

# **Interpretation and practice of sports diplomacy in Hungary in the period between 2010 and 2020**

Abstract of PhD Thesis

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# 1. Introduction

With the acceleration of globalization, the rapid development of information and communication technology, and the proliferation of actors in international relations, the framework of traditional diplomacy based on nation-state premises is undergoing a fundamental transformation. The transformation of traditional diplomacy's framework in the twenty-first century involves the growing utilization of "soft" tools such as culture and sports within it. Cultural and sports organizations are playing an increasingly important role in achieving the public diplomatic objectives of governments, making cultural and sports diplomacy an increasingly common element of the foreign policy toolbox. Large-scale sporting events with high international visibility, such as the Olympic Games or the World Cup, are particularly attractive political tools for the leadership of some states. In addition to global sporting events, outstanding international sporting achievements have also become a means of internal and external legitimacy for some governments.

Over the past decade, more and more governments have recognized the practical benefits of sports diplomacy and established strategies, institutions, and relevant policies. In recent years, Hungary has also caught up with this international trend. One of the symbolic steps in this process is the establishment of the Department of Sports Diplomacy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2018, whose primary task is to perform sports diplomacy tasks at the Ministry and to coordinate sports-related inquiries from foreign missions and domestic organizations. As the field of sport has advanced into a national strategy sector since 2010, the allocated amount of resources has increased significantly, and the number of international sports events held in Hungary has increased exponentially. In 2017 alone, Hungary hosted 113 international sporting events (Stocker 2018).

According to the main argument of my dissertation, for the proper development of sports diplomacy, it is necessary to clarify the conceptual framework, to define more precisely its main tools and goals, to map its international and domestic application and to develop policy proposals. The aim of my dissertation is to contribute to the proper interpretation of the theoretical framework of sports and international relations, and thus

to the development of the domestic education and practice of sports diplomacy, the adoption and application of good international practices. I present the role of sport in diplomacy primarily from the perspective of the fields of international relations and political science, using the theoretical frameworks of realism and liberalism. In the dissertation I propose and apply the following definition of sports diplomacy:

*“The mission of sports diplomacy is to establish cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sport organizations, sport-related civil organizations, athletes and businesses for common international goals based on mutual benefits. The objectives of sport diplomacy are, inter alia, to develop international relations between the state and civil society, to shape the country's image through sporting events and successes, and to improve relations between people, nations and cultures through sport.” (the author's own wording)*

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the primary research related to the dissertation are based on a multi-dimensional, theoretical-practical approach. I have identified the following main objectives:

(1) Mapping and presenting the Hungarian interpretation of sports diplomacy, as well as an attempt to develop a more precise conceptual framework and to define the types, goals and tools of sports diplomacy and actors.

(2) Comparative study of the Hungarian government's sports diplomacy policy of the last decade (2010-2020), comparison with other government strategies considered to be international good practices: mapping of similarities and parallels, identification of specificities and opportunities for development. Presentation of the results related to the Hungarian civil sports administration of the examined period, an attempt to evaluate the international representation of Hungarian sports diplomats on the basis of objective aspects (2013-2019).

## 2.1. Raising the question of scientific research

In line with the objectives of the research, I identified two main issues.

*Domestic interpretation of the concept of sports diplomacy:*

- (1) What is the meaning of the concept of sports diplomacy among the Hungarian online public and Hungarian sports leaders and administrative professionals with international experience? In what context does the concept of sports diplomacy appear most in the online press?
- (2) In the understanding of the online press and Hungarian sports leaders and administrative professionals, what organizations, institutions and individuals are involved in sports diplomacy and what can be the tools of sports diplomacy? Who can be a sports diplomat, who can we call a sports diplomat?
- (3) What are the main differences and similarities between the interpretations of the concept of sports diplomacy of Hungarian sports leaders with international experience, public administration professionals and the Hungarian online press?

*The practice of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy in international comparison:*

- (1) How are the objectives, institutions and tools of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy structured?
- (2) What are the main pillars of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy, and how do they resemble or differ from the good practice policies of other states?
- (3) What are the possible directions for the development of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy?
- (4) What was the impact of identifying sport as a national strategic sector (2010), on the number and influence of Hungarian nationals holding positions in international sports federations?

## **2.2. Hypotheses**

In connection with my empirical research, I set up the following hypotheses:

H1, The Hungarian government's sports diplomacy (diplomacy through sports) is a highly success-oriented, elite and competitive sports-centric activity, focusing on the organization of international sports events in Hungary.

H2, According to the Hungarian online press and sports leaders, sports diplomacy is the development and nurturing of the international relations of non-governmental sports organizations (diplomacy within sport).

H3, The Hungarian online press and sports leaders do not see social development through sport as a possible area or tool of sports diplomacy.

## **3. Methods**

Due to the novelty of the research field of sports diplomacy and the challenges related to its theoretical interpretation and practice, I used qualitative and quantitative methods that are widely applied in both international relations and the social sciences of sport. These are policy document analysis, semi-structured interviews, online content analysis, and secondary statistical data analysis. I applied a quantitative approach for online content analysis and secondary statistical data analysis, while I applied a qualitative approach for policy document analysis, semi-structured interviews, and online content analysis.

### **3.1. Analysis of policy documents**

The comparative analysis of foreign strategies that are considered as good practices, may put the Hungarian government's recent sports diplomacy efforts and practice in an appropriate context. The document analysis focuses primarily on Hungarian policy documents on sports diplomacy. The subjects of the analysis were policy documents, legislation, reports, background materials and reports available in public databases and online government platforms.

### **3.2. Online content analysis**

The aim of the content analysis, which is also used in sociology and political science, was to explore the utilization and interpretation of sports diplomacy in the Hungarian online press. The scope of the content analysis were online articles available in Hungarian that were published between June 2010 and June 2020. The analyzed range contains five hundred (n=500) online articles in Hungarian in which the keywords sports diplomacy or sports diplomate can be found. To create the database, I followed the steps below. First, using the built-in news search feature of the most popular online search engine (google.com), I identified articles that appeared between June 2010 and June 2020, including sports diplomacy or sports diplomat keywords. To examine the online articles of the database, I chose MAXQDA2020 content analysis software which can be easily used for exploratory analysis of unstructured text data sets. The purpose of content analysis is to identify the patterns in the text, to denote their co-occurrence, and to encode them. After coding, the structure of the texts can be examined, thus analyzing the occurrence and context of the codes is possible.

### **3.3. Semi-structured interviews**

In order to examine the interpretation of sports diplomacy in the Hungarian context, it was essential to interview those internationally experienced sports leaders and public administration professionals who have an adequate overview of the Hungarian and international sports governance and the Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy. The semi-structured interviews were mainly used to explore the deeper contexts of interpreting sports diplomacy, and to reveal the opinions of sports leaders that could help to understand the practical application of the concept. Last but not least, the semi-structured interviews contributed to the development of the code system as the first step in online content analysis.

The questions in the semi-structured interviews basically focused on two main topics:

1. interpretation of the concept, goals and means of sports diplomacy
2. governmental and civilian practice of sports diplomacy in Hungary

During the selection of the interviewees, I used the snowball method which is often used in sociology. The essence of this non-probabilistic sampling method is that the researcher starts from a small population of known persons in the target group, which he gradually expands based on the recommendations of the participating interviewees. As a starting point for the sampling, I started from the database of the Sports Political Power Index and my personal contacts gained previously as a civil servant in the Ministry of Human Capacities. Based on these, I compiled a preliminary list, which included half of the professionals working in the civil sports sector (n=5) and the governmental sports sector (n=5). More than half of the experts on the preliminary list responded positively to my request. At the end of the interviews, I asked the interviewee to recommend other Hungarian sports leaders or government professionals with appropriate expertise and insight into the field of sports diplomacy. This is how the sample of twenty interviewees was formed, which represents the experts and sports leaders taking part in governmental (n=5) and non-governmental sports administration (n=15) in a 1:3 ratio. The interviews were conducted between September 2019 and April 2020. The length of the semi-structured interviews was usually between 40 and 50 minutes, but in some cases the recording time was longer than an hour.

#### **3.4. Secondary statistical data analysis (Sports Political Power Index)**

In order to objectively assess the influence of Hungarian sports diplomats in international sports governance and thus indirectly the sports diplomatic advocacy power of Hungary in recent years, I used the complex database of the Sports Political Power Index developed by the staff of the Danish National Olympic Committee and the Sports Confederation. The Sports Political Power Index aims to assess the power and influence of sport leaders of individual nation states in international and European sports federations recognized by the International Olympic Committee. The database of the 2019 edition available at the time of data-collection was based on recording the nationality of 1 673 sports diplomats serving in the executive committees of 119 international and European sports federations recognized by the IOC and analyzing their decision-making role within the federations (n = 1673). The editors of the index used weighted scoring to better reflect the balance of power within a given decision-making body. Secondary data analysis was performed using statistical comparison methods

provided by the publicly available Tableau online software ([public.tableau.com](https://public.tableau.com)), which manages the index database. The conclusions related to the research were made mainly on the basis of a longitudinal and comparative analysis of the data between 2013 and 2019. After exporting the database, I visualized the results using the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Policy document analysis: the governmental practice of sports diplomacy in Hungary (2010-2020)**

With the emphasis on sport as a sector of national strategy (2010), its role and relevance in Hungarian foreign policy also increased. Governments between 2010 and 2020 have increasingly used elite sporting events and professional athletes to achieve their public diplomacy goals. The cornerstone of the Hungarian government's sports diplomacy strategy is the organization of international sports events in Hungary and thus the improvement of the country's external image while strengthening its international relations. The government also supports the international expansion of Hungarian sports companies, and at the same time it promotes the appointment of former athletes to diplomatic positions. Although Hungary does not have a publicly available sports diplomacy strategy, it can show results in institutionalizing sports diplomacy. With the establishment of the Department of Sports Diplomacy in 2018 sport has gained a unique role in foreign administration, making the Hungarian example a progressive governmental initiative at the international level. Based on Table 1, it can be stated that there are several similarities between the selected international good practices and Hungary's government-led sports diplomacy objectives, such as the systemic support for organizing international sporting events, encouraging sports companies to acquire foreign markets or promoting international sports leadership. Regarding the main differences, the role of sport in social development, the concept of Sport for Development and Peace and the UN Sustainable Development Goals did not appear, or only moderately, among the domestic objectives. Disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities did not appear among the main target groups of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy programs.

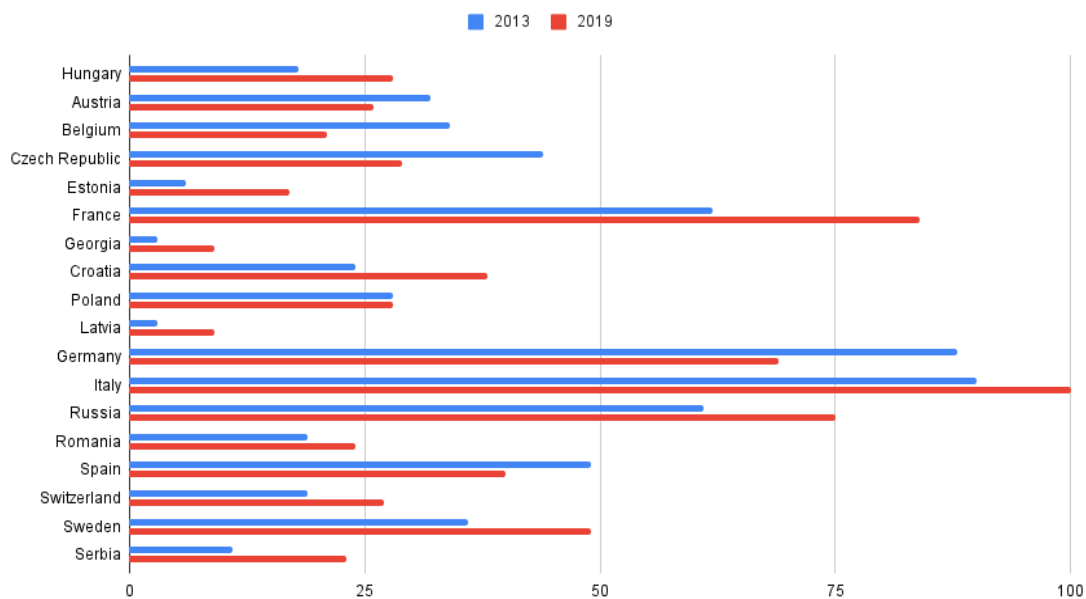


Table 1. Comparison of government-led sports diplomacy practices

	Australia	France	United States	Japan	Hungary
Public sports diplomacy strategy	2015 and 2019	2016		2015	
Open funding programs for sports and non-governmental organizations to support sports diplomatic activities	ASOP, PSP, Team Up	Paris 2024, AFD	SportsUnited, Global Sports Mentorship	Sport for Tomorrow	
Position of Sports Diplomacy Ambassador		2014-		Such a position was created in 2015	Senior Adviser on Sports Diplomacy (2019)
Sport envoys program	PacificAus Sports program		Sports Envoys	Sport for Tomorrow	
Institutionalization in public administration	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, DIGES, CFSI	Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA)		Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Sensitization and information of foreign missions to sports diplomacy	Typical	Typical	Typical	Typical	Typical
Encouraging bilateral and multilateral agreements on sport	Typical	Typical	Typical	Typical	Typical
System-wide support for the organization of international sporting events	Direct governmental objective	Direct governmental objective	Indirect governmental objective	Direct governmental objective	Direct governmental objective
Encouraging and supporting the acquisition of international positions by sports leaders	Direct governmental objective	Direct governmental objective	Indirect governmental objective	Direct governmental objective	Direct governmental objective
Promotion of sports businesses abroad	Match Australia	Sport à l'Export	Indirect governmental objective	Tokyo 2020:	SportTech Hungary
Development programs through sport	ASOP, PSP	AFD	SportsUnited, USAID	Sport for Tomorrow	
UN SDGs in sports diplomacy initiatives	Typical	Typical	Typical	Typical	
Encouraging the participation of women in sport, training female sports leaders in sports diplomacy programs	Team Up program	Paris Call for Sport	espnW Global Sports Mentoring Program	No information	Hungarian Olympic Committee: Women in Sport Commission
Social inclusion of people with disabilities through sport in sports diplomacy programs	Team Up program	Paris 2024	Sport For Community	Sport for Tomorrow	
Supporting the learning mobility of disadvantaged young athletes			SportsUnited	Sport for Tomorrow	
Promoting the language of the country through sport		Direct governmental objective		Direct governmental objective	
Sports Integrity Issues in Sports Diplomacy Strategy and Programs	Typical (Sport Diplomacy 2030)	Typical (Paris 2024, Council of Europe)		Typical (Play True 2020)	

#### 4.2. Analysis of the position of Hungarian sports diplomats in international sports federations with the help of the Sports Political Power Index (2013-2019)

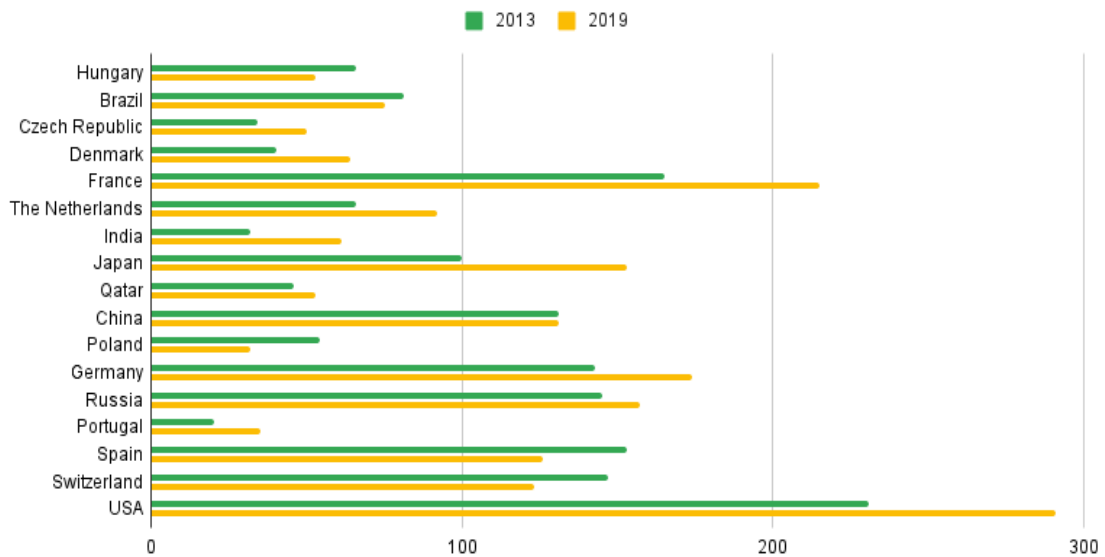
In 2019, Hungary ranked 15th out of 47 countries in a tie with Poland (28 points) in terms of elected positions in European sports federations. This represents an increase of almost 56% compared to the 2013 scores, and the Hungarian index was increased by 10 points. The growing weight of Hungarian sports leaders in regional sports diplomacy is in line with the trend that in the last decade the balance of power in European sports federations is shifting more and more from the West to the East. Regarding the 2019 data of the index, in the Central and Eastern European and Balkan regions only Croatia (p=38) and the Czech Republic (p=29) were able to overtake Hungary, while Poland (p=28), Romania (p=24) and Serbia (p=23) performed almost similarly (Figure 1.). However, in the population-adjusted index, this score was only sufficient for the 21st place (2.89 points / million people).



*Figure 1. Sports Political Power Index: European sports federations. Variations in the Sports Political Power Index of some states in European sports federations between 2013 and 2019 (regional comparison).*

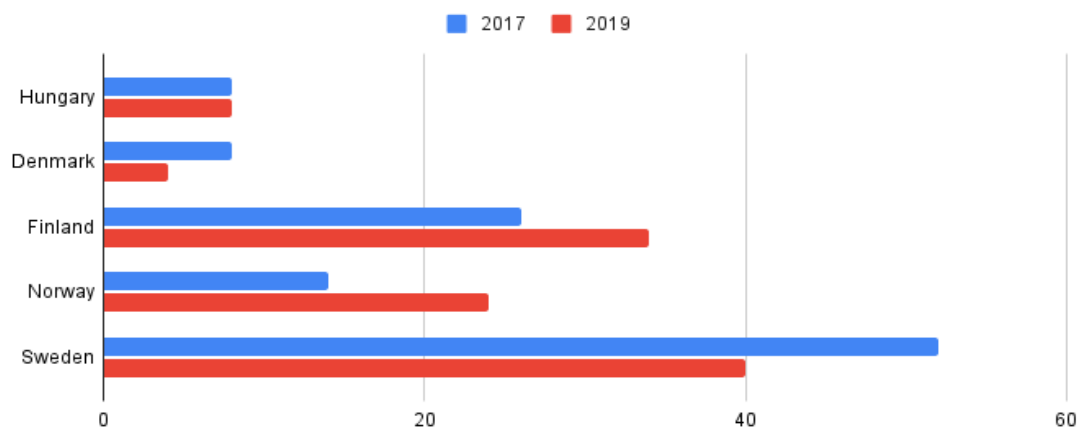
In terms of elected positions in international sports federations, Hungary tied with Qatar as both nations ranked 27th, scoring 53 points in 2019. In the period between 2013 and 2019, Hungary lost about 20% of its points (13 points), thus falling 7 places in

the international rankings (Figure 2.). In the population-adjusted index, this performance resulted in the 45th place. The loss of position can be explained, among other things, by the growing international influence of sports leaders from developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, while the weight of European countries, which are traditional sports powers, is declining.



*Figure 2. Sports Political Power Index: international sports federations. Variations in the Sports Political Power Index of some states in the international sports federations between 2013 and 2019.*

Despite the loss of Hungary's position in the global rankings in 2019, in a narrower, regional comparison, Hungary outperforms all its neighbors in terms of elected decision-making positions in international sports federations. In 2019, Hungary ranked 14th out of 47 European countries with 53 points. Despite the high position in the Central and Eastern European region, some Scandinavian countries with lower populations (Norway, p=60; Denmark, p=64; and Finland, p=72) performed better than Hungary. The explanation can be found in many respects in the number of female sports leaders and the positions they occupy, as we experience large differences between Hungary (p=8) and most Scandinavian countries. Sweden (p=40), Finland (p=34) and Norway (p=24) all show a leading example in positioning female sports leaders in international (and domestic) sports federations in Europe and worldwide (Figure 3.).



*Figure 3. Sports Political Power Index of female sports diplomats in Hungary and the Scandinavian countries. Variations in the Sports Political Power Index of female sports diplomats between 2013 and 2019 in Hungary and the Scandinavian countries (excluding Iceland).*

However, disregarding the continental context, different global trends prevail in international sports. Based on the available data, it can be stated that the weight of Hungarian sports diplomats in international sports federations decreased in the period from 2013 to 2019. Although the decline is not as spectacular as in Poland (-40.74%), it was still the fourth largest among European countries (-19.70%). Among the nations presented in the Introduction, Japan (53%), France (30.3%) and the United States (25.97%) were able to moderately increase their representation and thus their lobbying and advocacy capacity in international sports governance. The reorganization of the global sports world and international sports governance is well illustrated by the extent to which representatives of some developing countries have gained ground in international federations. During the period under review, certain countries tripled or doubled the number of their sports diplomats in international sports federations. Thus, Hungarian sports diplomats have to prevail in such a rapidly changing, extremely multi-player and competitive international environment of the twenty-first century.

#### **4.3. The interpretation of sports diplomacy by the Hungarian-language online press (2010-2020)**

Following the analysis of the database built on online articles (n=500) published between June 2010 and June 2020, one of the main results was that the term *sports*

*diplomatic success* proved to be the most commonly used expression for the concept. Within the data range analyzed, the term appeared in some form in 125 articles a total of 148 times, while the words *sports diplomacy* and *success* or *successful* appeared a total of 210 times in one sentence in 172 articles. For the whole range analyzed, the word *success* was by far the most used term (n=1082), which the word *interest* could not approach (n=367) (Figure 4.).

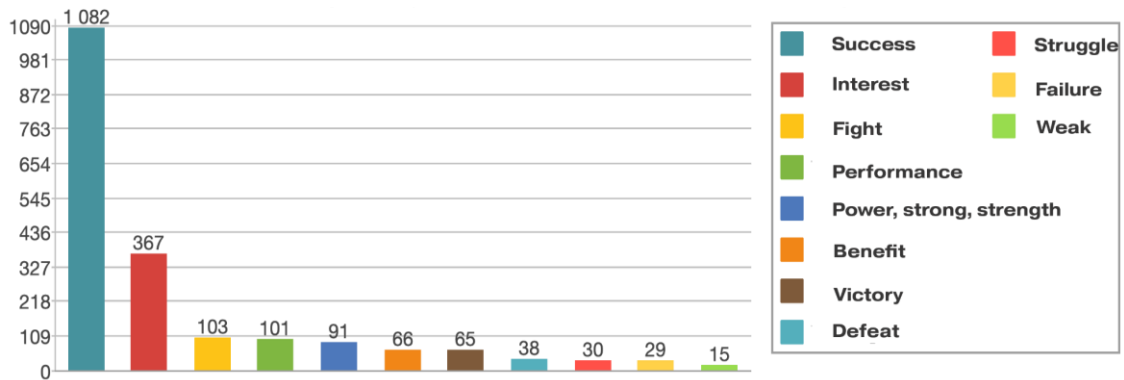


Figure 4. Frequency of words related to advocacy. Frequency of words related to advocacy in the analyzed range between June 2010 and June 2020.

If we were to interpret the performance of Hungarian sports diplomacy only in the light of the online Hungarian press articles of the period between 2010 and 2020, its absolute success would be unquestionable. The online press used the phrase *sports diplomacy success* mostly in connection with international sports events held in Hungary and in the election of Hungarian sports leaders to international positions (Figure 5.).

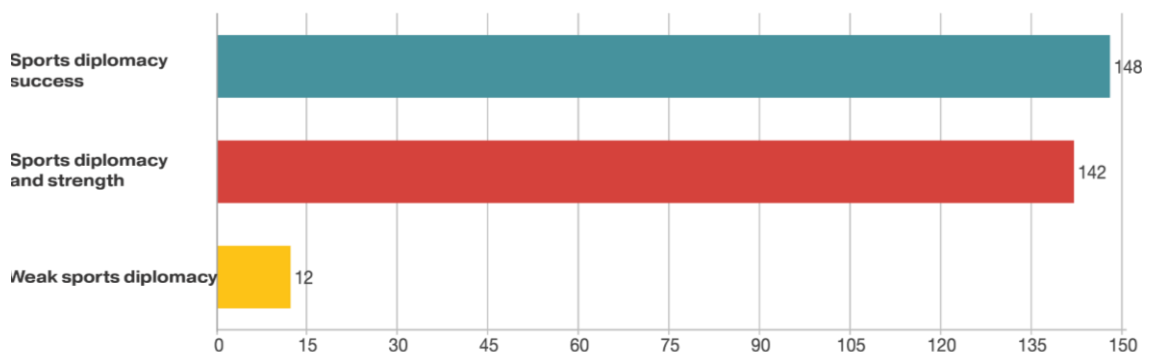


Figure 5. Sports diplomacy success and strength. Frequency of codes for sports diplomacy success, strength and weakness in the data range (June 2010 - June 2020).

In addition to articles emphasizing the strength of Hungarian sports diplomacy, other online publications called for the improvement of the international enforcement of Hungarian sports interests. Some writings deduced the importance of developing sports diplomacy from a competitive international environment, while others argued that international results are essential for adequate government funding. In general, it can be stated that articles related to the success-oriented performance and international advocacy of Hungarian sports were most likely published in the examined period.

Analyzing the frequency of the terms related to the state administration, it can be stated that the number one player in the Hungarian governmental sports administration, the State Secretariat for Sports, and the Ministry of Human Capacities hosting the institution were marginally mentioned in the analyzed range. In the articles containing the keywords of sports diplomacy, the terms referring to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Prime Minister's Office both appeared in a higher numbers, from which it can be concluded that the online press is more likely to associate these public administration institutions with the tasks related to government-led sports diplomacy (Figure 6.).

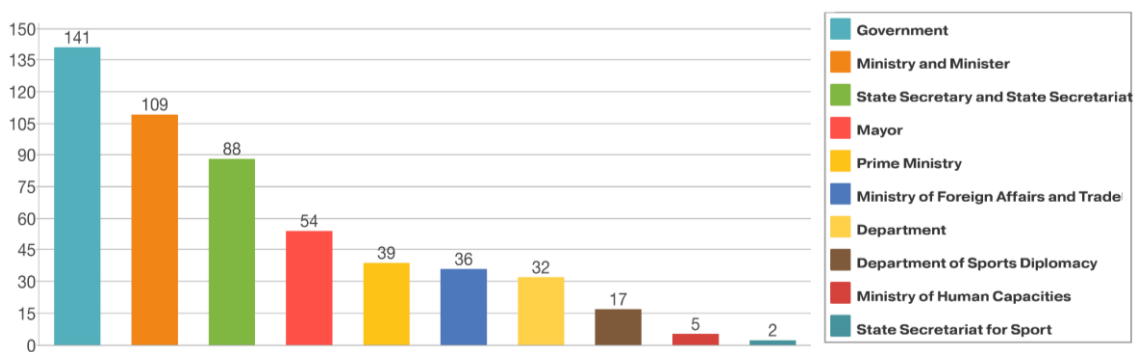


Figure 6. Frequency of codes related to the government. Frequency of codes related to the government in the analyzed range (June 2010 - June 2020).

#### 4.4. Expert interpretations of the concept and domestic practice of sports diplomacy

Based on the experience of semi-structured interviews, it can be concluded that the domestic interpretation of the concept also reflects the duality arising from the governmental and civilian nature of sports governance (Murray and Pigman, 2014).

Interviewees' interpretations of the concept were strongly influenced by their personal experience gained in the field of non-governmental or governmental sports administration, as well as their athlete background. While interviewees active in the field of non-governmental sports administration defined sports diplomacy primarily as a non-governmental activity (diplomacy in sport), in the interpretation of professionals with public administration experience, sport appeared as a public diplomacy tool of governments, a branch of state-led diplomacy (diplomacy through sport). In addition, the results of the interviews confirmed that the term *sports diplomat* refers primarily to elected officials or contracted staff of international sports organizations rather than to government diplomats or politicians.

## **5. Conclusion**

### **5.1. Answering the research questions**

In line with the objectives of the research, I have identified two issues: the first concerns the domestic interpretation of the concept of sports diplomacy, while the second concerns its practice. Trying to answer the questions of the first matter, I used content analysis and semi-structured interviews while in the case of the second point, I used the results of policy document analysis, secondary data analysis and semi-structured interviews.

The non-governmental approach to sports diplomacy (diplomacy in sport) dominates the interpretations of Hungarian online press and sports leaders. According to the seemingly dominant interpretation, sports diplomacy is the development of the autonomous international relations of non-governmental sports administration and the enforcement of Hungarian interests in international sports organizations. Sports diplomacy, as an advocacy activity, is necessarily success-oriented, elite and competitive, and aims to support domestic sports success and winning the right for hosting international sporting events. The role of sport in connecting and building relationships between nations and people seems to appear to a moderate extent. Representation and advocacy activities in sports diplomacy can be carried out primarily in international sports administration, and its actors are mainly international sports organizations and elected sports diplomats, who are not necessarily successful elite

athletes, but their experience in sports is a great asset. The broad toolbox of sports diplomacy can include a number of methods, but it is mostly based on communication, legal, regulatory and financial tools. The prevailing view is that government involvement in this area is limited, mainly described as a supportive competence. Based on the experience of the interviews, it can be concluded that the definition and interpretation of the concept depends to a large extent on the personal experience of the interviewed expert. Experts working in civil sports administration interpret the concept similarly to the current perception of online media. Experts with public administration backgrounds consider sports diplomacy primarily as a government tool, which is in line with the definition of the literature.

Regarding the second issue, based on the results, it can be stated that the target system of Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy (2010-2020) is elite sports-centric and success-oriented, while several ministries and background institutions are responsible for its implementation. Comparing international practices presented in the dissertation (USA, France, Japan and Australia), it can be stated that various similarities can be discovered, especially with regards to the French example. Gaining the right to host large-scale sporting events and strengthening the position of sports leaders in international sports administration is a key goal for both countries. Concerning the embeddedness of sports diplomacy into public administration, Hungary has taken considerable steps with the establishment of the Department of Sports Diplomacy in 2018. Nevertheless, at the time of writing this dissertation, the government did not have a publicly available strategy, and social development through sport did not appear in the target system of sports diplomacy. With regard to the power index of Hungarian sports leaders elected to international sports federations, there was a slow decline between 2013 and 2019. During this period, Hungarian sports diplomats were only able to strengthen their positions in European sports federations; both changes are compatible with general trends. The large number of sports events held in Hungary has not yet impacted the international representation of Hungarian sports leaders, and the aging of the current generation of sports leaders is strengthening the negative trends.

## **5.2. Testing the hypotheses**



The first hypothesis (H1), according to which the Hungarian government-led sports diplomacy is a highly success-oriented, elite and competitive sports-centric activity focusing on the organization of international sports events in Hungary, has been confirmed. The primary goals of the government's (2010-2020) sports diplomacy activities are winning the hosting rights of international sports competitions, electing Hungarian sports leaders to international sports organizations and, through this, effectively enforcing Hungarian interests. In this sense, the domestic perception of sports diplomacy reflects the realist school of international relations, seeking to maximize the success of elite sports and strengthen national advocacy in a competitive international system.

The second hypothesis (H2), according to which, in the interpretation of the Hungarian online press and sports administration, sports diplomacy is the development and nurturing of the international relations of non-governmental sports organizations, was only partially confirmed. Although the results of the online content analysis and semi-structured interviews support the predominance of non-governmental interpretations of sports diplomacy, they also indicate the politicization and governmental influence in Hungarian sport. Interviewees with a public administration background saw sports diplomacy as a government task. According to the results of the research, the perception of networked sports diplomacy is not widespread in Hungary.

The third hypothesis (H3), according to which the Hungarian online press and sports leaders do not interpret social development through sport as a possible area or tool of sports diplomacy, has been confirmed. Based on the lessons learned from policy document analysis, online content analysis and semi-structured interviews, it can be stated that the Hungarian interpretation and practice of sports diplomacy does not aim at promoting social inclusion and equal opportunities through sport.

### **5.3. Recommendations for the development of sports diplomacy in Hungary**

#### *Exploiting the role of sport in social development*

The results of my research show that the highly successful and elite sports-centric Hungarian sports diplomacy, in addition to winning the right of hosting international sporting events, plays a moderate role in promoting mutual understanding between

sportsmen and nations and developing the social cohesion and integration function of sport. The concept of sport for development and peace is an integral part of the examined good practices, but in Hungary it is mostly considered an incomprehensible concept and it is “in short supply” (Bardocz-Bencsik et al. 2020). Government support for sport-based empowerment and education initiatives and sport-based international youth mobility programs can contribute to reaching public diplomacy goals and in comparison to hosting international sporting events it is a less resource intensive activity.

#### *Training the future Hungarian sports diplomats*

I am convinced that in educating the next generation of sports diplomats, due attention must be paid to supporting female sports leaders. According to Földesi and Gál (2019), sports management is often still considered a gender-specific occupation in Hungary, and the number of female sports managers is low in European comparison. This inequality is also present in the field of sports diplomacy. Based on the results of the secondary data analysis, the number of Hungarian female officials holding positions elected in international and European associations is severely underrepresented compared to that of men. As a result of the increasing efforts for women's equality in international sports, the role of female sports leaders will become more and more important, and Hungary could improve its interests in international sports administration by investing in female sport leaders.

#### *Public sports diplomacy strategy*

At the time of writing, neither the Ministry of Foreign Affairs nor the Ministry of Human Capacities, which oversees the field of sport, had a public sports diplomacy strategy that encompasses the country's governmental objectives, guidelines and program in this area. While the states presented as good examples in the dissertation have publications aimed at a wider audience such as policy documents available in English, information in the case of Hungary is not even available in Hungarian language. Based on the general experience of the interviews, and in my view, consideration should be given to developing a public government sports diplomacy strategy based on broad consultation and appropriate data collection. In the current system of sports administration, the tasks of sports diplomacy are performed by three

ministries and several background institutions. I think it would be desirable to set up a strong governmental institution with coordination powers.

#### **5.4. Closing remarks**

The primary goal of my dissertation is to examine the Hungarian government's sports diplomacy practice between 2010 and 2020 in an international context, while attempting to objectively evaluate the power of Hungarian sports diplomacy. The secondary aim of the dissertation is to map and present the Hungarian interpretation of sports diplomacy, while attempting to develop a more precise conceptual framework. I am confident that the results of my research can contribute to the promotion of a scientific approach to sports diplomacy, the development of theoretical foundations and the broadening of knowledge on good international practices, thus strengthening the domestic knowledge-base of a rapidly developing interdisciplinary field. I believe that my work can contribute to the development of university-level education in sports diplomacy by presenting a conceptual framework based on sound theory. I hope that the policy proposals set out in the dissertation will reach decision-makers in governmental and non-governmental sports administration who will consider putting the recommendations into practice.

## 6. List of own publications

### *Publications related to the topic of the dissertation:*

Garamvölgyi B, Begovic M, Dóczy T. (2021) Sport Diplomacy in Hybrid Regimes: The Cases of Hungary and Montenegro. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1-18. DOI: 10.1080/24704067.2021.2008804

Garamvölgyi B, Dóczy T. (2021) Sport as a tool for public Diplomacy in Hungary. *Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research*, 90: 39-49.

Garamvölgyi B, Bardocz-Bencsik M, Dóczy T. (2022) Mapping the Role of Grassroots Sport in Public Diplomacy. *Sport In Society*, 25: 889-907.

Garamvölgyi B, Deregán G, Dóczy T. (2018) Sportdiplomáciai intézményrendszerek francia és magyar megközelítésben. *Civil Szemle*, 15: 69-84.

Garamvölgyi B. Sportdiplomácia Kolumbiában. In: Tóth B (ed.), *Tudományos eredmények a nagyvilágból: Válogatás a Campus Mundi ösztöndíjasok tanulmányaiból*. Budapest, Tempus Közalapítvány, Budapest, 2018: 13-17.

Garamvölgyi B. Sport: a tool for reaching EU external policy goals? In: Gál A, Kosiewicz J, Sterbenz T (eds.), *Sport and Social Sciences with Reflection on Practice*. Josef Pilsudski University of Physical Education, Warsaw, 2016: 217-231.

### *Publications not related to the topic of the dissertation:*

Bardocz-Bencsik M, Garamvölgyi B, Dóczy T. (2018) Sporttal a békéért és a fejlődésért - Az Egyesült Nemzetek Szervezetének szerepe. *Civil Szemle*, 15: 47-65.

Garamvölgyi B. (2019) ISSA 2019 Sportszociológiai Világkongresszus: World Congress of Sociology of Sport 2019 (ISSA). *Testnevelés, Sport, Tudomány - Physical Education, Sport, Science*, 4: 76-77.

Petridis L, Garamvölgyi B, Csere G, Tóth PL. (2019) Kitekintés a sporttudományok világába: Window to the world of sport sciences. *Testnevelés, Sport, Tudomány - Physical Education, Sport, Science*, 4: 115-118.