Proposition of an index for sports diplomacy in the military context

Propuesta de un index para la diplomacia deportiva en el contexto militar

Abstract: Sports diplomacy uses sportsmen and sporting events to build a favorable image between audiences and foreign institutions. The aim of the research was to propose an index of sports diplomacy in the context of military sport. An analytical literature review was conducted to list the tools and indicators of sports diplomacy. Five experts judged the importance and potential impact of the tools in the military sports context. Multidimensional scaling was performed to define tool retention. Finally, it was identified in the International Military Sports Council yearbooks the frequency of use of these tools in the last three editions of the Military World Games and the confirmatory factorial analysis with partial least squares for formative models was employed to generate the index algorithm. The results indicated that six tools were relevant and the factor analysis indicated that the index met the required quality criteria, being possible to generate the algorithm from its weighted factor weights, generating a model for analysis of sports diplomacy in the military context.

Keywords: Diplomacy. Sports. Military.

Resumen: La diplomacia deportiva utiliza deportistas y eventos deportivos para construir una imagen favorable entre el público y las instituciones extranjeras. La investigación tuvo como objetivo proponer un *index* de diplomacia deportiva en el contexto del deporte militar. Se llevó a cabo un examen de la bibliografía analítica para enumerar los instrumentos e indicadores de la diplomacia deportiva. Cinco experts juzgaron la importancia y el potencial de impacto de las herramientas en el contexto del deporte militar. El escalado multidimensional se realizó para definir la retención de herramientas. Finalmente, se identificó en los yearbooks del International Military Sports Council la frecuencia de uso de estas herramientas en las últimas tres ediciones de los Juegos Mundiales Militares y se empleó el análisis factorial confirmatorio de mínimos cuadrados parciales para modelos formativos a generación del algoritmo de *index*. Los resultados indican que seis herramientas eran relevantes y el análisis factorial indicó que el index cumplía los criterios de calidad requeridos, siendo posible generar el algoritmo a partir de sus pesos factoriales ponderados, generando un modelo para el análisis de la diplomacia deportiva en el contexto militar.

Palabras Clave: Diplomacia. Deportes. Militar.

Delon Philbert Willis 💿

Guiana Defense Force. Georgetown, Guyana. delon_looney@hotmail.com

Angela Nogueira Neves 回

Exército Brasileiro. Escola Educação Física do Exército. Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brasil. angelanneves@yahoo.com.br

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1 Introduction

Since indefinite times, "man has lived in bands or villages" but not until perhaps 5000 BC the villages began to come together in larger political units. As a consequence, the aggregation process continued at a progressively faster pace and led to the formation of the first state in history (SPRUYT, 2002). Since then, the State has configured itself as the legitimate holder of the use of force (WEBER, 2015) and the expansion of States creates a society of relations between them, in which both hard power (military and economic) and soft power are employed in a single or combined way in order to balance relations between States (NYE, 2004).

While the world great powers can use both types of power in international politics to tip the balance of power (smart power), peripheral nations has soft power as their main option, that is, the ability to make others do what they want through attraction, and not through coercion or payment (NYE; WELCH, 2013). Diplomacy, economic assistance, peace operations and communication are tools for soft power (MARKS; FREEMAN, 2020).

The term diplomacy has its origins in both Old French (*diplomatie*) and Greek (*diploma, matos*) and Latin (*diploma*), having come into use not before the last decade of the 18th century (LEIRA, 2016; MARKS; FREEMAN, 2020). Diplomacy is generally defined as an art that is practiced in conducting negotiations between nations in order to implement policies and pursue interests (LEIRA, 2016; MARKS, 2015).

In the discipline of international relations, it is argued that there are eight forms of modern diplomacy: (1) pacification policy, (2) gunboat diplomacy, (3) dollar diplomacy, (4) public diplomacy, (5) people's diplomacy, (6) intermediary diplomacy, (7) economic diplomacy and (8) digital or electronic diplomacy (REDEKER, 2008). Although all forms of diplomacy are important, this article is restricted to sports diplomacy, which is configured as a type of public diplomacy.

Sports diplomacy involves representation and diplomatic activities carried out by sportspeople and / or sports confederations on behalf of and in conjunction with their governments (ALLISON; MONNINGTON, 2002). Sports diplomacy uses athletes, sport-related people – coaches, managers – and sporting events to inform, engage and build a favorable image among foreign audiences and institutions, which often shape perceptions in a way more favorable to the government's foreign policy objectives. (MURRAY, 2018). It is an expression of soft power (DUBINSKY, 2019; NYE, 2008).

There is an attitude of explicitly denying or, at least, moving away from any association of institutions and sporting events with politics. It is stated that "sport, like music and art, transcends politics, [so] we are concerned with sport, and not with politics or business" (BROUNDAGE, 1968, p. 10). However, what is seen in contemporary times is the use of sport by governments for political purposes: the Berlin Olympics in 1936 (GRIX; HOULIHAN, 2014), the ping pong table between the United States and China (GRIFFIN, 2014), the Seoul Olympics in 1988(CHO, 2012), Socchi's winter Olympics (KOBIERECKI, 2019), Germany's World Cup (GRIX; HOULIHAN, 2014), and PyeongChang's winter Olympics (LEE, 2019) are recent examples of success of these practices. Furthermore, in recent years, there has been a more explicit recognition of the role of sport as an international diplomatic tool. This is illustrated, for example, in the development of a close relationship between the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the United Nations (UN) in the use of sport for development and peace, and the subsequent provision of "observer status" To the IOC at the UN (HONG, 2010).

Despite the relationship between international sports and diplomacy being a familiar area, it is relatively little explored when compared to other types of diplomacy, and more studies are needed in this area (MURRAY, 2018). Theoretically, it is recognized that there are two distinct categories of sports diplomacy. One, more versed in traditional diplomacy – the dialogue between States – international sport is intentionally employed by the government official as an instrument of diplomacy, being the most familiar form of sports diplomacy. Here, sports diplomacy is often associated with governments that employ sportsmen to convey a diplomatic message, or with states that use sporting events – promoting or participating in them – to cool tensions in diplomatic relations or simply test the ground for a possible change in politics (ESHERICK et al., 2017; MURRAY, 2012, 2013; MURRAY, PIGMAN, 2014; ROFE, 2018).

Otherwise, the second category postulates that international sport-as-diplomacy concerns diplomatic representation, communication and negotiation between non-state actors that occur as a result of the ongoing international sports competition – more versed in public diplomacy (MURRAY; PIGMAN, 2014). It includes diplomatic activities that take place to make international sports competition possible. In the modern and plural diplomatic environment, non-state actors such as the IOC and the International Football Federation (FIFA), can practice this distinct type of diplomacy. It is these organizations that negotiate with governments, with regional and national sports organizing bodies, with large global companies, the global media and global civil society organizations that sponsor, transmit and validate the competition (MURRAY, 2018; MURRAY, PIGMAN, 2014).

Military sporting events can be an opportunity for convergence between military diplomacy and sports diplomacy. Military diplomacy uses tangible and intangible military resources to exert influence in a non-coercive manner, in various activities – appointment of attachés, educational and training exchanges, support for humanitarian aid – as a form of expression of the nation's soft power (SILVA, 2015). This possibility of convergence is due to the existence of the World Military Games promoted by the International Military Sports Council (CISM), with the participation of the Armed Forces (FFAA) from countries in America, Europe, Asia and Africa every four years. CISM itself promotes this double vision – sports and military diplomacy – based on the reasons it presented for the support of nations to their mission (INTERNACIONAL MILITARY SPORTS COUNCIL, 2020).

Sports diplomacy has four basic objectives: to build peace, to unite nations, to establish a platform for dialogue and to build trust and consensus of interests between nations (ÖZSARI et al., 2018). These goals can be achieved through the tools of sports diplomacy. To date, there is no consensus in the literature, on which tools are effectively constituents of sports diplomacy – national brand, sports media, victories, organization of events, lobbying are some examples – and what weight each has in practice sports diplomacy in order to meet

the objectives it serves (MURRAY, 2017). This research focuses on the identification of tools and their use in the context of military sport.

The aim of this research is to propose an index for sports diplomacy in the military context, based on the frequency of their use. Its constitution is based on analytical literature review, expert evaluation and analysis of the last three editions of the Military World Games. We conclude with the proposition of an algorithm for calculating an index score, in order to make it possible to determine the weight of each tool and to categorize countries based on the frequency of use of sports diplomacy tools in the military context.

2 Methods

This is a methodological research, focused on developing a tool, a measure (diplomacy index) (MAUCH; BIRCH, 1998). It follows the methodological proposal of index construction in which the steps of searching for evidence in the literature, proposing and confirming the items and validating the index using multivariate methods are described as essential (ABEYASEKERA, 2005).

2.1 Identification of tools related to sports diplomacy

Initially, sources were searched in the Google Scholar database. Due to its scope, this public database provides relevant evidence for the topic, not only centered on scientific articles, but also on reports, of the topic under investigation. The following string was used: "sports diplomacy" "dimension" "tools" "indicators".

The search period included materials published since 2002, to consider the scenario of international relations after the events of September 11, 2001, which caused profound changes in the form of expression of hard and soft power in the dynamics of relations international standards. There was no attempt to exhaust the literature, only to gather relevant evidence for the proposition of the index.

2.2 Selection criteria

Theoretical essays, books, book chapters, theses and dissertations, newspaper news, reports and policy papers regarding sports diplomacy were considered documents to be included. Cases of particular analysis of an event were excluded, as were texts that discussed sports diplomacy conceptually, and not its application. Articles wrote in Portuguese and English were read.

2.3 Tools identification

The selected material was systematically read to identify used or theoretically proposed sports diplomacy tools. From this reading, the tools were listed and their indicators were generated, in order to define the constituent actions of each tool. The list of tools / definition of indicators was finalized when no other tool / indicator other than those already described was identified in the selected material, that is, by the saturation criterion.

2.4 Index dimensions

Subsequently, the list was submitted to analysis by five professionals considered experts on the topic – military personnel from the General Staff (QEMA) and General officers with military sports experience. Together with the indicators, these professionals were offered the definition of diplomacy adopted in this work for the theoretical guidance of the judgment. The judges assigned a score from 1 to 10 to verify the importance (1 = not very important; 10 = very important) and the potential impact of the tools (1 being low potential and 10 = high potential).

Based on the judges' scores, attributed to the importance and potential impact of each tool, a multidimensional scaling (ALSCAL) was carried out in order to determine their dissimilarities on a perceptual map. A model with determination coefficient (RSQ) greater than 0.60 and stress less than 2.5 is acceptable (HAIR et al., 2009). A perception of value was attributed to each tool, varying according to its dimensional position on the perceptual map (Figure 1). Low value tools have been eliminated.

Low resonance, high	High resonance, high
importance	importance
Recommendation:	Recommendation:
Keep it	Keep it
Low resonance, low	High resonance, low
importance	importance
Recommendation:	Recommendation:
Drop it	Keep it

Figure 1 – Interpretation of the perceptual map for decision

Source: Adapted from Abeyasekera (2005).

2.5 Index algorithm (score)

To create an index score based on the reality of military sport, data from the last three editions of the Military World Games promoted by CISM were analyzed. Yearbooks from the years 2011, 2015 and 2019 (years of the Summer Military World Games) were used. From these sources, information was collected on the use of each tool remaining in the index, after the previous analysis.

The yearbooks were systematically read, having as reading guide material the list of all countries associated with CISM and the indicators of diplomacy tools in the military context. To identify the frequency of use of each tool, a specific reading of each yearbooks was carried out, in order to avoid loss of information and / or confusion between the indicators. Analyzing the content of the yearbooks, actions were identified that reflected the use of the tools – through similarity with the indicators that define them. For each identified action, one frequency point was assigned.

The diplomacy index, in statistical terms, constitutes a formative model, in which each tool collaborates to form a general concept. For this characteristic, a confirmatory factor analysis with partial least squares was conducted. As it is a formative model, outer weights (ω) are the indicators of the tool's "contribution" to the index. To be important, outer weights must be significant and, preferably but not necessarily, ω > 0.50 (HAIR et al., 2009). The multi-collinearity of the tools was investigated, measured by the variance inflation factor (VIF) as a retention criterion in the model, considering an acceptable VIF <10 (HAIR et al., 2009). To assess the fit of the model (and ultimately, the relevance of the tools), the Cohen indicator (f²; values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered small, medium and large) (COHEN, 1988) to assess how each tool is "useful" for adjusting the index. The Stone-Geisser indicator (Q²> 0; values of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are considered small, medium and large) evaluated the precision of the adjusted model (index) (COHEN, 1988).

From data, the algorithm was created, which may be used to classify the frequency of the tools used for sports diplomacy in the military context. The algorithm was written using the tools' wheighted outer weights (ω), following the common practice (MARÔCO, 2014)

Sports diplomacy Index_{country} = $\omega_{weighted_1}^*$ (frequency of tool₁ usage) + $\omega_{weighted_2}^*$ (frequency of tool₂ usage) +.... $\omega_{weighted_n}^*$ (frequency of tooln usage)

Weighting is done by the following formula: $\omega_{weighted} = \omega_n / \Sigma \omega$

For all inferential tests, a significance level of 5% was adopted, and the software SPSS 22 and PLS-PM 3.2.2 were used in the analyzes.

3 Results

3.1 Tools identification

From the works collected in our analytical review of the literature, it was possible to identify fourteen reference sources (BLACK, PEACOK, 2013; GRIX, 2018; GRIX, HOULIHAN, 2014; EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2018; GRASSROOTS ..., 2018a; HAUT et al., 2018; HEERE et al., 2012; MURRAY, 2013; 2018; NYGÅRD, GATES, 2013; ÖZSARI et al., 2018; TRUNKOS, HEERE, 2017; USHKOVSKA, PETRUSHEVSKA, 2015; ZINTZ, PARRISH, 2019) relevant for this research, which directly described, or indicated, or defined tools to be used in sports diplomacy. We were able to recognize and define eight tools from the reading of these works: (1) Being an active nation in large sporting events; (2) Promote a National Brand; (3) Use of Media and Technology; (4) Appointment of Sports Ambassador; (5) Lobby; (6) Establishment of International Technical Cooperation; (7) Establishment of Non-Governmental Partnerships; (8) Creation and / or Participation in Multisectoral Networks. The description of the indicators of these tools can be seen in Table 1.

Tools	Indicators
Being an active nation	a. Be a hostess of mega events (Olympic Games or FIFA World Cup) to increase international prestige and project soft power.
in relevant sporting events	b. Project the image of the country with the publication of records and medals (both for isolated sports and for the medal table), being of special importance for countries that are not promoting the event.
	c. States can combine the two methods mentioned above.
Promote a National Brand	a. Sport may be used as an instrument to promote international recognition or the country's good reputation and image. Not only are victories part of this, but also sports promotion programs, technology development and used materials.
Use of Media	a. Use of media tools to promote countries' cultural and social values in the international arena.
and Technology	b. Promotes prominence to commercial institutions and state institutions and international media organizations.
	c. Promotes country identification with some sporting areas in which they are successful.
Appointment	a. Serves as a model for global youth.
of Sports Ambassador	b. Seen as a representative of public diplomacy in his country.
	c. Acts as a mediator in the development of mutual understanding through a variety of joint programs between countries.
Lobbying	a. Influence people who are active in decision-making, with the purpose of making a significant contribution to interstate relations.
	b. The most common lobbying activities in the sports context are: influencing which countries, cities and even places where relevant sports games will take place.
Establishment of Non- Governmental Partnerships	a. Transfer or sharing successful practices through non-governmental partnerships.

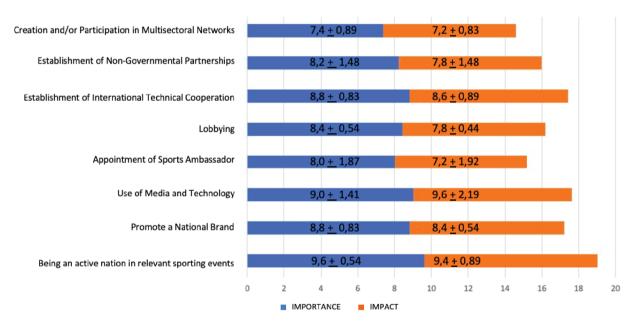
Table 1 – Sports diplomacy tools and indicators

Tools	Indicators
Establishment of International Technical Cooperation	a. Transfer or sharing of successful practices through international Technical Cooperation.
Creation and/ or Participation in Multisectoral Networks	a. The exchange of successful practices and/or advocacy

Source: The authors (2020).

In order to verify the relevance of sports diplomacy instruments, the list of indicators was submitted to the five experts, the same being: former commander of the Centro de Capacitação Física do Exército; three (03) QEMA officers, undergraduated in Physical Education at Physical Education School of Brazilian Army and representatives of Brazil at CISM; and the president of CISM in English Guiana.

Figure 2 – Mean of the sports diplomacy tools evaluation, regarding their potential impact and importance in military sport



Source: The authors (2020).

In Figure 2, the mean of the scores and the standard deviation of each tool can be observed, both for the evaluation of its importance in the military sports context and for the potential for impact.

In order to determine the dimensions of the index, multidimensional scaling analysis (ALSCAL) was performed. The best fit of the model (Stress = 0.03; RSQ = 0.99) was obtained

from the calculation of squared Euclidean distances between variables, for ordinal measurement level, with Euclidean distance model, without normalizing the variables (Table 1).

Interval	Standardization	Stress	RSQ
Squared Euclidean	No standardization	0,03	0,99
Squared Euclidean	Z score	0,04	0,99
Chebychev	No standardization	0,07	0,96
Chebychev	Z score	0,10	0,93
Block	No standardization	0,04	0,98
Block	Z score	0,05	0,98

Table 1 – Ac	ljustments	of the	different	models
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Source: The authors (2020).

Note: RSQ = coefficient of determination.

The perceptual map indicates that promoting a national brand through sport and promoting/participating in large events tend to be the most relevant and important tools (Figure 3).

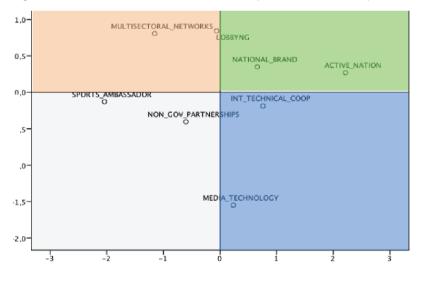


Figure 3 – Perceptual map of sports diplomacy tools in the military context

On the other hand, the appointment of a sports ambassador in the context of military sport and establishing non-governmental partnerships were considered to be tools of low relevance and low importance. According to the interpretation guideline adopted for the perceptual map (ABEYASEKERA, 2005), these tools must then be eliminated from the index.

Source: The authors (2020).

3.2 Index algorithm

The raw data regarding the use of tools by each nation can be obtained from the authors in full. As a highlight, only Brazil, Belgium and France were the countries that used all the tools listed in the 3 Military World Games analyzed.

Measurement model

Initially, it was tested whether the tools that could make up the index were not multicollinear. All tools were below the acceptable value (VIF <10) (HAIR et al., 2009), allowing the index to be constituted by the six remaining tools from the previous analysis. The factor weights were then calculated for each tool (Table 2).

Tool	ω	р	VIF
(1) Being an active nation in major sporting events	0.52	< 0.001	1.85
(2) Promotion of a National Brand	0.22	< 0.001	2.85
(3) Lobbying	0.25	< 0.001	4.13
(4) Use of Media and Technology	0.26	< 0.001	9.17
(5) Establishment of International Technical Cooperation	0.24	< 0.001	5.37
(6) Creation and / or Participation in Multisectoral Networks	0.13	< 0.001	1.33

Table 2 – Factorial weights and collinearity for each index tool

Source: The Authors (2020).

Note: ω = outer weights; p = significance; VIF = variance inflation factor.

The outer weights were relatively low, but still, all significant, which is the most relevant for their retention in the model.

Structural Model

In order to confirm the quality of the proposed index, the adequacy of two general indicators was verified: Cohen (f^2) and Stone-Geisser (Q^2) (COHEN, 1988). After performing the blindfolding analysis, it was found that the index has significant ($Q^2 = 0.59$) and high ($f^2 = 0.49$) predictive relevance, as well as the index tools, which varied in terms of intensity of relevance – medium to high (Table 3).

Tool	Q2	f2
(1) Being an active nation in major sporting events	0,29	0,20
(2) Promotion of a National Brand	0,63	0,49
(3) Lobbying	0,80	0,69
(4) Use of Media and Technology	0,86	0,79
(5) Establishment of International Technical Cooperation	0,73	0,64
(6) Creation and / or Participation in Multisectoral Networks	0,21	0,15
Sports Diplomacy Index	0,59	0,49

Table 3 - General indicators of adjustment and quality of the index and its tools

Source: The Authors (2020).

Note: Q2 = Stone-Geisser indicator; f2 = Cohen indicator.

In view of these results, we were able to show that the selected tools are relevant and that the index formed by them has evidence of quality. After weighting the outer weights (MARÔCO, 2014), it was then possible to propose the algorithm for calculating the frequency of use of sports diplomacy tools in the context of military sport:

Sports Diplomacy Index_{country} = $0,32^*$ (frequency of tool, usage) + $0,14^*$ (frequency of tool, usage) + 0,15*(frequency of tool, usage) + 0,16*(frequency of tool, usage) + 0,15*(frequency of tool, usage) + 0,08*(frequency of tool usage)

Table 4 shows the 10 highest scores in the Sports Diplomacy Index in the military context.

No	Country	Index score
1	Brazil (BRA)	3.32
2	China (CHN) e South Korea (KOR)	3.08
3	Kuwait (KUW)	3.03
4	Belgium (BEL) e France (FRA)	3.00
5	United States (USA) e Russia (RUS)	2.84
6	Ecuador (ECU), Germany (GER), Austria (AUT), Spain (ESP)	2.76
7	Oman (OMA) e Finland (FIN)	2.61
8	Algeria (ALG)	2.47
9	Lebanon (LBN) e Portugal (POR)	2.46
10	Indonesia (INA)	2.45

Table 4 - Countries classified according to the proposed Index

Source: The authors (2020).

4 Discussion

The aim of this research was to propose an index for sports diplomacy in the military context, generating an algorithm that makes it possible to classify countries based on the frequency of use of sports diplomacy tools in the Military World Games.

A reflection on the need to think about sports diplomacy in the military context should be done in view of the *signifié* of sport in the military environment. There is the saying that is repeatedly recalled: "in times of peace, sport is what most resembles combat" – a sentence whose authorship is unknow. George Orwell (1945), for his part, stated in the 1940s that sport is war without guns. Sport is often imbued with notions of national identity and war, and is a significant symbol of nationality in international disputes (GLEAVES; LLEWELLYN, 2014).

For this reason, although there is Defense diplomacy – defined as the cooperative use of the Armed Forces and related infrastructure (military and civilian) as a tool of foreign and security policy (SILVA, 2015) – and military diplomacy – defined as an instrument that "aims to promote exchanges and cooperation, building relationships of mutual trust, with the purpose of collaborating with the training of personnel, security, development, stability and peace" (BRASIL, 2016, p. 19) – sports diplomacy must have its place in the military context, in order to better understand the contribution that sport can make to diplomacy, conflict resolution and cultural understanding.

As diplomacy is an expression of soft power (DUBINSKY, 2019; NYE, 2004) – measuring it, in some way, is a strategic necessity in the international anarchic system. To name a few of these, we highlight the Lowy Global Diplomacy Index (LOWY INSTITUTE, 2019) – which is based on the number of diplomatic representations – and the Digital Diplomacy Index (REPUTATION SQUAD, 2020) – which is based on the frequency of nine Twitter indicators to assess G20 countries. In this context, the proposal for the present sports diplomacy index in the military context is coherent, not only because of its importance, but because of the way in which the indicators are addressed – frequency of use.

The model proposed here was developed from a literature review and was able to identify specific indicators for the sport. To select them for military sport, experts with a notorious ability to exercise this function judged them, and it was possible to identify the six indicators that actually made up the index. With a robust statistical analysis, it was possible to highlight the relevance and usefulness of the index, also generating an algorithm that makes it possible to update the data year by year – if the query is maintained in the CISM yearbook – or at least every four years, for advent of the Military World Games.

Despite these positive results, it is recognized that there is a possibility of future improvement to the index, or at least, in the countries' assessment sources. Yearbooks aggregate public data, being a communication to the public of the actions promoted within the scope of CISM. Perhaps, internal data, of the meetings and actions of the countries within the organization and behind the scenes of the events could allow to recognize more accurately how the countries use the tools of sports diplomacy. On the other hand, what has been made public is the action that really caused some impact – notorious for being remembered – and for that reason keeping this consultation with public material can be interesting. Add, do not exchange for internal data. What is presented here is an initial proposal, which allows classifying countries in relation to the frequency of use of sports diplomacy tools in the context of military sport. The tool does not allow the evaluation of outcomes – the results of the action in the short, medium and long term; just the inputs – what has been done. But measuring this construct using quantifiable indicators is an improvement (PAHLAVI, 2007). The continuity of the research and the improvement of the measure is necessary, including following the developments of the actions taken by the countries.

The classification of Brazil as first in the ranking is consistent with its actions in the analyzed period: it hosted an event, participated in all the others and, alongside France and Belgium, used all the tools identified in the three editions of the analyzed Games. In the same way that it is consistent to be followed by the other two hosts of the Games of 2015 and 2019, South Korea and China, respectively. It is up to Brazil to maintain the use of this soft power, seeking to use it in favor of its international policy, leaving the athletes of the Brazilian FFAA the role of representatives of their country in this space, also political, of sweat and peace.

5 Conclusion

The present work achieved its objective, making a coherent proposal relevant to the military context to evaluate the frequency of sports diplomacy actions. Future research can improve the measure and its recurrent use can help the FFAA to position itself in the use of this soft power instrument.

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