, such relations develop during meetings of responsible persons and politicians within the framework of various championships. Given the fact that everyone in the CIS countries loves football, and also bearing in mind its huge impact on people and on the image of countries and their leaders, it is not surprising that "football diplomacy" has become, in a certain sense, an indispensable tool for solving foreign and domestic political problems, as well as the establishment of interethnic conflicts.

In this context, the author considers two aspects of football diplomacy and in fact of sports diplomacy, which is manifested in the Republic of Moldova: on the one hand - the meetings between officials in national and international championships, on the other - the participation of supporters in public diplomacy bringing the population closer to both banks of the Dniester and returning to the territorial unity of the Republic of Moldova. Sometimes this process is accompanied by certain incidents and in this sense it is important not to admit that such a tool as sports diplomacy, to turn, in certain circumstances, into a destructive one.

Along with these aspects of sports diplomacy, the author also considers the third form of manifestation of “football diplomacy”, which is more like a cultural event, but has its own specific place in the process of consolidating relations between various diplomatic missions, between them and representatives of state and non-state structures in host country. It should be noted in this regard that over the past ten years, “football diplomacy”, with the participation of diplomats, has shown itself to be more active and

at the same time more creative, within the broader context of public and sports diplomacy of the post-Soviet republics.

Despite the existing problems in Moldovan sports: insufficient attention from the state; lack of legislative tools for sponsorship; weakening material and technical base; insufficient funding; the loss of a school for training high-class coaches and, most importantly, in our opinion, the need to use sports as a tool for consolidating society and promoting a worthy image of the country in the international arena, which is not fully understood, sports nevertheless plays a significant role in the social, political, economic and international life of the Republic Moldova.

In the third paragraph **Conclusions on the third chapter**, one of the main theses of the research work is emphasized - sports diplomacy is an effective instrument of "soft power", which can be defined as the state's ability to obtain the desired results through attractiveness, and not through coercion.

Sport in this context, according to the author, is the "field of force" to which various participants in international relations gravitate. In this regard, the "Conclusions" state that the Olympic Games, World Championships, especially the World and European Football Championships, or national and international sports competitions in prestigious or popular sports such as American football, basketball, cricket, ping-pong etc., are the direct embodiment of "soft power" in international life. In this regard, the process of "rating" and identifying great athletes "of all times and peoples" enjoys great public resonance. In addition, the sports, which are associated with the countries where it is practiced (football with Brazil, basketball with the USA, hockey with Canada and Russia, cricket with India, ping-pong with China, etc.) not only advertise these countries, including as sports forces, but also create favorable conditions for "summit" meetings and certain negotiations to resolve interstate issues.

It is worth mentioning that international sports competitions, since the rebirth of performance sports, are accompanied by ideological struggle. In this sense, the "soft power" of sport also has its "dark" sides, to the analysis of which the author pays special attention.

Regarding the essence and forms of manifestation of sports diplomacy in the Republic of Moldova, the author mentions that in the development of performance sports, there is a clear continuity between two historical periods - Soviet and post-Soviet. The interference between these two periods represents the dimension that constitutes the "continuity", which is distinguished by the most significant successes in the history of the Moldovan Olympic movement. In a short time, however, the potential for the development of performance sports in the Republic of Moldova was shattered by virtue of subjective and objective causes, which the author analyzed in this work.

Despite this indisputable fact, sports diplomacy in Moldova manifests itself on the one hand - within the framework of regulating the frozen conflict between Chisinau and Tiraspol, as an opportunity to bring the positions of the parties closer together, including on solving various problems of social mobility between the left and right banks of the Dniester, on the other as a tool of "soft power" used outside the Republic of Moldova, the effectiveness of which, figuratively speaking, is proportional to the number of medals won in various international championships.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the framework of this research, in accordance with the established goal and objectives, a significant scientific problem is solved on the basis of the theoretical and methodological structure developed by the author, which, in turn, is based on an interdisciplinary approach that allows analyzing the essence and forms of manifestation of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a factor of “soft power” in the process of forming a positive image of the country and ensuring its security in the international arena.

Analysis of the phenomenon of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a "soft power" factor, allowed the author of this study to formulate the following **conclusions**:

1. According to the analysis of the scientific literature, which constitutes the theoretical basis of research and which sums up the examination of issues from the perspective of political history and theory, international relations, classical diplomacy, public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, “soft power”, sport is approached from the perspective of its functions socio-political, its place and role in the system of international and interstate relations. In the research process, the author comes to the basic conclusion - without a serious examination and awareness of general-theoretical paradigms, which refer to international relations, diplomacy theory and practice, it would have been impossible to analyze the dialectical link between sport and foreign policy, as well as the appropriate definition of the categories and notions included by the author in the scientific circuit. In other words, without an adequate understanding of the general-theoretical context, which refers especially to political theory and international relations, it is impossible to analyze sport as a factor in the internal and external political relations of the state [39].

2. The examined sources constitute a kind of research matrix, which the author completes with a series of specialized theoretical-methodological approaches, reflected in some monographic researches and scientific articles, including the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Alexander Wendt, Joseph Nye, James N. Rosenau etc. The theoretical value of these works allows a deeper acceptance of the functionality of sports structures and organizations in their capacity as international actors, whose activity is manifested in dichotomous aspect: on the one hand they act as partners of the state in solving internal and international social problems, on the other hand - as competitors of the state, in their intention to "acquire" some skills and responsibilities regarding the negotiation and organization of international sports competitions. The more determined their role in international affairs becomes, the more the state places itself in the shadow of sports “battles”. This process, in a sense, is convenient for states exposed to serious political pressure from sports superpowers and international structures and organizations [40].

3. Taking into account the international nature of performance sports, but also its spectacle and its ability to attract the attention and sympathy of a huge number of people from different countries of the world, it is by definition a real factor in the foreign policy of the state. The research of this phenomenon, including through its manifestations in interstate relations, has not only a theoretical-scientific significance, but also a practical one from the perspective of establishing diplomatic relations,

forming a positive image of the country in the world, protecting national interests and ensuring state security. That is why the sport of performance and in this sense sports diplomacy, paradoxically but explicable is very close to the nature of international relations which normally focuses on the national interest and classical diplomacy. From the perspective of functionality, sports diplomacy within the international sports movement has the same negotiating functions in terms of organizing international sports events, characteristic of achieving classical diplomacy in maintaining good interstate relations. In this sense, we confirm the arguments presented, regarding the application of the theory of political realism in international relations, as a basic one in the research of the object of study. Sport, as a unique social phenomenon, manifests itself as an uncompromising struggle – “the fight of all against all”, but not on the battlefield, but on the stadiums and in sports halls [41; 42].

4. In the research of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy, there is a clear continuity (as in the development of the theory of international relations) between the theoretical elaborations of Western scientists and those of post-Soviet researchers, with reference, first of all, to the transfer of motivations for research actions, such as technologies for analyzing the interaction of sport and the state in achieving certain foreign policy goals, its programs and projects in this regard. In this respect, we highlight that the phenomenon of sports diplomacy and the interaction of sport with the foreign policy of the state, is a relatively new object of study for researchers in the post-Soviet scientific area, and for those in the Republic of Moldova it is unique. “Continuity”, by its nature, also includes liberal approaches, which allow the examination of sport in general and its governing structures, including - the International Olympic Committee, the National Olympic Committees, the International Football Federation, etc., as actors of contemporary international relations, being also part of public diplomacy and sports diplomacy. In view of this, the paradigm developed by Joseph Nye under the notion “soft power” offers the possibility of elucidating new aspects of sport in the context of world politics. Sport as an international social phenomenon, along with other “soft power” factors - culture, education, science, media and communication relations, civil society, etc., is an important part of public diplomacy and an undeniable factor in image marketing in the international arena [43].

5. Through the systemic approach of the research object, as well as the comparative method of analyzing the empirical processes, but also the normative ones, the author examined the social aspect of the cognitive dissonance regarding the connection between sport and politics, which still remains poorly studied, and in this sense - relevant. In connection with this fact, the work accredits the idea that sport as a social phenomenon, including performance sport, which is basically the result of the rebirth of the Olympic movement, manifests itself not only as an object, but also as a political subject. On the one hand, sport is exposed to serious political influence on the part of the state, and in certain periods - to the organization of global sports competitions, - to the pressures exerted by the political and sports superpowers, and sometimes by some international organizations. From another perspective, sport itself is part of the political process, as an instrument of domestic policy and especially of foreign and international policy. In this sense, despite the fact that in social consciousness, sport and politics are intangible, the author of the paper demonstrates

with great argument that “sport outside politics” is rather a slogan and reflects the efforts of international sports organizations, in first of all, of the International Olympic Committee, to respect the historical tradition and to present the sport as a symbol of peace, of the peaceful coexistence between states and outside the political interference [44].

6. Given the fact that politics is characterized by two basic dimensions – “power” and “influence”, performance sport, along with other social factors (culture, science, education), par excellence is an effective tool for achieving of power and its influencing factor, and in this sense part of the political struggle, implicitly ideological. Currently, from the perspective of sports researchers and analysts, the words of praise for the Olympic movement in the style of Pierre de Coubertin are gradually being replaced by epithets that reduce its moral and historical importance. The world press is increasingly inserting in the information circuit expressions that characterize the Olympic Games such as “war between peoples”, “poisoned by politics”, “Cold War”, “dirty games”, “political subversion”, “harmful actions” and so on. According to the author, the semantic evolution - from the conceptual apparatus of “soft power” to the vocabulary of a tough approach, characteristic of the information and psychological manipulation of mass consciousness, according to the scientists cited in the work, indicates the emergence of a new propaganda weapon of “short-term use” (meaning the period of organizing and holding Olympiads), to defeat the systemic-institutional legitimacy of the state itself and its governing bodies. In this sense, the author of the research mentions that this propagandistic “weapon”, which can be described as “anti-Olympic”, is not a new one. The performance sport has become an indispensable part of interstate contradictions since the beginning of the “Cold War”, and in the last twenty years, the “operational weapon” in the field of sport has become much more complex, sophisticated and highly effective. The Olympic process of the mentioned period demonstrates this fact with a lot of arguments, exposed in this work [45].

7. The foregoing demonstrates eloquently that performance sport is the uncompromising struggle in the formula “*bellum omnium contra omnes*” (war of all against all), which the great English philosopher Thomas Hobbes spoke of as a “natural state” of relations between people. Applying the terminology of political realism, we mention that the world championships and the Olympic Games represent, in essence, the arena of fights between states, - through performance athletes. In addition, this is an ongoing struggle for economic and financial potential; technologies and methodologies for training athletes, including through healthcare; of state ideologies and national characters. The performance sport is a relentless struggle to defend national interests, proliferate and strengthen national prestige in the world arena. In other words, sport is the essential expression of human nature, of its reactions of aggression, which is manifested in the intention to dominate and influence, to control and transform the world around in a less harmful environment for itself. The instinct of self-preservation and manifestation of power is manifested not only in international sports arenas. They are no less intensive in the high political bureaus, whose representatives are working to impose systemic control over the energy of sport for political purposes [46; 47].

8. Taking into account the indisputable fact of the ideological struggle in the field of sport, the states also undertake a series of actions to reduce this phenomenon, including through the application of “soft power”. In this sense, the bi-functional role of sport - on the one hand as an instrument of political struggle, on the other as a “soft power” factor, does not contradict logical thinking. On the contrary, sport expresses the essence of the goals pursued by the political actors on the international arena, at the same time both these sides being in a close dialectical connection and supplementing each other from their potential for influence. Sport as a socio-political phenomenon, the author concludes, is the expression of the motivated man, of a motivated society and at the same time the manifestation of their vital need to survive, to dominate and to glory without the application of the means of physical extermination. In this sense, sport from the very beginning has become a means of social prophylaxis, and of preventing bloody conflicts between people and communities. In this context, sport as a social phenomenon is perceived and as such is an effective diplomatic tool that manifests itself in public diplomacy and an indisputable factor of “soft power”. In all these connotations the meaning of “sport” is unchanged, only its function changes, being determined by that connotation. In this context, the author, referring to the expertise of Western specialists, proposes the theoretical delimitation between the syllogisms – “sport as diplomacy”, which involves the negotiation process on the organization and holding of international sports competitions and “sport diplomacy”, which provides for the involvement of performance as an important factor in the foreign policy of the state. These characteristics of sport in the form of “soft power” were analyzed by the author as natural features of forming and consolidating the image of the state internationally, which are essentially tools of “marketing” and “branding” applied in promoting the country's image on the world map [48].

9. The sport in the Republic of Moldova as a means of proclaiming the country in the international arena and forming a positive image abroad, manifested itself only in the early 1990s, a few months later after the adoption by the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR of the Declaration of Sovereignty (23 June 1990). The first steps towards the institutionnalization of Moldovan sport as an instrument of foreign policy were taken in the direction of the formation of the Olympic Committee of the Republic of Moldova. The continuity of this process lies in the adoption of the Law on Physical Culture and Sports (no. 330-XIV of 25.03.99), which influenced in a certain sense, but with a certain delay, the development of national sport in the Republic of Moldova. The content of this law leads us to the following conclusion: the state was not only ready to use performance sports as an instrument of foreign policy, it itself intended to form this instrument, to strengthen it through financial assistance from the state budget and also to be responsible of its efficiency, to ensure the fulfillment of the international commitments regarding the good organization of the competitions assumed by the Moldovan sports structures. However, taking into account the economic potential and reduced financial resources, the rigid dependence of performance sports on the public budget, these factors conditioned one of the causes of the slowdown in Moldovan sport in its development. This thesis is also confirmed by the fact that after the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the potential of performance sports was largely lost due to the stated causes, which also led to the amplification of the bureaucratic body; diminishing

the body of qualified coaches; essential reduction of the technical-material base of sports; the gradual disappearance of the coaching school. In addition, as a normative conclusion, the author mentions the lack of full awareness of the need to use sport as a tool to strengthen society and promote the country's positive image in the international arena [49; 50].

In the context of the above conclusions, we consider it necessary to propose some **recommendations** both of general and particular order, these referring also to the administration of sport in the Republic of Moldova:

1. Taking into account the fact that the participation of states in the process of organizing and holding international sports competitions requires a special mobilization of national resources, we consider rational the systematic monitoring of the area of interference of politics and sports in the following directions: 1) identify the degree of integration of national sport into the global sport community and the Olympic movement; 2) setting the level of state involvement in the development of performance sports and their respective consequences; 3) to determine - which of the branches of performance sports are ahead or advanced compared to the same branches of sport in the reference countries; 4) to fix - what is the level of efficiency in the interaction between the national sports structures and organizations, with the structural units of the international sport. The monitoring of these processes will be carried out in accordance with the established parameters and indicators.

2. We consider it reasonable to use the data obtained, as a result of such monitoring, in the elaboration and implementation of sports development programs and projects, its involvement in the implementation of political-diplomatic and imagological measures, designed to ensure national interests in the field of state security in the international plan. Also, we suppose it important to emphasize in this sense, the need to establish an optimal balance between the resources (possibilities) of the state and the goals set for the national sport.

3. The state's responsibility for the development of performance sports cannot be absolute. A certain part of the functions of responsibility, such as those related to the promotion of the country's image, are to be attributed to the sports federations, whose activity we propose to be evaluated, according to the level of development of the respective sport genre; with the results obtained in the branch of sports managed by the federation; the quality and level of ensuring the interests of the national sport within the international sports organizations, including at the expense of the participation of the country's representatives in their activity. The results of the assessment of national sports federations in accordance with these criteria are appropriate to be used in sports diplomacy programs in relation to other states and international sports organizations.

4. The proposals presented are universal and can be used even in the Republic of Moldova. One of the measures that would have an operational and concrete impact on the process of promoting the image of performance sports and its involvement in shaping the positive image of the country, is to organize various competitions, in which Moldovan athletes occupy leading positions; holding charity competitions with the participation of well-known athletes, including from abroad, and investing the accumulated financial means in the construction of social objects, such as a sports field in rural areas; in this regard, it is recommended to organize competitions for spectators with special invitations,

in order to see the uniqueness and major importance of the sport or sporting event; in addition - the organization of information meetings with world and Olympic champions, as well as physical education classes with the participation of famous athletes from the country and abroad.

5. Along with these mass sports events, we consider it necessary to organize more specialized meetings in seminars and practical lessons, training – “masterclass” with the participation of the most illustrious athletes and coaches, leaders of national and international sports federations, which in the author's opinion will play an exclusive role in the realization of sports diplomacy, the integration of national sport in the identity of world sport, the formation of the positive image of the country in the international sports environment. In this sense, a direction of effective manifestation of “soft power”, including for the Republic of Moldova lies in sports arbitration, the systematic and most frequent participation of Moldovan referees in international sports competitions, positioning them as some of the most qualified and equitable specialists.

6. Regarding the efficiency of sports diplomacy as a “soft power” factor, it is necessary, in the author's view, to solve an important institutional problem - the formation of an advisory body to the government of the Republic of Moldova concerned with the development of performance sports and strengthening its efficiency as an instrument of foreign policy. The administration of this structure is to be entrusted to a Deputy Prime Minister, endowed with the power and responsibility respectively to ensure the interaction between the ministries and the district administrations, as well as granting the respective attributions regarding the intensification of the cooperation of the national sports structures with those from abroad.

7. From the perspective of the administrative assistance of the development of performance sports and the amplification of its functions at the international level, it would be appropriate, in addition to the respective “advisory body” to form a Scientific Center, formed on the basis of the State University of Physical Education and Sports, whose functions would be determined by the following directions of activity: scientific and methodological assistance of training activities for highly qualified athletes to participate in world championships and Olympic Games; elaboration of an integral social, institutional and instructive system for ensuring the continuity of sports activity between the stages, taking into account the specificity of the internal situation and the share of the Republic of Moldova on the international arena; legal, organizational and methodological assistance in carrying out the complex of actions for the development of Moldovan sports, including sports for children and adolescents, which for many years bear the consequences of maladministration, derisory financing, underdeveloped level of technical-material base and methodological-instructive assistance.

8. Furthermore, we propose the planning of public funding and the implementation of the personnel policy with the direct participation of the “Advisory Body” under the Government of the Republic of Moldova and of the mentioned “Scientific Center”, because we think that in a such way, it will be possible to exclude the intermittent public funding of sport, such as cases of volunteerism and the expression of group interests, and vice versa; and we will be able to balance the policy of cadres and ensure the efficient administration of national sport, especially performance sport and its complex functions, at the national and international level. In this context, the participation of these structures in the

administration of the process is to be institutionalized, including by amending the legislation in force, according to which one of the basic functions of these administrative components lies in strategic planning and actions on the practical application of sports diplomacy as a "soft power" factor.

Prospects for the study of the scientific problem consist in the deep analysis of the institutional aspect of the sports diplomacy, including through the prism of the "constructivism" theory. In this context, we consider important the research of the international experience of the institutional impregnation between the state structures concerned with foreign policy and the international relations and of those who manage performance sports. A significant direction of research on issues related to the role of sport in international relations lies in examining the influence of performance sport in shaping the state's foreign policy strategy. A current issue in the research of this scientific problem refers to the holistic approach to the study of sports diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova as part of the international process of applying the socio-political and diplomatic potential characteristic of performance sports.

REFERENCES

1. КЕННАН Дж. Дипломатия Второй мировой войны глазами американского посла в СССР Джорджа Кеннана. Москва: Центрполиграф, 2002. 580 с. ISBN: 5-9524-0018-3
2. ШВАРЦЕНБЕРГЕР Дж. Политическая власть. Изучение мирового сообщества. В: Теория международных отношений: Хрестоматия / Сост., науч. ред. и коммент. П.А. Цыганкова. Москва: Гардарики, 2002. 400 с. ISBN 5-8297-0107-3
3. КЛАУЗЕВИЦ К. О войне. Москва: АСТ; Санкт-Петербург: Terra Fantastica, Эксмо, 2002. 575 с. ISBN 5-17-007073-X
4. МОРГЕНТАУ Г. Политические отношения между нациями. Борьба за власть и мир. В: Теория международных отношений: Хрестоматия / Сост., науч. ред. и коммент. П.А. Цыганкова. Москва: Гардарики, 2002. с. 72–88. ISBN 5-8297-0107-3
5. MORGENTHAU H.J. Politica între națiuni. Lupta pentru putere și lupta pentru pace. Iași: Polirom, 2007. 736 p. ISBN: 978-973-46-0548-4
6. АРОН Р. Мир и война между народами. Москва: NOTA BENE, 2000. 880 с. ISBN 5-8188-0020-2
7. УОЛФЕРС А. Противоборство и сотрудничество: очерк международной политики. Дружба и вражда между государствами. В: Теория международных отношений: Хрестоматия. Москва: Гардарики, 2002. с. 338–348. ISBN 5-8297-0107-3
8. ВЕБЕР Макс. Политика как призвание и профессия. Москва: Литера Нова, 2018. 232 с. ISBN 978-966-1553-48-3
9. ДЮРКГЕЙМ Э. Социология. Ее предмет, метод, предназначение. Москва: Канон, 1995. 352 с. ISBN 5-88373-037-X
10. ПАРСОНС Т. Система современных обществ. Москва: Аспект Пресс, 1998. 270 с. ISBN 5-7567-0225-3
11. КАЛЬЕР Ф. Каким образом договариваться с государями. Москва, 2001 г. 382 с. ISBN 89481-087-6
12. НИКОЛЬСОН Г. Дипломатическое искусство. Москва: Книга по Требованию, 2013. 118 с. ISBN 978-5-458-52353-0
13. НИКОЛЬСОН Г. Дипломатия. Москва: ОГИЗ 1941. 156 с.
14. КАМБОН Ж. Дипломат. Москва: Государственное издательство политической литературы, 1945. 88с.
15. KISSINGER H. Diplomația. București: BIC ALL, 2003. 784 p. ISBN 973-571-462-0
16. КИССИНДЖЕР Г. Дипломатия. Москва: АСТ, 2018. 896 с. ISBN 978-5-17-099392-5
17. КИССИНДЖЕР Г. Мировой порядок. Москва: АСТ, 2018. 544 с. ISBN 978-5-17-111098-7

18. КИССИНДЖЕР Г. «Шанхайское коммюнике» заложило основу для американо-китайских отношений. В: Газета Жэньминь Жибао [online] [citat 08.11.2020]. Disponibil: <http://russian.people.com.cn/zhuanli/jixing.html>
19. ПОПОВ В.И. Современная дипломатия. Теория и практика. Москва: Международные отношения, 2004. 576 с. ISBN 5-7133-1158-9
20. КОХЕЙН Р., НАЙ Дж. Власть и взаимозависимость: переходный период мировой политики. В: Помелова Ю.П., Сафронова О.В. Материалы для чтения по теории международных отношений Часть 2. Плюрализм Учебно-методическое пособие. Нижний Новгород: Нижегородский госуниверситет, 2020. с.13-40. [online] [citat 09.11.2020]. Disponibil: http://www.lib.unn.ru/students/src/Reading_TMO_P2.pdf
21. НАЙ Дж. Гибкая сила. Как добиться успеха в мировой политике. Новосибирск; Москва: Фонд социо-прогност. исслед. "Тренды", 2006. 397 с. ISBN 5-902688-05-1
22. НАЙ Дж.С. мл., КОХЭН Р.О. Транснациональные отношения и мировая политика. В: Теория международных отношений: Хрестоматия. Москва: Гардарики, 2002. с. 152–167. ISBN 5-8297-0107-3
23. MURRAY St. Sports diplomacy. Origins, theory and practice. London: Routledge, 2018. 274 p. ISBN 9780367457648
24. СТОЛЯРОВ В.И. Спорт вне политики и в мире политики: монография. Москва: Русайнс, 2017. 290 с. ISBN 978-5-4365-1830-5
25. АКСЯНОВА А.С. Спорт как инструмент современных политических процессов основа государственной безопасности: монография. Москва: Библио-Глобус, 2018 г. 272 с. ISBN: 978-5-6040237-8-5
26. БОГОЛЮБОВА Н.М, НИКОЛАЕВА Ю.В. Спорт в палитре международных отношений: гуманитарный, дипломатический и культурный аспекты. СПб.: Издательство Санкт-Петербургского университета, 2011. 320 с. ISBN 978-5-9651-0564-9
27. БОГОЛЮБОВА, Н.М. Геополитика спорта и основы спортивной дипломатии: учебное пособие для бакалавриата и магистратуры. Москва: Издательство Юрайт, 2019. 282 с. ISBN 978-5-534-06186-4.
28. ВИЗИТЕЙ Н., МАНОЛАКИ В. Идея олимпизма и спорт (философско-культурологический анализ проблемы). Кишинэу, 2015. 264 с. ISBN 978-9975-68-264-0.
29. НАЙ Дж. «Мягкая сила» и американо-европейские отношения. В: «Свободная мысль-XXI». 2004. №10. с.33-41.
30. БУРДЬЕ П. Социальное пространство и символическая власть. Thesis. 1993. Вып. 2. с.137-150. [online] [citat 03.10.2020]. Disponibil: https://igiti.hse.ru/data/157/314/1234/2_2_3Bourd.pdf
31. ВЕНДТ А. Четыре социологии международной политики. [online] В: Международные отношения: социологические подходы / рук. авт. колл. проф. П.А. Цыганков. Москва: Гардарики, 1998. 352 с. [citat 16.10.2020]. Disponibil: <https://refdb.ru/look/3497129-pall.html>
32. ALLISON L. The Politics of Sport. Manchester University Press, 1986. 264 p. ISBN 0719018714
33. ПОНКИН И.В., РЕДЬКИНА А.И., РОГАЧЕВ Д.И., СОЛОВЬЕВ А.А., ШЕВЧЕНКО О.А. Государственное управление в сфере спорта. [online]. [citat: 14.10.2020]. Disponibil: <http://sportfiction.ru/books/gosudarstvennoe-upravlenie-v-sfere-sporta/?bookpart=357297>
34. БАРАНОВ В.В. Спортивная печать Российской Федерации. Формирование новой системы (90-е годы). Диссертация на соискание ученой степени к.ф.н. [online] [citat: 14.10.2020]. Disponibil: <http://www.dslib.net/zhurnalistika/sportivnaja-pechat-rossijskoj-federacii-formirovanie-novoj-sistemy.html>
35. КУБЕРТЕН П. Ода спорту. [online] [citat: 10.10.2021]. Disponibil: <http://www.offsport.ru/olympic/coubertin/parol-otkryvayuschii-serdca-6.shtml>
36. ЧАЕВИЧ А.В. «Мягкая сила» в обеспеченье национальной безопасности. В: Инноватика и экспертиза: научные труды. 2019. №2 (27). с. 225-235. ISSN 1996-2274
37. ХАРИТОНОВА Е.М. «Мягкая сила» Великобритании. Москва: ИМЭМО РАН, 2018. 139 с. ISBN 978-5-9535-0542-0.

38. БУРДЬЕ П. Начала. Москва: Socio-Logos, 1994. 288 с.
39. **ПОПОВ А.** *Олимпийское движение как инструмент публичной дипломатии Республики Молдова: проблемы становления и развития.* В: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2020. Nr.36/2. Categoria B. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. p.63-71
40. **ПОПОВ А.** *Большой спорт через призму политического реализма: продолжение «холодной войны».* В: Personalitate și sport: Teorie. Metodologie. Practică. = Личность и спорт: Теория. Методика. Практика = Personality and Sports. Theory. Methodology. Practice: Materialele conferinței științifico-practice, dedicate antrenorilor emeriți la Sambo și Judo Nicolae Bolboceanu și Iracii Valișvili, ediția a 6-a, 21 mai 2021, Chișinău. – Chișinău: Print-Caro, 2021. – 100 p. ISBN 978-9975-56-885-2. p. 81-86.
41. **БЕНЮК В., ПОПОВ А.** *Спорт и политика или антидипломатия в спорте: историческая ретроспектива олимпийских игр.* În: Relații internaționale. Plus. 2020. Nr. 2 (18). p.38-48. ISSN 1857-4440, eISSN 2587-3393. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.4392340[online] [citat 01.12.2021]. Disponibil: <http://aap.gov.md/files/publicatii/ri+/arhiva/18.pdf>
42. **ПОПОВ А.** *Политические измерение спорта с точки зрения международных отношений.* Scientific Collection «InterConf», (74): with the Proceedings of the 3rd International Scientific and Practical Conference «Recent Scientific Investigation» (September 16-18, 2021). Oslo, Norway: Dagens næringsliv forlag, 2021. 396 p. ISBN 978-82-7346-353-1. p.156-165.
43. **ПОПОВ А., БЕНЮК Л.Г.** *Спорт и внешняя политика через призму классических теорий международных отношений.* В: Scientific Collection «Interconf», (41): with the Proceedings of the 7th International Scientific and Practical Conference «Scientific Horizon in the Context of Social Crises» (February 6-8, 2021). Tokyo, Japan: Otsuki Press, 2021. 1228 p. ISBN 978-4-272-00922-0. c.434-442.
44. **ПОПОВ А., БЕНЮК В.А.** *Методологические аспекты исследования взаимоотношения спорта и политики государства* В: Scientific Collection «Interconf», (41): with the Proceedings of the 7th International Scientific and Practical Conference «Scientific Horizon in the Context of Social Crises» (February 6-8, 2021). Tokyo, Japan: Otsuki Press, 2021. 1228 p. ISBN 978-4-272-00922-0. c. 427-433.
45. **ПОПОВ А.** *Большой спорт через призму политического реализма: продолжение «холодной войны».* В: Personalitate și sport: Teorie. Metodologie. Practică. = Личность и спорт: Теория. Методика. Практика = Personality and Sports. Theory. Methodology. Practice: Materialele conferinței științifico-practice, dedicate antrenorilor emeriți la Sambo și Judo Nicolae Bolboceanu și Iracii Valișvili, ediția a 6-a, 21 mai 2021, Chișinău. – Chișinău: Print-Caro, 2021. – 100 p. ISBN 978-9975-56-885-2. p. 81-86
46. **БЕНЮК Л.Г., ПОПОВ А.** *Спорт и внешняя политика через призму классических теорий международных отношений.* В: Scientific Collection «Interconf», (41): with the Proceedings of the 7th International Scientific and Practical Conference «Scientific Horizon in the Context of Social Crises» (February 6-8, 2021). Tokyo, Japan: Otsuki Press, 2021. 1228 p. ISBN 978-4-272-00922-0. c.434-442.
47. **ПОПОВ А.** *The Olympic Movement as a tool for public diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova: problems of formation and development.* În: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2020. Nr.36/2. p.72-79. Categoria B. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. <https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2020.36-2.04> .
48. **ПОПОВ А.** *Спорт – как инструмент «мягкой силы».* În: Revista Moldovenească de Drept Internațional și Relații Internaționale. 2020. Nr. 2 (Vol.15). Categoria B. ISSN 1857-1999. E-ISSN 2345-1963. p.142-153
49. **ПОПОВ А.** *Sports diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova: forms and specificity of manifestation.* In: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2021. Nr.37/1. p.24-30. Categoria B. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. <https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2021.37-1.02>
50. **ПОПОВ А.** *The Olympic Movement as a tool for public diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova: problems of formation and development.* În: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2020. Nr.36/2. p.72-79. Categoria B. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. <https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2020.36-2.04> .

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S PUBLICATIONS ON THE THESIS

Articles in reviewed national scientific journals (category B)

- 1.1 Popov, A. Sports diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova: forms and specificity of manifestation. In: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2021. Nr.37/1. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. <https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2021.37-1.02> p.24-30.0,35 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.2 Popov, A. The Olympic Movement as a tool for public diplomacy of the Republic of Moldova: problems of formation and development. In: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2020. Nr.36/2 ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. <https://doi.org/10.52449/1857-4114.2020.36-2.04>. p.72-79. 0,4 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.3 Popov, A., Beniuc V. Sport and politics or anti-diplomacy in sport: a historical retrospective of the Olympic Games. În: Relații Internaționale Plus. Revistă științifico-practică Nr. 2 (18) 2020. ISSN 1857-4440 eISSN 2587-3393. p.147-156. 0,5 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.4 Попов, А., Бенюк, В. Спорт и политика или антидипломатия в спорте: историческая ретроспектива олимпийских игр. В: Relații Internaționale Plus. Revistă științifico-practică Nr. 2 (18) 2020. ISSN 1857-4440 eISSN 2587-3393. c.38-48. 0,6 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.5 Попов, А. Олимпийское движение как инструмент публичной дипломатии Республики Молдова: проблемы становления и развития. В: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2020. Nr.36/2. ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. c.63-71.0,5 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.6 Попов, А. Спортивная дипломатия Республики Молдова: формы и специфика проявления. В: Știința culturii fizice. Revistă teoretico-științifică. 2021. Nr.37/1 ISSN: 1857-4114. eISSN: 2537-6438. c.17-23. 0,35 c.a. Categoria B.
- 1.7 Попов, А. Спорт – как инструмент «мягкой силы». În: Revista Moldovenească de Drept Internațional și Relații Internaționale. 2020. Nr. 2 (Vol.15). ISSN 1857-1999. e-ISSN 2345-1963. c.142-153.0,65 c.a. Categoria B.

2. Materials / theses at international conferences published in collections abroad

- 2.1 Popov, A., Beniuc, V. Some Aspects of Contemporary Theoretical Discourse Regarding Sports Diplomacy. In: International Relations 2021: Current issues of world economy and politics. Proceedings of scientific works from the 22nd International Scientific Conference 2 nd – 3 rd December 2021. Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave, Fakulta medzinárodných vzťahov/University of Economics in Bratislava, Faculty of International Relations, 2021. ISBN 978-80-225-4904-2; ISSN 2585-9412. p.79-84. 0,3 c.a.

3. Materials / theses at international conferences published in the Republic of Moldova

- 3.1 Попов А. Теория политического реализма, как методологический инструмент исследования спортивной дипломатии. В: Materialele Conferinței internaționale științifico-practice „Sintezele investigațiilor doctorale în domeniul științelor politico-administrative și economice”, organizată de Școala doctorală a Academiei de Administrare Publică (19 noiembrie 2021). 0,5 c.a.

4. Materials / theses at scientific conferences with international participation in the Republic of Moldova

- 4.1 Попов, А., Бенюк, В. Спортивная дипломатия как инструмент внешней политики и фактор международной безопасности. În: Dezvoltarea Armatei Naționale în contextul aprofundării reformelor democratice. Materialele conferinței științifice cu participare internațională, 25 februarie 2021 Ed. a 6-a - Chișinău: Notograf Prim., 2021. p.190-193. 0,2 c.a.

5. Materials / theses at scientific conferences published in national collections

- 5.1 Курдов И., Попов А., Муртазалиев М. Подготовка к соревнованиям по самбо и участие в них. В: Personalitate și sport: Teorie. Metodologie. Practică. = Личность и спорт: Теория. Методика. Практика = Personality and Sports. Theory. Methodology. Practice: Materialele conferinței științifico-practice, dedicate antrenorilor emerți la Sambo și Judo Nicolae Bolboceanu și Iracii Valișvili, ediția a 6-a, 21 mai 2021, Chișinău. Chișinău: Print-Caro, 2021. 100 p. ISBN 978-9975-56-885-2. p.5-9. 0,2 c.a.
- 5.2 Попов А. Большой спорт через призму политического реализма: продолжение «холодной войны». В: Personalitate și sport: Teorie. Metodologie. Practică. = Личность и спорт: Теория. Методика. Практика = Personality and Sports. Theory. Methodology. Practice: Materialele conferinței științifico-practice, dedicate antrenorilor emerți la Sambo și Judo Nicolae Bolboceanu și Iracii Valișvili, ediția a 6-a, 21 mai 2021, Chișinău. Chișinău: Print-Caro, 2021. 100 p. ISBN 978-9975-56-885-2. p. 81-86. 0,3 c.a.

ADNOTARE

POPOV Anton. „Diplomația sportivă ca instrument al politicii externe și factor „soft power”, teza de doctor în științe politice. Chișinău, 2022.

Structura tezei de doctor: Introducere, trei capitole, fiecare din ele fiind constituite din trei subcapitole, concluzii și recomandări, adnotări în limbile română, rusă, engleză, lista abrevierilor, lista tabelor, bibliografie din 324 de surse, 137 pagini de text de bază.

Cuvintele cheie: sport, diplomație, sportul și politica, politica externă, diplomația publică, diplomația sportivă, „puterea intangibilă”, instrument de politică externă, confruntare ideologică, dilema securității, interes național, jocuri olimpice, mișcarea olimpică, sportul de performanță, funcțiile sportului.

Domeniul de cercetare: științele politice.

Scopul cercetării: identificarea rolului și importanței diplomației sportive, a mecanismelor de aplicare a acesteia în realizarea politicii externe a statului și apărării intereselor naționale, formarea imaginii pozitive a țării pe arena internațională.

Sarcinile cercetării: analiza literaturii științifice în care se abordează legătura dialectică a sportului, politicii și diplomației precum evoluția discursului politologic cu privire la diplomația sportivă ca instrument de politică externă; elucidarea și analiza abordărilor teoretico - metodologice vizavi de tema de cercetare; examinarea potențialului politico-diplomatic al sportului de performanță, inclusiv a teoriei și practicii interdependenței sportului și a proceselor politice; studierea fenomenului de manifestare a diplomației sportive drept instrument de politică externă și în acest sens analiza sistemică a legăturii dintre politica externă, diplomația clasică, diplomația publică, diplomația sportivă și „puterea intangibilă”; studierea diplomației sportive drept mijloc de realizare a puterii intangibile și profilaxiei conflictelor interstatuale; analiza sportului moldovenesc în calitate de instrument politico-diplomatic implicat în formarea imaginii țării pe arena internațională.

Problema științifică principală soluționată în cadrul temei de cercetare, examinează diplomația sportivă ca instrument de politică externă și factor al „puterii intangibile”, în contextul asigurării interesului național și securității statului, formării imaginii pozitive a țării pe arena internațională.

Noutatea științifică și originalitatea: în prezenta cercetare științifică, pentru prima dată în Republica Moldova, într-o formulă complexă și din punct de vedere politologic este analizat fenomenul diplomației sportive în calitate de instrument al politicii externe și important factor în realizarea „puterii intangibile”. În baza examinării multiplelor evenimente și a unor procese social- istorice, autorul demonstrează, în baza unor serioase argumente, că sportul de performanță permanent a fost atras de către stat în procesul de politică externă în calitate de instrument în relațiile internaționale și mijloc eficient de formare a imaginii pozitive a acestuia pe plan internațional, precum a unui anumit spațiu de securitate care se formează prin însăși destinația Jocurilor Olimpice (mai târziu a campionatelor mondiale) menite să stabilească relații de prietenie între statele participante. Originalitatea cercetării constă în aplicarea unei teorii cu caracter interdisciplinar precum punerea în circuitul științific a abordărilor teoretice din domeniul relațiilor internaționale, adaptându-le la o mai profundă comprehensiune și analiză a subiectelor cercetării.

Importanța teoretică a tezei rezidă în elaborarea bazei teoretico-metodologice a temei de cercetare care din perspectiva noastră poate fi folosită în calitate de reper în cercetarea diverselor manifestări ale diplomației sportive.

Valoarea aplicativă a lucrării constă în elaborarea de către autor a concluziilor și recomandărilor care au o anumită importanță pentru politicieni și managerii preocupați în domeniul sportului de performanță precum pentru reprezentării structurilor de politică externă a statului.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice și-au găsit reflectarea în 12 publicații științifice precum în discursurile expuse în cadrul conferințelor științifice naționale și internaționale.

АННОТАЦИЯ

ПОПОВ Антон, «Спортивная дипломатия как инструмент внешней политики и фактор «мягкой силы», диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора политических наук, Кишинэу, 2022.

Структура диссертации: введение, три главы, каждая из которой состоит из трех параграфов, выводы и рекомендации, аннотации на румынском, русском, английском языках, список аббревиатур, список таблиц, библиография из 324 источников, 137 страниц основного текста.

Ключевые слова: спорт, дипломатия, спорт и политика, внешняя политика, публичная дипломатия, спортивная дипломатия, «мягкая сила», инструмент внешней политики, идеологическое противостояние, дилемма безопасности, национальный интерес, олимпийские игры, олимпийское движение, большой спорт, функции спорта.

Область исследования: политические науки.

Цель исследования: выявить роль и значение спортивной дипломатии, механизмы ее применения в реализации внешней политики государства и защите его национальных интересов, формирование положительного имиджа страны на международной арене.

Задачи исследования: анализировать научную литературу рассматривающую диалектическую взаимосвязь спорта, политики и дипломатии а также развитие политологического дискурса относительно спортивной дипломатии как инструмента внешней политики; раскрыть и проанализировать теоретико-методологические подходы к изучению диссертационной темы исследования; исследовать политико-дипломатический потенциал спорта, в частности теорию и практику взаимосвязи спорта как социального явления и политики; изучить феномен проявления спортивной дипломатии как инструмента внешней политики и в этой связи системно анализировать взаимосвязь внешней политики, классической дипломатии, публичной дипломатии, спортивной дипломатии и «мягкой силы»; рассмотреть спортивную дипломатию как средство реализации «мягкой силы» и профилактики межгосударственных конфликтов; анализировать молдавский спорт в качестве политико-дипломатического инструмента формирования образа страны на международной арене.

Главная научная проблема, которая была решена в рамках темы исследования, рассматривает спортивную дипломатию как инструмент внешней политики и фактор «мягкой силы», в контексте обеспечения национального интереса и безопасности государства, формирования положительного имиджа страны на международной арене.

Научная новизна и оригинальность: в данном научном исследовании впервые, в Республике Молдова, комплексно, с политологической точки зрения анализируется феномен спортивной дипломатии в качестве инструмента внешней политики и важного фактора «мягкой силы». На основе анализа множества фактов и социально-исторических процессов, автор аргументировано демонстрирует, что большой спорт всегда вовлекался государством в своей внешней политики в качестве действенного инструмента международных отношений и эффективного средства формирования его позитивного имиджа на мировой арене, а также определенного пространства его безопасности, которая формируется в том числе изначальным предназначением Олимпийских игр, позже чемпионатов мира, призванных устанавливать дружественных отношений между государствами. Оригинальность исследования заключается в применении теории междисциплинарного характера, а также в использовании базовых теоретических подходов науки о международных отношениях, к пониманию и анализу предмета исследования.

Теоретическое значение диссертации состоит в разработке теоретико-методологической основы темы исследования, которую, на наш взгляд, можно использовать в качестве ориентира в исследовании различных проявлений спортивной дипломатии.

Прикладная ценность работы состоит в разработанных автором выводы имеющими определенное значение для политиков и менеджеров занимающимися управлением спортом больших достижений, а также для представителей структур занимающимися внешней политикой.

Имплементация научных результатов нашли свое выражение в 12 научных публикациях, а также в научных презентациях, в рамках национальных и международных научных конференциях.

ANNOTATION

POPOV Anton, „Sports Diplomacy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy and a Factor of „Soft Power”, PhD thesis in political science, Chisinau, 2022.

PhD thesis structure: introduction, three chapters, each of which consists of three sections, general conclusions and recommendations, bibliography that consists of 324 works, 137 pages of the main text.

Keywords: sport, diplomacy, sport and politics, foreign policy, public diplomacy, sports diplomacy, "soft power", foreign policy instrument, ideological confrontation, security dilemma, national interest, Olympic Games, Olympic movement, big sport, sport functions.

Research area: political science.

The purpose of the thesis: to reveal the role and importance of sports diplomacy, the mechanisms of its application in the implementation of the foreign policy of the state and the protection of its national interests, the formation of a positive image of the country in the international arena.

Research objectives: to analyze scientific literature considering the dialectical relationship of sport, politics and diplomacy, as well as the development of political science discourse on sports diplomacy as a foreign policy instrument; to reveal and analyze theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of the dissertation research topic; explore the political and diplomatic potential of sport, in particular the theory and practice of the relationship between sport as a social phenomenon and politics; to study the phenomenon of the manifestation of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and, in this regard, to systematically analyze the relationship between foreign policy, classical diplomacy, public diplomacy, sports diplomacy and "soft power"; consider sports diplomacy as a means of implementing "soft power" and preventing interstate conflicts; analyze Moldovan sports as a political and diplomatic tool for shaping the country's image in the international arena.

The main scientific problem, which was solved within the framework of the research topic, considers sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and a factor of "soft power", in the context of ensuring the national interest and security of the state, forming a positive image of the country in the international arena.

Scientific novelty and originality: this scientific study for the first time, in the Republic of Moldova, comprehensively, from a political point of view, analyzes the phenomenon of sports diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy and an important factor of "soft power". Based on the analysis of many facts and socio-historical processes, the author demonstrates reasonably that big sport has always been involved by the state in its foreign policy as an effective tool of international relations and an effective means of forming its positive image on the world stage, as well as a certain space for its security, which formed, among other things, by the original purpose of the Olympic Games, later the world championships, designed to establish friendly relations between states. The originality of the research lies in the application of the theory of an interdisciplinary nature, as well as in the use of the basic theoretical approaches of the science of international relations, to the understanding and analysis of the subject of research.

The theoretical significance of the dissertation lies in the development of a theoretical and methodological basis for the research topic, which, in our opinion, can be used as a reference point in the study of various manifestations of sports diplomacy.

Applied value of the work consists in the conclusions developed by the author that have a certain value for politicians and managers engaged in the management of sports of great achievements, as well as for representatives of structures engaged in foreign policy.

Implementation of scientific results: found their expression in 12 scientific publications as well as in scientific presentations, in the framework of national and international scientific conferences.

POPOV ANTON

**SPORTS DIPLOMACY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY AND
A FACTOR OF „SOFT POWER”**

**561.01. Theory, methodology of political science; institutions and political
processes**

Abstract of the PhD thesis in Political Science

Approved for printing: 25.05.2022
Offset paper. Offset printing
Quires: ...

Paper size A4
Edition 50 ex
Order no.49.

Tipografia „PRINT - CARO”,
Str. Astronom Nicolae Donici 14 mun. Chişinău MD-2049
tel.(022) 85-33-86