

BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**Impact of sports diplomacy on the relations between South and North
Korea
Bachelor Thesis**

Bratislava, 2018

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BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS

**IMPACT OF SPORTS DIPLOMACY ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH
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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is the work of my own and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references

Bratislava, February 19

Šimon Vacval,

Signature: _____

The Impact of Sports Diplomacy on the Relations between South and North Korea

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Abstract

The subject of this thesis is the impact of sports diplomacy on the relations between South and North Korea. The aim of this thesis is to find out if the Olympics in 2018 played a major role in the current relationship between Koreans.

The research will be done by comparing the communications, meetings and actions of the leaders of Korea before and after the Olympics. First chapter will lay out the history of sports diplomacy, its application and dangers, second will look at the history of South and North Korea while the third will look at the recent situation in Korea and the possible implication of Olympics on it.

Vplyv športovej diplomacie vo vzťahu medzi Južnou a Severnou Kóreou

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Abstrakt

Hlavnou témou tejto bakalárskej práce je vplyv športovej diplomacie vo vzťahu medzi Južnou a Severnou Kóreou. Cieľom tejto práce je zistiť, či Olympijské hry v roku 2018 boli dôležitým faktorom vo vzťahu Južnej a Severnej Kórei. Komunikácia, stretnutia a správanie lídrov týchto krajín pred a po Olympijských hrách budú preskúmané na to, aby sa táto práca dostala bližšie k odpovedi. Prvá kapitola bude zahŕňať podstatné informácie ohľadom športovej diplomacie, druhá kapitola sa pozrie na začiatok Kórejského konfliktu a tretia preskúma súčasný stav v Kórei a či bol tento stav nejakým ovplyvnený Olympijskými hrami.

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Introduction

Sport and diplomacy are thought to not be compatible, nonetheless, they can still influence each other. Diplomacy has always been about finding agreement or compromises with the other party. On the other hand, sport is full of rivalries and there is always only one winner. Do opposites attract? Even if they do not, sports diplomacy is usually not done on the sport pitch. Events such as Olympic Games are capable of bringing people together. The founder of the modern Olympic Games, Pierre Coubertin, was known for his quote: “The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in the life is not the triumph but the struggle”. Sport should therefore not always be about winning. The power of sport comes from its absolute popularity all over the world. It inspires people in their daily life. Spreading political, diplomatic or other messages through it can make a big impact on the majority of the population.

When we consider how important some cases of sport diplomacy such as “Ping-pong diplomacy” (a ping-pong game between the US and China that started the normalization of their relationship) were, it is surprising how little info there is about it. When most people hear the term sports diplomacy, they either have no clue what it means, or they imagine something that is not sports diplomacy at all. There are next to zero books about this topic and only handful of articles. While sports diplomacy is not as important as some other aspects of diplomacy, it deserves a little bit more recognition amongst general public. Small, local sport events with simple message against racism, sexism, drugs or with any other positive message can be done by almost anyone and can have a positive impact.

The unfortunate thing about sports diplomacy is that it is really hard, if not impossible to accurately measure its impact. This thesis will try to consider all the other factors that could have played a major role in the current Korean relations. Very often the sport itself does not achieve much and the important aspect of it is that it forces the leaders to stay in touch and friendly communication before and

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during the event, as it was the case with Ping-pong diplomacy. If everything goes well, the tone of communication will not change after the event.

The main goal of this thesis is to get as close as possible to defining the impact of sport in Korea on all levels. Can the dangerous, ugly part of sport – nationalism - that is very present in both Koreas be useful as it helps to unite both countries? As it was previously mentioned, sport is very popular among common people. Could the message of uniting both Koreas be much more powerful for people if done through sport? How powerful it is for Koreans, when they see South and North Koreans marching under one flag during Olympics, looking like they were always living together? Just how powerful is the symbolic of sport in connection to politics? Politicians are usually not as popular as sportsmen. Seeing the North and South Korean leader formally shaking hands and smiling into cameras will not make people as much emotional. This thesis aspires to prove that this is one of the main benefits of sports diplomacy.

The positive impact of sports diplomacy in starting the communication is unquestionable. However, with the rise of technologies, news and social media, the communicating part of sports diplomacy is simply not as relevant as it was in the 20th century, as the communication between most countries is now much more common. Instead, the focus of sports diplomacy is now shifting into image-building. Sporting mega-events, such as the World Cup or Olympics are getting as popular as ever. It is a great way for the hosting party to become more known. A well hosted event will make them look more serious and improve their image, along with tourism. It is no wonder that many rising countries such as Brazil, Korea or China hosted these events with hopes of repeating the success that Germany achieved in 2006 with the World Cup. This is one of the reasons, why sports diplomacy is so important for South Korea, as they get to kill two birds with one stone. Apart from gaining prestige from hosting these events, the isolationism of North Korea is also represented in their communication, which makes the sports diplomacy shine here even in the 21st century. In the last thirty years, South Korea hosted the most sporting mega-events out of all the countries in the world - three. And they are not done yet, as they just have made a joint bid with North Korea for hosting Olympics in 2032.

Literature review

Sport Diplomacy

Sports diplomacy is a fairly unknown subject and many people are likely to make misconceptions about this topic. To negate some of these misconceptions about sports diplomacy, "Sporting Spirit" (Orwell, 1945) will be used. It will also show us the unsuccessful start of sports diplomacy and help us look at the shift that happened during the end of 20th century and in the 21st century. Many uses of sports diplomacy such as "Ping-pong diplomacy" in the second half of 20th century have shown an enormous potential of sports diplomacy as a great way to overcome previous bad relationships. This will be followed by the present use of sport diplomacy and its four main uses: image-building, building a platform for dialogue, trust-building and reconciliation, integration and anti-racism (Nygard, 2013).

The other side of sports diplomacy will also be mentioned, such as the usage of propaganda or nationalism (Seippel, 2017). Another new danger arising is the slow transformation of image-building sports diplomacy into a corporate diplomacy. The incredible power of organizations such as FIFA or IOC and their corruptness and lack of morals shown by their recently chosen hosts of World Cups are scary for the sports diplomacy (Jackson, 2013). Choosing Russia as a host during annexation of Crimea, putting Crimea as a part of Russia in a map during World Cup trailer and not doing anything with the inhuman treatment of workers in Qatar are clear signs that all that FIFA cares about is money.

South Korea, North Korea

Bruce Cumings's "Korea's place in the sun" will give us a brief look into the history of North and South Korea (Cumings, 1997). North Korea's isolation policies and fight against globalism is also very relevant here. The linkage between isolationism and sport can be studied in "Sport and physical culture in North Korea: resisting, recognizing and relishing globalization" (Merkel, 2012). On the other side we have South Korea. Their eagerness to put themselves on a map and be more

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known is the exact opposite of North Korea's behavior. Their recent increase of organization of big events shows it and its impact on the population will be studied (Merkel, 2017). The location of Korean peninsula and its importance will be studied through "Geopolitics: A very short introduction" (Dodds, 2007).

Diplomacy, Sport Diplomacy in Korea

"Diplomacy: The dialogue between two states" (Watson, 1982) will be used to gain the needed basic diplomatic knowledge. The reasons, benefits and dangers of combining sport and diplomacy into one hybrid will also be mentioned (Murray, 2011). How sport shapes the opinion of South Koreans, along with a direct look into the history of sport diplomacy in Korea will also be provided, combined with the comparison between Koreas and the situation in East and West Germany (Merkel, 2014). Apart from that, another important topic is the barriers blocking the reunification (Constantinou, 2010). Another important thing in the diplomatic communication between Koreas is the multiple breaks in communication, that often last few years. How often these breaks happen, what is the reason behind them and what are the reasons behind the reopening of the communication? Here, in answering of these questions, we also might find the influence of sports diplomacy.

1. Sport Diplomacy

1.1 Sport Diplomacy in the Past

Sport diplomacy is the use of soft power through sport. “Soft power is the power to persuade whereby one actor in a non-coercive manner convinces another to want the same things he/she wants. Sport politics and diplomacy constitute a form of soft power. They aim to persuade and not coerce” (Nygard, 2013). The term sport diplomacy might look like an oxymoron. Competitive sport is full of rivalries, and everyone is there to win, not to make friends. Huge fights between football fans especially in Southern Europe and South America do not show any reconciliation through sport, but the exact opposite. The passion, prestige, nationalism, and money that come from the competitive sports makes it impossible for the two rival countries to use it as a way to improve relations. So how does sport diplomacy work then?

The first signs of sports diplomacy appeared at the start of the 20th century. George Orwell writes about it in the article “The Sporting Spirit”. This form of sports diplomacy was done through friendly games between teams from Russia and England. Even a friendly game like this was full of rivalry and unfair practices, from which Orwell concluded, that sport simply cannot work as a way to unite people. He went even further and said that: “Serious sport is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence. In other words, it is war minus the shooting” (Orwell, 1945). There is some truth in this quote, although in the reality competitive sport is usually not as violent or brutal. Luckily, sport diplomacy is usually not done on the sport field. Even a friendly football game between two hostile countries can do more harm than good, due to violent fans. Even if most of the people will want to watch the game in peace, a small vocal minority of violent fans can ruin the experience and the peaceful message of the friendly game. Therefore, sport diplomacy is very much dependent on the attitude of the people and leaders towards uniting. A friendly game between South and North Korea can be beneficial, but on the other hand, a game between

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Russia and Ukraine would most likely only lead to conflicts and fights between people that watch the game.

FIFA and IOC, the biggest sport organizations that are behind the World Cup and the Olympic Games are very much aware of the positive and the negative aspect of sport. During the World Cup some countries cannot play against each other due political reasons, such as Spain vs. Gibraltar, Russia vs. Ukraine or Azerbaijan vs. Armenia. On the other hand, one of the reasons why South Korea was chosen as the host of the Olympic Games or the World Cup was because FIFA and IOC believed it could help in improving their relationship with North Korea. For similar reasons was South Africa awarded the Rugby World Cup in 1995. “One year after the fall of the apartheid regime, in 1995, South Africa hosted the rugby World Cup. Traditionally, rugby had been a predominately “white” sport in South Africa. The newly elected President Mandela used the event to champion South African unity, moving rugby away from being a “white” sport to being a national sport for all. Mandela succeeded beyond expectations—the South African team won the tournament, a victory for all of South Africa” (Nygard, 2013).

1.2 Sport Diplomacy in the Present

In the 21st century is sport diplomacy used mainly as an image-building tool. This is done by hosting sport mega events – the World Cup and the Olympic Games. Other smaller sports, such as hockey or basketball can also be used, but they are in no way comparable to these two events and so I will focus only on them. “Almost half of the population (around 3 billion) tuned in at some point to watch both of these events. Just the finals of the World Cup reached over one billion viewers” (Statista, 2016-2018). It is therefore clear why are so many countries fighting to become the host of the next mega event. The hosting country is put in the spotlight for more than a month. Many people will visit this country just to experience the atmosphere of the event and so it is a huge boost for the tourism and for the local companies. With all the spotlight, the hosting country can show its progress to the whole world. “Recently, China, South Africa and Brazil have used mega-sporting events to announce their status as rising powers” (Nygard, 2013). In the case of Germany and South Africa, it can be also used to distance country from its past and to show that they are now a democratic country.

The benefits of hosting mega events (especially the economic ones) are absolutely huge and that is clear due to all the scandals of bribing that happened in the past 20 years. From 2006 up until the last confirmed World Cup in 2022, every single one except for Brazil was full of rumors about bribing, with some of them being confirmed. “Mohamed bin Hammam admitted getting 6.7 million Euros after Germany was chosen as the host of World Cup” (Connor, 2018). The big corruption case with FIFA in 2015, where fourteen people were indicted also included World Cup in South Africa. “FIFA received 10 million dollars from Danny Jordaan, the president of South African Football Association” (Rashbaum, 2015). After the scandal came to light in 2015, he admitted to it but denied that it was a bribe for hosting of the World Cup. However, since this payment was done shortly before the selection of the host, it is very hard to believe him, especially since South Africa

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ended up being chosen as the host. Similar situation repeated with the World Cup in Russia and Qatar, however this time the accusations were about buying individual votes instead of paying bribes to the head of FIFA. Clearly, countries are willing to spend millions of Euros just to be able to host the sporting event, which comes with additional huge payments. Some countries do not have the necessary infrastructure for hosting of these events and have to spend additional billions of Euros. For example “in the Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008 China had to spend 44 billion dollars” (Sudakov, 2008). Such a shocking amount of money combined with the fact, that most of the infrastructure will not be used after the Olympic Games at all makes it really hard to see hosting of the Olympic Games as a profitable thing and yet, dozens of countries are fighting and bribing their way through the process every year.

The second main use of sport diplomacy is peace-building and building a platform for dialogue. If two countries have rough relations, organizing a friendly sport game between them can be the first step toward a new, better relationship. Sport diplomacy cannot make miracles, it needs will from both parties to work. The most famous case of sport diplomacy is certainly the “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” between China and the USA, which happened during the Cold War. The relations between China and The US were terrible, with barely any communication or visits between these two countries. This is exactly the situation, where the sport diplomacy shines. It all started when the US Table team got an invitation to play a friendly game in China. “On April 10, 1971, the team and accompanying journalists became the first American delegation to set foot in the Chinese capital since 1949” (MacMillan, 1985). This event was a success and it was the first step that led to an eventual historical visit of Richard Nixon in China. Was sport diplomacy the sole reason behind the improvements between China and the US? Definitely not, but it would not start without it.

The beauty of sport lies in its popularity. Every country has its own culture and traditions. However, what every country shares is the love of the sport. Even if two countries are hostile due to their differences in culture or religion, they can still

be reunited through sport. And this works on all levels, not just for countries. Sport can be a great tool to pull a country, group or even an individual out of isolationism. We can see cases of this even in Slovakia with Roma people. Some Slovak villages are trying to solve the problem of isolation between white and Roma kids through football and hockey matches. During sport, everyone is equal. All the racial, religious or different tensions between these groups are forgotten here, as long as it is not a competitive sport. This can be seen even in the case of the US, who tried to connect young Muslims in Africa and Asia together through football in programs like SportsUnited. “Only certain cultures or segments of society show strong interest in learning English, traveling to United States, attending a classical music event, or participating in a discussion on human rights. On the other hand, virtually all cultures and all citizens have an interest in and appreciation for sport. This makes it one of the best methods for exchange – especially for diplomats operating in an age where the opinions of foreign publics are so crucial for success” (Walters, 2011).

1.3 What Makes Sport a Good Diplomatic Tool

What makes sport appealing as a diplomatic tool? What is the advantage of sport over other activities, hobbies or actions when it comes to diplomacy? One of the reasons that I already mentioned in the previous subchapter is definitely its popularity all over the world. However, sport has some additional qualities that make it a very interesting diplomatic tool. Sport gives us an image of what human body is capable of doing at its peak. Famous sportsmen are the idols of millions of people. With their perfect physique, they are the closest thing to superheroes we have. People like Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi or in Slovakia Peter Sagan are respected and known all over the world. While this is good news for companies that want to use them in their advertisement, it also makes them a very potent tool for a spread of message and this is where diplomacy comes to play.

These sportsmen are more popular than politicians or diplomats and so the message they send can reach more people. “Whether it is Queen Elizabeth in her 2010 Christmas speech or David Beckham using his fame and sport to raise awareness of children’s rights, the medium of sports to spread a diplomatic message is proving increasingly popular” (Murray, 2012). Some people will believe these celebrities just because of their status. On the other hand, this also means that they can be used by politicians as a tool of propaganda. In fact, many leaders tried to meet with famous sportsmen to improve their image, for example Vladimir Putin with Conor McGregor, Recep Tayyip Erdogan with Mesut Özil or Ramzan Kadyrov with Mohamed Salah. This is the other side of sport diplomacy, or in this case more of a celebrity diplomacy. Famous sportsmen devote their whole life to sport, they are usually very apolitical and do not realize the threat of being used as a tool of propaganda. All the previously mentioned sportsmen were met with heavy criticism for their meetings and it is hard to believe they gained anything useful from it. It is quite likely that these sportsmen barely knew anything about the politicians they met. Every sportsman has to start his training in his early life, which often leads to them skipping even high school. Therefore, compared to the other types of

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celebrities, sportsmen are usually less educated and more vulnerable to being used by politicians.

The third reason why sport is a great diplomatic tool is the fact that its global presence goes way beyond just the normal population. “There are 203 national Olympic committees in the IOC – 11 more countries than there are members of the United Nations (UN). This fact, in and of itself, demonstrates the significance and potential strategic value of sport as an instrument of international relations” (Jackson, 2013). Competitive sport is mostly unaffected by politics, and therefore is not controversial. With its global popularity, no country has a reason nor can afford to be opposed to sport.

1.4 Dangers of Sport Diplomacy

Unfortunately, sport diplomacy can be very dangerous. One of the dangers is the previously mentioned propaganda, another one is nationalism. Just like sports diplomacy is used to spread diplomatic messages, it can be abused as a propaganda. “The Olympics have been used to paint authoritarian regimes in a less threatening light before. When Nazi Germany hosted the 1936 Summer Olympic Games in Berlin, Adolf Hitler utilized the platform as a way to sway international opinion in favor of his anti – Semitic, white supremacist ideals” (Friedman, 2018). Olympic Games were used in a similar way during the Cold War, when Russia boycotted Olympic Games in the US, and the US boycotted Olympic Games in Russia. However, with the presence that sport has in the 21st century, there are only a few countries in the world – like North Korea – that could afford to boycott such a prestigious event without a huge backlash from the public.

When it comes to nationalism, there seems to be two different types of people created by sport. “Individuals with strong national sentiments are also those who are proud when national athletes succeed. The second type of people are interested in sport and may feel “nationally proud” of their athletes despite not otherwise expressing strong national feelings” (Seippel, 2017). The quote from George Orwell is relevant here as sport does have some characteristics that make it similar to war. Two countries against each other, winner takes it all. Just like in war, even in sport, the winning country can feel some sense of superiority. With nationalism on the rise, there will be always a danger that politicians will use good results in sport as a way to prove that their country is superior, just like Adolf Hitler did in the past.

Nationalism in sport is also relevant to the third danger of sports diplomacy and that is the power of sport organizations – FIFA and IOC. These two organizations get a lot of criticism for choosing undemocratic countries as the hosts of sport mega events. This, combined with their corruption shown in multiple bribing scandals is very dangerous for sport diplomacy. The last two countries chosen for the World Cup were Russia and Qatar, who are both non-democratic countries. Qatar was

never known for football previously, lacks any sport infrastructure and has extreme climate that is not ideal for football, so it is quite shocking FIFA decided to make them the host. Since Qatar lacks stadiums necessary for the World Cup, they had to be built in a quick time. However, the workers are getting inhuman treatment. “If we were to hold a minute of silence for every estimated death of a migrant worker due to the constructions of the Qatar World Cup, the first 44 matches of the tournament would be played in silence” (Gabrielsen, 2018). FIFA is completely ignoring this issue. As if it that was not enough – FIFA – a sport organization has a lot of power over countries. In Brazil, where the 2014 World Cup was hosted, it was forbidden to consume alcohol in stadiums due to fights between the fans. However, the main sponsor of FIFA was Budweiser and so FIFA managed to force Brazil into making a new bill to allow people consume alcohol. “Alcoholic drinks are a part of the FIFA World Cup, so we are going to have them. Excuse me if I sound a bit arrogant but that’s something we will not negotiate. The fact that we have the right to sell beer has to be part of the law” (“Beer must be sold at Brazil World Cup, says FIFA”, 2012). In conclusion, FIFA and IOC are clearly focused on profits and are not afraid to force countries into changing laws or choose undemocratic countries as hosts, as long as it gives them more money. This, combined with the rise of nationalism in and outside of sport is very dangerous, because it seems like FIFA would not be afraid to give hosting rights to a country that can abuse them in a similar way like Adolf Hitler did.

2. Situation in South and North Korea

2.1 History Between South and North Korea

After learning the basics of sport diplomacy in chapter one, it is now time to look at one of the most frequent users of sports diplomacy. Korea, one of the oldest civilizations in the world, was not divided into two countries up until the 20th century. After the occupation from Japan during the WWII, Korea was divided into two different countries – North Korea, freed by Soviet army, and South Korea, freed by The US. “Shortly after the superpowers pulled out most of their forces, North Korea invaded South Korea (25 June 1950) starting the Korean War, which lasted until 1953. After a truce was signed with the North, a demilitarized zone (DMZ) was established along the 38th parallel and has separated the two countries from the conflict since” (Cumings, 2005). Now we are reaching almost 70 years since North Korea attacked South Korea and yet there is still truce and no peace treaty. Since the occupation of Korea by Japan began in 1910, there are now no Koreans alive, who remember living under one Korea without any interference. Now between the occupation and Korean War Koreans did not live in peace for more than one hundred years. When will they finally find peace?

Even though they were the same country just few years ago, North Korea and South Korea transformed into completely different, almost opposite types of countries. South Korea heavily focused on economy and “following the Japanese model of export-oriented growth, production grew dramatically in the 1970s and 1980s and the South still maintains an annual average real growth rate of over five percent” (Amsden, 1989). Strong economy combined with one of the best militaries in the world makes South Korea a force to be reckoned with. In the times when liberal democracy is slowly losing its popularity all over the world, South Korea goes against this trend as their latest president became liberal Moon Jae-In, who is trying

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to bring back the Sunshine Policy – in which South Korea is trying to cooperate with North Korea as much as possible, instead of the cold approach. This policy was popular at the start of the 21st century, however, it was deemed unviable. Moon Jae-In will try to redeem this policy.

On the other hand we have North Korea with completely different economic and political system. After the occupation, North Korea was left with a great industry, however, most of it was destroyed during the Korean War. Since then, North Korea heavily relied on other countries. “During the Cold War, the North frequently exploited the animosities between its two main benefactors, the Soviet Union and China, and achieved astonishing progress in standards of living. However, since the demise of the Soviet Union things have changed for the worse; most of the markets for North Korean products have all but disappeared” (Cumings, 2005). Questionable economic decisions combined with famines led to huge problems. “While the South has continued to grow and now enjoys per capita GDP on a par with those of many developed nations, the North has slowly slid into poverty. South Korea trades heavily with the rest of the world, whilst North Korea is isolated and its economy bears a remarkable resemblance to the old Korea” (Cumings, 2006).

2.2 Juche and Sport in North Korea

The reason, why North Korea heavily favors isolationism is related to their ideology – Juche. The author of this ideology is Kim Il–Sung, who “is a modern Utopus, who cut his nation off from the world in search of an ancient ideal, a self-sufficient Hermit Kingdom” (Cumings, 2006). “Juche is a philosophy, which appeared to be an inevitable response by the North Korean nation to the hardships caused by the Japanese annexation, poverty and the Korean War, “having the broader meaning of putting Korea first”” (Martin, 2006). The similarities between Juche and sport can be seen right away. In both there is some sense of nationalism and both can lead to people seeing their country as superior. However, nowadays, having Juche as a state ideology seems very limited and it is believed that North Korea is struggling economically because of it. “Juche has become a liability in North Korea’s efforts to reform its economy. Instead of opening the country to the outside world as China did two decades ago, North Korea has resorted to a highly chauvinistic and defensive form of nationalism. It will continue to promote a defensive form of nationalism as a key strategy of national survival” (Shin, 2006).

With Juche being the national ideology and sharing similarities with sport, it is no wonder that even though North Korea heavily restricts the freedoms of their citizens and the media they can reach, there seems to be much more choice when it comes to sport. “Football is the biggest sport in North Korea, and the streets of Pyongyang go quiet each Sunday when the state broadcaster airs games (never live) from the English Premiership, Italian Serie A or Eastern European leagues. Locals stand around in bars to discuss the scores and the occasional match reports that they read in the state-run sports paper” (Watts, 2010). This once again highlights the diplomatic power of sport. While North Korea is censoring a lot in social and political areas they see sport not threatening enough to ban it. It helps that Kim Jong- Un, the leader of North Korea, is also a big fan of sports, especially NBA, which led to a visit of Dennis Rodman, former basketball player. Therefore, the diplomatic power of sport is very valuable when it comes to North Korea. Not only it is one of

the very few non-censored things in North Korea, but it also is something popular not only among citizens but also by their leader.

There is also another demonstration of the popularity of sport in North Korea. While the leaders of the country - whether it was Kim Jong-Un or Kim Jong-Il - are known to have a strong personality cult, "the North Korean media are encouraged by the country's former leader to offer additional domestic role models, for examples heroes and heroines from the world of sport" (Merkel, 2012). The quote about sportsmen being the closest thing to superheroes from the first chapter once again applies here, and it has even more power in a country that is used to having a strong leader. These sportsmen are valued as the most popular people in North Korea, right behind the leader. "In North Korea, footballer Jong Tae - se is frequently referred to as a "people's Rooney" which not only demonstrates the popularity of the foreign sportsmen and women but shows that this secluded country is gradually becoming more porous" (Merkel, 2012). However, in the past North Korea was not as open to sport as it is now. During the 2002 World Cup hosted by South Korea and Japan, "The North did not even try to qualify and totally ignored FIFA's offer to hold a very small number of games north of the 38th parallel" (Merkel, 2012). As if that was not enough, North Korea also attacked a South Korean ship during the World Cup in attempt to steal the spotlight from South Korea, who achieved historic success during this World Cup. However, since then is North Korea much more open to the sport as this chapter has shown. Clearly not even North Korea seems beneficial to censor or interfere with sport.

2.3 Reunification and its Consequences

Even if Kim Jong-Un and Moon Jae-In meet and decide to reunite Korea, there are still many obstacles for the reunification. Reunification of Korea would not lead to just local consequences, it is something that would be extremely relevant for every current superpower. According to Goldman Sachs, “a united Korea could overtake France, Japan or Germany in GDP in 30 years” (Thatcher, 2009). The complete opposite style of economies would work extremely well together. While South Korea heavily focuses on export, as they lack any natural resources, North Korea had always central economy with a big amount of minerals and other natural resources. “While the North Korean economic system appears to be in a constant state of chaos, it offers a wealth of minerals and large and cheap workforce. Pair that with a mineral-poor South Korea that relies heavily on imports to feed its massive industry, and you’ve got growth” (Berstein, 2018).

Judging from this, it would seem like reunification should be the number one priority for South Korea. However, there still needs to be done a lot for work, before they can even think about reunification. “The financial burden of unification which South Korea will have to absorb has been estimated at ten times greater than that of West Germany, related to Germany’s reunification” (Choo, 2005). According to South Korean researcher Leonid Petrov, this sum could reach three trillion dollars. And this is not the only problem that South and North Korea are facing. “Millions of North Koreans could enter the South, which would quickly overwhelm South Korea’s refugee support capacities and would have enormous negative impact on country’s economy” (Merkel, 2012). Since the state of economy of North Korea is in a much worse state than it was the one of East Germany, it is clear that South Korea will need to provide a lot of support until they are ready for the possible reunification. Up to this day is East Germany is still struggling behind West. “Despite a very organized and carefully implemented economic plan to reduce regional differences executed over the course of a quarter century, the per capita GDP of former East German provinces still stands today at less than 70 percent of former West

provinces. Unemployment in the former East hovers around twice that of the West, at 11 percent, and average household assets still haven't risen to 50 percent of the West. In short, equalizing economic conditions post-unification is incredibly difficult, with efforts in Germany still ongoing today“(Fendos, 2018). Therefore, South Korea needs to be extremely careful with reunification talks. If we consider that East Germany was in a better state than North Korea, reunification would currently lead to a disaster. A sudden collapse of North Korea could lead to more than just local consequences. “Equally worrisome for Seoul is China’s potential reaction to collapse as this superpower could either intervene directly or orchestrate a coup and install a pro-China regime that would further complicate a peaceful Korean reunification” (Merkel, 2012).

What also cannot be ignored is, how would other superpowers view this reunification of Koreas. “One remarkable feature of North Korea’s external environment after the collapse of the socialist states in many parts of the world is that all of the four surrounding powers – China, the US, Russia and Japan – are against the collapse of the North. Preoccupied with its domestic affairs and afraid of the negative impact of North Korea’s sudden collapse on itself, each of them is trying to help stabilize North Korea in one way or another” (Hak, 1996). This is yet another obstacle for Koreas to achieve reunification. When it comes to China, they have an ally in North Korea. While their friendship with North Korea is fairly one-sided, a united Korea could become a big rival who would probably be closer to the US than China. A collapse of North Korea could lead to millions of refugees going to China, so this is not just a problem that South Korea faces. On the other hand the USA had always unstable relationship with North Korea and the reason behind that is due to their nuclear weapons. It is clear that Donald Trump’s main goal currently is to denuclearize North Korea. What is not clear is how would the USA see Korean reunification. While united Korea would most likely still remain an ally to the USA, there would be no need for their army to remain in South Korea. Since Donald Trump’s presidency, the USA has been already losing some of their influence in other regions and this would be another blow for them.

2.4 Three Level Analysis

The history of North and South Korea and the isolationism of North Korea are key in understanding this analysis that will focus on Panmunjon Declaration. Panmunjon Declaration happened in April 2018 during inter-Korean summit. Kim Jong - Un reached an agreement with Moon Jae – In and they agreed to work together on ending of the Korean War and to reach denuclearization of Korean peninsula. This was a historical moment and many Koreans see this event as a big step towards peace on Korean peninsula. When it comes to North Korea, this event has big implications on an international, state and individual level and therefore it is well suited for a three level analysis. “Scholars and diplomats have found it useful to think about the numerous factors that shape international relations by breaking them into different levels of analysis -- individual, state and international. These different levels of analysis illuminate different reasons for why countries go to war, sign treaties or pursue alliances -- is it due to the personalities of individual leaders, the values of particular nations as a whole or the characteristics of the international system as a whole?” (Alt, 2018). The relations between South and North Korea were very unstable in the past twenty years. The year 2017 was full of nuclear tests done by North Korea. In fact, “Kim Jong – un made 17 missile tests in 2017 – more than Kim Il – sung or Kim Jong – Il during their whole life” (Cotton,2017). Due to unpredictable behavior of the North Korean leader, this analysis can only consider all the possibilities behind this event, instead of giving a clear answer of the impact in international, state and individual level.

Starting with the individual level might be best when it comes to North Korea, as it is unclear what intentions it has. When we look at the position of Kim Jong – Un, there are many possibilities why he decided to sign the Panmunjon Declaration. While it seems unlikely, it cannot be ruled out that he was impressed by the new South Korean president. Moon Jae – In and his Sunshine Policy, in combination with

the Olympic Games in PyeongChang could have convinced Kim to genuinely try to achieve peace on Korean peninsula. The second option is that the nuclear weapons developed by North Korea were simply not powerful enough. Once Kim realized this, he might have felt pressured, especially by Donald Trump who was very vocal about his priority in denuclearization of North Korea. This option leads to the same end – denuclearization – however, in this case it was not by Kim’s own will. Therefore, in this case North Korea might try to develop nuclear weapons again once they feel like they are ready. Third option is that this is all just a trick by Kim Jong – un. Reaching historical progress with South Korea, first ever meeting of North Korean leader with American president and other image improvements of North Korea in 2018 could all have been fake. While every country is certainly still very careful when it comes to North Korea this actions could have created a bit of doubt that would allow Kim to strike when they are not prepared. The sheer unpredictability of the North Korean leader means, that all this could have been just one big plan to strike against the US or South Korea when they are not ready for it. The fourth option is that Kim is just testing the waters. This is certainly a new position for him to be in. It is possible that he is openly thinking about denuclearization to see, what kind of benefits from the USA or South Korea he would get. This seems even more possible after the recent events between the USA and North Korea. It seems like Kim would agree on denuclearization only if the USA will close their network of nuclear-capable submarines and bombers near South Korea. Whether this is a genuine security concern or just a plan to squeeze as much possible from the USA is to be known yet. The option that Kim wants to retire from politics cannot be ruled out completely either. Being a ruler can be exhausting and not for everyone, so someone like Kim might try to make the current situation as peaceful as possible so he can quickly retire somewhere with his money.

The political regime in North Korea, combined with their heavy censorship makes it hard to make any state level analysis. Especially due to the cult of personality of the leader, state level is often identical to individual level. Whether it is because of fear, or because of propaganda, the citizens of North Korea usually do not have much to say about the actions of their leader. Since there is next to zero

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data available about the North Korean population, once again it is possible to only speculate about the ways they reacted to the Panmunjon Declaration. However, since many North Korean families are unable to meet with their relatives in South Korea, many North Koreans might see this as a very positive thing, because it might increase the chances of eventually seeing them. Then there is a part of population, that will follow Kim no matter what and they will see this event as a showcase of Kim's mercifulness and peacefulness. However, with Kim being seen as the very powerful and fearless leader, some part of the population might see this as a sign of weakness. These people might wonder, why is their leader following the orders of the other countries and agreeing with destruction of their own weapons. Nevertheless, Kim seems to have most of the population under the full control and therefore these opinions do not hold as much power as they would in other countries.

The last level is the international one. The aforementioned unpredictability of the North Korean leader may create doubt among other countries, whether this act of denuclearization is sincere. Nonetheless, a country that is definitely happy with this event is South Korea, as they were trying to end the Korean War for decades without any major success. The new South Korean president Moon Jae – In certainly played his part here and he proved that Sunshine Policy might still be useful. The news were taken extremely positive in South Korea and people are hoping this will lead towards eventual peace and maybe even reunification. Another country that will be happy about this due to security concerns is Japan. Most of missile and nuclear tests done by North Korea affected mainly Japan and Japan were one of the most critical countries when it comes to nuclear weapons of North Korea. Most of missile tests in 2017 were launched into Japan Sea and forced the government to issue alerts to its citizens. The USA was another country that fought heavily for a denuclearization of North Korea. While Donald Trump mentioned Korean peace talks few times, it was clear that his main motivation on Korean peninsula was denuclearization of North Korea. With his policy of putting America first, which led to the US losing some of its influence in Europe or Asia, it seems possible he will be willing to send back the army and nuclear bombers in Korea, if it

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will lead to denuclearization. The hardest country to predict here is China. They have an ally in North Korea that is destabilizing some of their main rivals – Japan and South Korea. However, their current relationship with Japan and South Korea is not that bad, so they might economically profit from the stronger, not destabilized eastern region. Since they were never threatened by North Korea unlike other countries, they see no security benefits here and so this event is not as impactful for them as it is for South Korea or the USA.

3. Impact of Sport Diplomacy in 2018

3.1 Year 2018 in Korea

The year 2018 was very special for the relationship between North and South Korea. With the Olympic Games taking place in South Korea, it also was a significant year for sports diplomacy in Korean peninsula. During this year, North Korea slowly started communicating with the rest of the world. The first step towards a better Korean relationship was right at the start of the year, when North Korea announced, that they will participate in the Olympic Games in South Korea. With their history of skipping the Olympic Games, especially the winter ones, combined with their unstable relationship with South Korea, this was a bit of a surprise. American politician Ron Paul called this a “big victory for the sports diplomacy”. During the ceremony, North and South Korean sportsmen marched under one united Korean flag. For the first time in the history, South and North Korea sent a team that consisted of both South and North Korean sportsmen. This was a female hockey team, however, it did not achieve as much success as some might have hoped. Some South Korean hockey players were angry, because they were replaced by weaker North Korean players for the sake of a peaceful message. This combined with the fact that men did not send unified team led to a lot of controversies. However, apart from this mistake the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang were a success.

After the Olympics, North Korea and South Korea stayed in touch. In April, an inter-Korean summit took place. “The past two inter-Korean summits were both held in Pyongyang. But the third inter-Korean summit being held in Panmunjom, at the Peace House on the South’s side, is highly significant” (Chung, 2018). The reason behind the significance of the place is the fact, that since the Korean War, no North Korean leader ever set foot in South Korea. This summit was very successful, as the Korean leaders agreed on working on denuclearization of Korean peninsula. It is also important to mention, that this was a first inter-Korean summit after eleven years. Another significant outcome of this meeting was the agreement between the Korean leaders to end the Korean War within a year. Since Korean War started fifty-nine

years ago, this was a huge progress. However, with all the denuclearization talks, it was not talked about it as much outside of South Korea. Shortly after, a new summit took place in North Korea. This one however did not have much importance in inter-Korean relationship and was more focused on the upcoming summit with North Korea and the US president Donald Trump. The only significance towards inter-Korean relationship was Kim's confirmation of still following the Panmunjom Declaration.

In September, third inter-Korean summit took place. Denuclearization was once again the main point of this summit, with Kim Jong-Un saying that he will continue with the denuclearization if the USA will get rid of its nuclear bombers and submarines. The Korean leaders also agreed on removing landmines, weapons, guards and propaganda speakers from the South–North Korean borders. After Moon Jae-In visited Pyongyang, Kim Jong-Un promised to visit Seoul as well. This next summit will happen in March 2019 and it will be the first time a North Korean leader steps into a South Korean capital.

The Olympic Games in Pyeongchang were not the only relevant sport event of 2018. In August, Asian Games 2018 took place. This event is very similar to Olympic Games, but it is more regional, with only Asian teams being able to participate. The two Korean countries continued the success from the Olympic Games and once again marched under one flag during the ceremony. For the first time in the history of Asian Games they fielded few unified teams and even managed to win one gold medal.

3.2 The Influence of Sports Diplomacy in 2018

It can be argued that the year 2018 was the most successful year in the South–North Korean history, when it comes to inter–Korean relationships. For eleven years, there were no inter-Korean summits and in the 2018 there were three, with another one being planned for 2019. The first historic visits of South Korean and American president in North Korea are another signs that North Korea might be slowly going out of its isolationism. The main question now is – what was the main cause of this huge progress and did sports diplomacy play a role there? It is necessary to reflect on the strengths of sport diplomacy from the first chapter. This thesis tried to argue that sport diplomacy is powerful due to the popularity of sport in every culture, due to its popularity among common people and due to its ability to start a conversation with a hostile country. The first point is not relevant in Korea as South and North Korea have a very similar culture. Therefore, the focus needs to be on the role that sport diplomacy played in making inter-Korean relationship better in the eyes of the people and in the improvement of inter-Korean communication.

Due to the way the communication between the Koreas work, it is very easy to find any signs of influence of sports diplomacy. South Korea and North Korea communicate by a Seoul – Pyongyang hotline. There are over forty connected telephone lines, with the main one being in Panmunjom. “Inside a building called “House of Freedom”, South Korea officials sit at the desk labeled “South–North Direct Telephone”. Right below a computer screen, a green telephone receives and a red telephone sends out calls. There’s also a fax machine where North Korea sometimes sends messages whose topics range from logistics to threats” (Kang,2017). For years, South Korea would call on odd dates and North Korea would call on even dates. In the span of fifty years, North Korea stopped responding multiple times, sometimes for years. “In February 2016, Pyongyang stopped responding to South Korea’s calls in the Panmunjom office. That was when the previous Park Geun-hye administration was pushing drastically more hard-line

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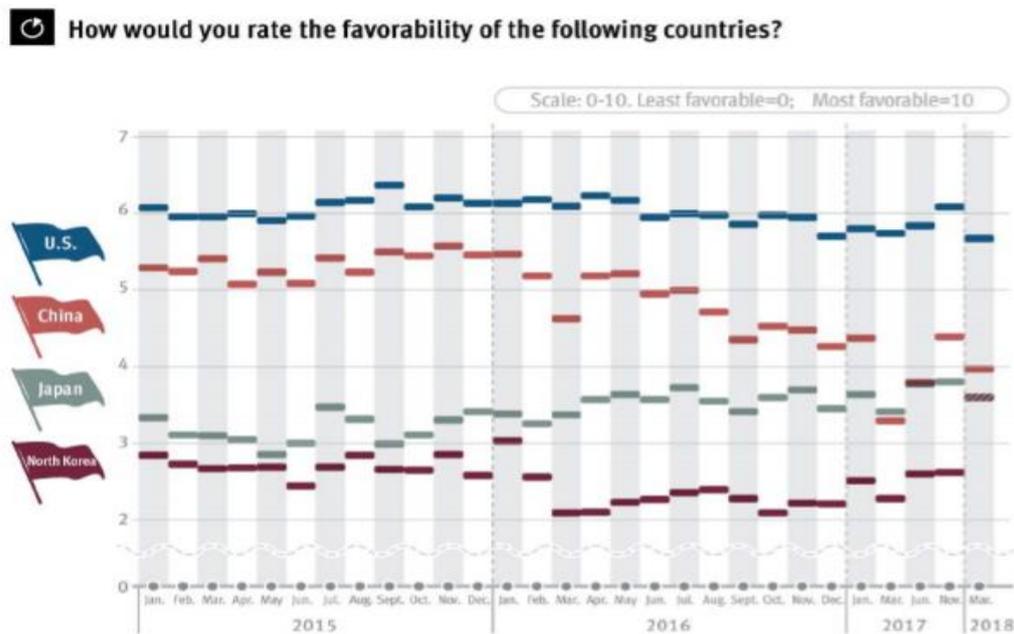
policies, especially in the aftermath of North Korea's nuclear test a month earlier" (Kang, 2017).

North Korea refused to communicate for almost two years, even though the South Korean administration changed in the meantime. "Every weekday for the past two years, a South Korean official has picked up a green phone and rung a counterpart just over the border in North Korea. No-one has picked up the call in that time" (BBC, 2018). After two years of silence, the North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un in his New Year's Day speech mentioned, that he was open to the dialogue with the South Korea. What was the reason behind this sudden change? It was The Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. "This year is significant both for the north and the south as in north the people will greet the 70th founding of the republic as a great, auspicious event and in the south The Winter Olympic Games will take place. To demonstrate the dignity of spirit of the nation at home and abroad, we should improve the frozen inter-Korean relations" ("New Years Adress", 2018). As North Korean officials mentioned, this call that ended the two year silence was only about North Korea's participation in the Winter Olympic Games. The two year silence was not broken by any political event, but with sports diplomacy.

When Moon Jae-In became a president, he swore to bring back The Sunshine Policy and to improve the inter-Korean relations. But during his first year in the office, he had no way to do so, as North Korea refused to communicate with him. At the start of the year 2018, he finally got his chance thanks to the sport diplomacy of the Olympic Games. If there were no Olympic Games in South Korea, maybe North Korea would be still silent right now. While sports diplomacy was certainly not the sole reason behind the historical progress in inter-Korean relations, it played its role here perfectly. It forced Kim to finally communicate with South Korea after two years. Some of the praise also has to go the South Korean president Moon Jae-In and his Sunshine Policy, as he managed to stay in contact with Kim even after Olympic Games which led to the improvements of inter-Korean relations during 2018.

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The second question is, whether sport diplomacy can improve the public opinion about the other country. With the political situation in North Korea, it is only possible to work with the numbers from South Korea. If sports diplomacy plays some role in improvement of the public opinion, then people should see North Korea in a better light after the Olympic Games. The Asan Institute for Policy Studies makes a survey “South Koreans and their neighbors” every two months, which is the perfect timeline to look at the situation before and after the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. Since it also surveys the popularity of the leaders, this can be also used to gauge Kim’s popularity.

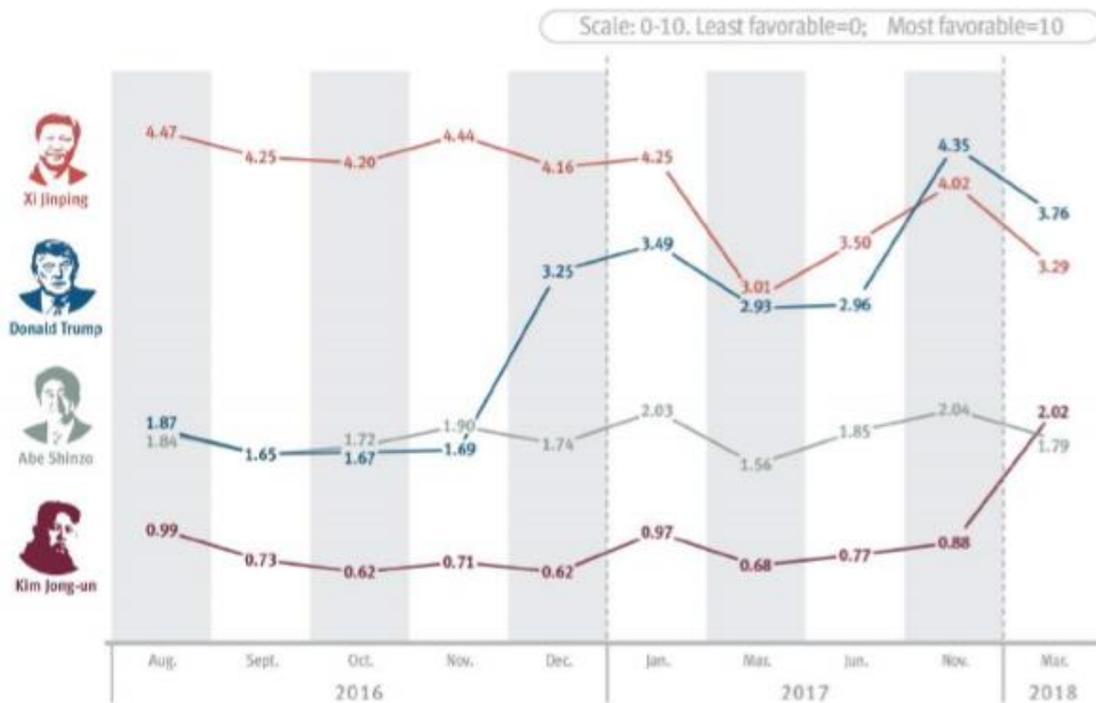


Source: ASAN Institute, <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/south-koreans-and-their-neighbors-2018/>

As this poll shows, the change in March 2018 was drastic. The popularity of all countries but North Korea dropped considerably. On the other hand, North Korea went from 2.5 points in 2017 into 3.52 points, getting on the level of Japan. “North Korea’s rating increased by a full point, reaching its highest level since 2013. It is rare

to see such a large increase in the span of four months” (ASAN Institute, 2018).

How would you rate the favorability of the following leaders?



Source: ASAN Institute, <http://en.asaninst.org/contents/south-koreans-and-their-neighbors-2018/>

The next poll looks at the popularity of the leaders and once again shows a huge jump for North Korea in March 2018. What is important to consider is that this scale is once again from 1 to 10. So while North Korea has 3.52 points, Kim Jong-Un has only 2.02. However, this drop can be seen with every other country, as the USA has only 2.02. However, this drop can be seen with every other country, as the USA has for example 6 points, but Donald Trump only 3.76. Japan as a country has 3.52 points, just like North Korea, however, Abe Shinzo has only 1.79 points, which makes him less popular than Kim Jong – Un. This indicates that Kim Jong – Un is fairly popular as a leader, compared to the leaders of other countries.

As this poll was done in March, it is clear that the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang played a big role in this spike of popularity. The first inter-Korean summit happened at the end of April, so the only event that could have swayed these numbers was the Olympic Games. As it was mentioned, North Korea did not reach such high numbers since 2013. The fact, that during the last 5 years no other

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political event managed to impact the public opinion as much as the Olympic Games did is a clear indicator of how valuable sports diplomacy can be.

The symbolism of the Olympic Games could have been crucial in this. Seeing North Koreans marching under one unified flag with South Koreans could have been a very powerful moment for many South and North Koreans. The location of the Olympic Games – Pyongchang – also increased the power of this moment. This poll is showing that these moments give the common people more hope than a formal meeting between the politicians. The popularity of sport cannot be compared with the popularity of politics and politicians. This can also be one of the cases, where the connection between sport and nationalism can be useful – with South Koreans cheering for North Koreans and North Koreans cheering for South Koreans this is a rare case of nationalism bringing people from two different countries together.

3.3 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis analyzes the use of language, which can be very useful with Kim Jong-Un. Every year, Kim makes a New Year's speech, where he reflects on the past year and looks at the plans in the next year. Discourse analysis will be helpful to see if there were any changes in his South Korean rhetoric during 2018 and 2019, as the inter-Korean relations changed. As it was previously mentioned, Kim talked about the need to improve the inter-Korean relations during his 2018 New Year's Speech. However, was this the first time he said that, or was that just an empty phrase used during every years speech that just happened to be finally relevant during 2018?

3.4 2017 Speech

As per tradition, at the start of the speech, Kim reflected on the achievements of his government during the past year. A big part of speech is focused on nuclearization of North Korea, which Kim sees as necessary defense against the rest of the world. "Last year an epochal turn was brought about in consolidating the defense of Juche Korea, and our country achieved the status of nuclear power, a military giant. This brilliant success achieved in the sector of national defense instilled a great national dignity and courage in our people and drove the imperialists into an ignominious defeat" (NCNK, 2017). Majority of his speech goes in a very similar way, with Kim praising every achievement that North Korea achieved during 2016, which was followed by plans for every industry for 2017. With heavy praise all around, the only area where Kim was critical was inter-Korean relationship. As it was previously mentioned, in February 2016 North Korea started ignoring the calls from South Korea. Despite of this, Kim here talks about his struggle to achieve reunification and blames South Korean government. "Last year,

we put forward the Juche-oriented line and policy of reunification and made strenuous efforts. However, the South Korean authorities turned a deaf ear to our patriotic appeal and ignored our sincere proposal. Instead they clung to their sanctions, thus driving inter-Korean relations towards the worst catastrophe” (NCNK, 2017).

Clearly, Kim was trying to tell his population how evil was the South Korean regime, and that they were the only reason preventing his efforts of reunification. He was not afraid to use any terms to call their government – “conservative regime that had been resorting to fascist dictatorship, anti-popular policy, sycophantic and traitorous acts” (NCNK, 2017). Kim ends his speech with demands to South Korea and the US that are necessary for improvement of the inter-Korean relations. “The South Korean authorities should not aggravate the situation by finding fault with our exercise of the right to self-defense thoughtlessly. We must put an end to the moves of aggression and intervention by the foreign forces including the United States that is occupying South Korea” (NCNK, 2017). In conclusion, Kim is trying to paint himself as some sort of a martyr that cannot achieve better inter-Korean relations because of South Korean government and the United States. He does not see any possibility of improving the inter-Korean relations as long as the United States has forces in South Korea and as long as South Korean government is sanctioning them.

3.5 2018 Speech

This speech started in a very similar spirit, as Kim looks at the past year and mentions every success North Korea achieved. “The year 2017 was a huge victory. I worked strenuously on the road of achieving national prosperity. The year 2017 was an incredible milestone” (NCNK, 2018). However, there was a big change in his rhetoric towards South Korea. In his 2017 speech, he only criticized south and mentioned them only at the end of his speech. In his 2018 Speech it was different – “My New Year greetings go also to the compatriots in south fighting for the reunification of the country” (NCNK, 2018). Kim did not greet South Korea in his 2017 Speech. One of the reasons behind this was a change of the president, as Kim was very critical of the past president Pak Geun-Hye. “The conservative regime in South Korea, which had resorted to fascist rule and confrontation with fellow countrymen collapsed” (NCNK, 2018). The second reason was already mentioned – the Olympic Games in South Korea, along with the 70th founding anniversary of North Korea.

However, Kim was still very critical of South Korean government and the reasoning was same as during 2017. “Nothing has changed in the relations between south and north. The South Korean authorities are siding with the United States in its hostile policy towards the DPRK against the aspirations of all fellow countrymen” (NCNK, 2018). Kim makes it clear how should the inter-Korean relationship look during 2018 – “The South Korean authorities should respond positively to our efforts for a détente, instead of siding with the United States. A climate favorable for a reunification should be established” (NCNK, 2018). Nonetheless, there is clearly friendlier rhetoric towards South Korea then during 2017, and Kim is showing he is open to talks. “We will open doors to anyone from South Korea, including the ruling party and the opposition parties” (NCNK, 2018). During the end of his speech, Kim once again stresses the importance of the Olympic Games. “As for the Winter Olympic Games to be held soon in South Korea, it will serve as a good occasion for demonstrating our nation’s prestige and we earnestly wish the Olympic Games a

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success. With regard to this matter, south and north authorities may meet together soon. Since we are compatriots of the same blood as South Koreans, it is natural for us to share their pleasure over the auspicious event and help them” (NCNK, 2018).

The differences between 2017 and 2018 are massive. In 2017, Kim only briefly mentioned South Korea at the end of his speech, mostly criticizing them for siding with the United States. While he did the same in 2018, he mentioned South Korea 24 times, while he did only 10 times during 2017. There was also a clear difference in his rhetoric to South Korea. Not only he greeted them, he also mentioned he is now open to talks and wished them good luck in their Olympic Games, along with his talks about the progress of reunification.

3.6 2019 Speech

After the successful year, Kim probably wanted to make this year's speech more unique, which however led to a bit of a problem. "He normally gave his speeches standing behind a podium in an assembly hall. This time, the North Korean leader sat in a massive armchair in one of his offices. The address lasted for 31 minutes and had been pre-recorded. As the clock standing behind Kim Jong Un showed, the leader started speaking at 12:03 and finished at 12:55. This means Kim actually spent an extra 21 minutes that went unrecorded" (Frank, 2019). This was not the only unique thing in this speech. For the first time Kim also greeted rest of the world (apart from Korea) – "Dear comrades and friends" (NCNK, 2019). This is fitting as North Korea was more open towards rest of the world in 2018.

The first part of the speech was very much same apart from greetings. Kim once again reflected on all the domestic achievements of North Korea during 2018. In fact, two thirds of his 31 minute long speech was focused on the domestic achievements, which was much more than during 2018. However, his rhetoric towards Korea was very much different than during 2018. Instead of mentioning his expectations from South Korea, he very often spoke as if south and north were already doing all the steps in inter-Korean relations together. "North and south should take practical measures proactively to remove military hostility on the whole Korean peninsula. Given that north and south committed themselves to advancing along the road of peace, joint military exercises with foreign forces should no longer be permitted" (NCNK,2019). It is interesting how quickly his rhetoric towards south changed. He is suddenly talking about South Korea as if they were his brothers. "When north and south join hands firmly and rely on the united strength of the fellow countrymen, no external sanctions and pressure, challenges and trials will be able to hinder us in our efforts to open a broad avenue to national prosperity" (NCNK,2019). While Kim mentioned that it is absolutely necessary that no interference of foreign forces should stand in the way of reconciliation, he was also much friendlier towards countries like the United States, that were only criticized in

his past speeches. "I want to believe that our relations with the United States will bear good fruit this year, as inter-Korean relations have greeted a great turn, by the efforts of the two sides. We exchanged constructive views and reached consensus with the US president last year" (NCNK, 2019).

In conclusion, while Kim's speech about domestic issues did not change at all in the last two years, the progress from 2017 to 2019 was huge when it comes to international relations. In 2017, Kim was not afraid to blame every other country and he was not open to talk at all unless the other countries will stop the sanctions and send away all the military on Korean peninsula. While he was still very critical of the United States during 2018, his behavior towards South Korea changed, which was most likely mainly due to the change of the president. He was now open to talks with south and was wishing them well in 2018. However, he was still quite reserved compared to 2019, where he was talking about north and south together in almost every instance. He was never this friendly with the south and for the first time it can be felt from his speech, that South and North Korea used to be one country in the past. For the first time, he was not as critical of the United States and was happy with the talks. If this trend will continue, North Korea should still be open to talks, as it was in 2018.

3.7 Conclusion

Sport has a great potential as a diplomatic tool because of its popularity all over the world, among all cultures. Sport mega events such as the World Cup or the Olympic Games are very potent tools to improve the image and economical situation of the hosting country. On the other hand, these events happen only every four years and countries are usually not able to host them more than once every 20 years, so they are extremely limited. The popularity of sport among common people can also be abused through propaganda, so there is a lot of pressure on organizations like FIFA and IOC to choose a country that will not use these events to promote their propaganda.

The year 2018 was special, not only for South and North Korea, but also for the Olympic Games. North Korea, infamous for ignoring huge sporting events – especially winter Olympic Games – decided to attend the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. In his New Year's Speech, Kim Jong-Un stressed the importance of improving the inter-Korean relations and decided to finally restart the communication with South Korea – after two years of ignoring. With North Korea finally participating in the event organized by South Korea (unlike the last time, where they completely ignored any offer from FIFA), with Koreas marching under one flag during the ceremony and with the first unified Korean Olympic team, it is clear why these Olympic Games were special. The progress during the Olympic Games was followed with a progress even in politics, as there were three inter-Korean summits (after eleven year long pause) and Panmunjom Declaration, where the Korean leaders promised to end the Korean War during the next year, along with denuclearization of Korean peninsula.

In 2018, sport diplomacy helped massively to every country that was in direct contact with North Korea. After 17 missile tests in 2017, North Korea did not make a single one during 2018 and started talks about denuclearization. This was great news for Japan and South Korea, who were directly affected by these tests. The US

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president Donald Trump was also happy about this, as it allowed him to improve his image as he was often in talks with North Korea during this time. And then there is Kim Jong-Un, who also profited heavily from the sports diplomacy. During the year 2018 he was able to improve his image, as a more peaceful leader that is open to communication. His popularity in South Korea more than doubled after the Olympic Games. However, with North Korea, there is always danger that they will use this for their own gain, instead of furthering peace talks.

With this event being so recent, it is unclear whether the actions of North Korea are sincere. The year 2019 will tell us more whether countries can start taking North Korea more seriously. Even if North Korea will go back to their old ways, the sport diplomacy was still a success as it at least stopped the dangerous missile testing for some period of time. Nonetheless, if North and South Korea will be chosen as the host of the Olympics in 2032, (which is likely they will, as it is a great story and will attract a lot of attention, which is something that IOC would love) there will be even a bigger potential for sports diplomacy as North Korea will be directly hosting them this time. Such huge event could even lead to reunification talks or completely ruin the inter-Korean relations, it will depend very much on who will be in charge of these two countries.

Thesis Statement

The world is changing. Cold war is over and the relations between most of the countries are not as tense, especially when it comes to the frequency of communication. This means, that the reconciling power of the sports diplomacy is fading away. Instead, the main focus of sports diplomacy nowadays is the image-building through sporting mega events such as Olympics or World Cup. However, there is one exception and that is Korea. Unstable relations, communication and lack of peace make them a perfect target for sports diplomacy.

Research Design and Methodology

This thesis will consist of theoretical part about sports diplomacy and a case study of Korea. One of the aims of this study is to highlight both pros and cons of sports diplomacy not only in Korea but in general. A three level analysis will be done for both South and North Korea as a part of the case study.

The theoretical part will look at the sports diplomacy in the past, in the present and also will include the expectations of experts about its future form. All current uses of sport diplomacy will be analyzed. The power of sport organizations such as FIFA or IOC will be considered, as it plays a huge role in the future of sport diplomacy and also in the Korean case specifically. Alongside the three level analysis there will be also various statistics from polls in Korea about reunification and Olympics in South Korea. Juche, North Korean state ideology and its relevance to sport will be mentioned.

The main aim of this thesis is to find out the impact of the Olympics of 2018 and the recent communication and meetings between the Korean leaders will help with that. Past communication will be analyzed as well as the breaks in the communication and the reasonings behind them. If the timings of these communications and improvements of Korean relations will align with the timing of the Olympics, there will a good reason to give some credit to the sports diplomacy. The reasons for reopening of communication between Koreas will also be analyzed in case there is some linkage with sports diplomacy. Discourse analysis of the North Korea leader will be done to further look at the sincerity of their actions.

Implications

If the results will back it up, there should be a raised awareness about the ability of sports diplomacy to restart communication between Koreas, as this is something I did not see mentioned in any literature. With Koreas making joint bid for Olympics in 2032, this information can be relevant once again in 12 years. If the truce will continue and there will be once again tensions between Koreas, the leader of South Korea could be able to use Olympics to start communication with North Korea again. If the relations between South and North Korea keep improving, then these Olympics could serve as a further improvement of the relations.

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