

Sport Plus the Shooting: An Examination of International Sporting Success and Event Hostship's Impact on the National Willingness to Fight

Rasmus K. Storm^{a, b*}, Tor Georg Jakobsen^b, Jo Jakobsen^c

*^a Danish Institute for Sports Studies
Frederiksgade 78, 2
DK-8000 Århus*

*^b NTNU Business School
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
7491 Trondheim, Norway*

*^c Department of Sociology and Political Science
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
7491 Trondheim, Norway*

**Corresponding Author*

Sport Plus the Shooting: An Examination of International Sporting Success and Event Hostship's Impact on the National Willingness to Fight

Abstract

Research has long aimed to identify the effects of international sporting success or event hostship on nations. Overall findings suggest that tangible benefits are marginal at best. Still, some studies find that sport may have significant intangible effects, such as bolstering (short-term) feelings of national pride or happiness. Following this strand of research, the present research note asks whether international sporting success and/or hostship affects people's willingness to fight for their country. The connection between sport and international conflict is a plausible one, which scholars have debated for decades. Yet, this is also an issue that is underexplored, especially empirically. To expand on existing research, we analyse time-series cross-sectional survey data. The output from our estimations suggests that citizens' willingness to fight decreases slightly when their country is hosting a major sport event. Similar effects do not apply to sporting success, even if additional analysis suggests a context-dependent positive relationship. To form a future research agenda, our approach and results are discussed to invite new and alternative research perspectives to improve the understanding of the relationship between sport and (the absence of) conflict.

Keywords: Elite Sport; Nations, Success, Arms Race, War, International Politics

Introduction

Research has long aimed to identify the effects of international sporting success or event hostship on nations. A variety of outcomes have been explored, including economic impact (e.g. Matheson, 2006), foreign direct investment (e.g. Jakobsen et al., 2013), urban development (e.g. Wolfe, 2024), national pride (e.g. Evans & Kelley, 2002; Kavetsos, 2012a), international prestige (Haut et al., 2017), mass sport participation (e.g. D’Hoore et al., 2023; Storm et al., 2018), happiness (e.g. Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010), and (self-rated) health (e.g. Storm & Jakobsen, 2024).

Overall findings, though, suggest that many of the usually claimed *tangible* benefits are anecdotal, absent or marginal at best (Müller et al., 2022). Still, some studies find that sport may have certain significant *intangible* effects, such as bolstering (short-term) feelings of national pride (Elling et al., 2014; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020), proudness of fellow citizens’ sporting success (Seippel, 2017) and happiness (Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010). The empirical literature thus indicates that there may be some (positive) externalities from sporting success and event hosting, particularly with respect to intangibles.

Following this latter strand of research, the present research note asks whether international sporting success or hostship affects people’s willingness to fight for their nation. It might, at first glance, seem unlikely that there exists any connection between, on the one hand, watching and attending what are rather lighthearted leisure activities and, on the other hand, the very deadly and existential matter of war. Yet, scholars have engaged in this broader issue for many decades, even as conclusions remain uncertain (Dunning, 2003; Hurcombe & Dine, 2023; Sipes, 1973). The question is also highly important from a broader political perspective. This is so not least because sport and international politics are sometimes closely intertwined (Dennis & Grix, 2012; Grix, 2013).

We can perhaps recall the famous statement by renowned author George Orwell that “serious sport is war minus the shooting” (Orwell. G., 1945). And, if sport does resemble

war, we are apt to ask whether it can also have a causal effect on war- and peace-related issues.

Existing literature fails to offer any empirical evidence of such a relationship. Neither is theory unambiguous on this matter. Granted, the literature does provide some broader theoretical discussions (e.g. Donnelly, 2011; Giulianotti, 2011; Reynard, 2020). Yet, causal directions remain uncertain. Some argue that sport tends to lessen individual and collective aggressiveness (e.g. Elias & Dunning, 1986), while others stress the negative, ‘jingoistic’ effects of sport through its impact on nationalism (e.g. Bertoli, 2017). Still, others argue that sport is, overall, disconnected from any outcomes associated with conflict, war and peace (Schiller, 2015). If several causal directions apply with near-equal plausibility, the question of the *general* impact of sport on willingness to fight is surely best resolved by way of empirical analysis, which the literature has so far failed to offer.

This research note aims to fill this gap by deploying a large dataset extracted from the World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Study (EVS). We structure it as follows: First, we briefly review existing literature and establish a theoretical underpinning. Second, we present our approach by outlining the data and estimation strategy. Third, we lay out and discuss our results showing that citizens’ willingness to fight decreases slightly when their country is hosting a major sport event. Similar effects do not apply for sporting success, even if additional analysis suggests a context-dependent positive relationship. Based on this, we finally point towards future research avenues to invite new and alternative research perspectives to improve our understanding of the relationship between sport and (the absence of) conflict.

What Do We Know about Sport, Peace and Conflict?

A brief literature review

The impact of international sporting success and major event hostship has been studied intensively in recent years. Roughly speaking, existing research can be divided into two broad categories: (i) studies on tangible effects and (ii) studies on *intangible* effects (Storm & Denstadli, 2023).

Related to the first category, scholars have examined a variety of outcomes, such as gross domestic product (e.g. Storm et al., 2020), tourism (e.g. Peeters et al., 2014), foreign direct investments (e.g. Jakobsen et al., 2013), property prices (e.g. Kavetsos, 2012b) and stock-market returns (e.g. Ashton et al., 2003). Overall, these studies reveal that real effects are usually absent or marginal at best.

Other scholars have examined various intangible effects from playing host or winning in sport. This part of the literature includes studies of mass participation (e.g. Lion et al., 2022), (mental) health (e.g. Storm & Jakobsen, 2024) and happiness (e.g. Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010). Here as well, overall effects seem to be rather weak (with happiness constituting a possible exception). Nonetheless, evidence suggests that sport may have a positive impact on citizens' feeling of pride – especially in their own athletes (in so far as they are successful) (Seippel, 2017), but also, albeit in a less profound or enduring way, in their nation more generally (Elling et al., 2014; Kavetsos, 2012a; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020).

What is the relation between sport, conflict and peace?

The present study places itself in the camp studying intangible effects. From a theoretical perspective, sport could be related to interstate conflict while it may also foster cooperation (Hurcombe & Dine, 2023). Furthermore, the relationship is not necessarily direct. Instead, sport could potentially affect aggressiveness, or even amicability, through its impact on nationalism (Bertoli, 2017). Nationalism, one should emphasise, is a plural concept: Several

nationalisms exist, and each of these nationalisms will have its own distinct effect on individual or state aggressiveness (Cottam & Cottam, 2000). Depending on context, sport can, theoretically, spur ‘good’, peace-enhancing nationalism; or it can feed the ‘bad’, jingoist version; or it can be associated with a type of nationalism disconnected from any clear-cut outcome in the realm of conflict, war and peace.

‘Good’ and ‘bad’ nationalism

The schism between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ nationalism corresponds with the literature in social psychology, which differentiates between ‘patriotism’ and ‘nationalism’ (Druckman, 1994; Herrmann et al., 2009; Kosterman & Feshbach, 1989). Here, patriotism represents the ‘good’ variant, describing attachment to and love for one’s country. Nationalism, on the other hand, directs its attention less toward the national Self and more toward the external. It depicts feelings of superiority, ethnocentrism and hostility towards foreign nations (Ko, 2022).

This distinction between good and bad nationalism carries over into studies in political science and international relations (Mylonas & Kuo, 2017; Powers, 2022; Viroli, 1997). Nationalism continues vitally to inform foreign policymaking, arguably still constituting ‘the most powerful ideology in the world’ (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 354). Yet, its connection to war and peace has long been unclear (Posen, 1993; van Evera, 1994). There is nonetheless little reason to doubt that the schism between good and bad nationalism also applies here. This is so even if most international relations scholars are apt to ‘take the war-causing character of nationalism for granted, assuming it without proof or explanation’ (van Evera, 1994, p. 5). Nationalism *is* an ingredient in many, or most, cases of international conflict and war, even if most expressions of nationalism are eminently non-aggressive (Anderson, 2006).

Two contrasting theoretical models

When sport enters the picture, its effect on conflict, war and peace, which mostly runs through its impact on nationalism, is not straightforward either. Indeed, the literature has debated this issue for decades, failing to reach any unambiguous conclusion (Dunning, 2003; Hurcombe & Dine, 2023; Sipes, 1973). The main lines of argumentation were, at first, captured in the Drive Discharge Model (DDM), on the one hand, and the Culture Pattern Model (CPM), on the other. The DDM approach is largely consistent with the ideas laid out by Elias and Dunning (1986), which built on Richard Sipes's (1973) original model. This model sees sport as part of a civilising process whereby it discharges impulses of aggression in mankind, making war and conflict less likely to occur. Contrarily, the CPM model contends that individual aggressive conduct is, for the most part, learned behaviour, representing a cultural characteristic. In particular, warlike (i.e., combative) sports are likely more prevalent in war-prone societies than in less belligerent ones (Hurcombe & Dine, 2023). Sport and general belligerence exhibit behavioural patterns that reinforce one another.

Theory, therefore, does not offer clarity about causal directions. The overall empirical evidence is also mixed, and most are based on case studies. Utilising extensive empirical data to test this question may, therefore, contribute significantly to existing scholarship.

Presentation of Data Materials and Methods

To understand whether international sporting success or sporting events hostship is related to people's willingness to fight, we utilise a large global data sample of individual-level survey responses from 110 countries. The data include 428 observations spanning 1981–2021 regressed against several relevant independent variables. We use a panel-data analysis approach, as do several existing studies on related topics (e.g. Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010; Storm & Jakobsen, 2020). We present both fixed-effects (FE) and random-effects (RE)

models. The former constitute our main mode of analysis, while the latter models are primarily used for robustness.

Our approach is a highly relevant way to deal with multifactorial issues and processes, such as the impact of specific events on people's intentions related to a specific topic – for example, their willingness to fight. This is because such intentions are formed by many factors that, in principle, can be incorporated into a statistical model. Some limitations nonetheless apply. When aiming to understand the relationship between sporting success or event hostship and our dependent variable, our models are only as good as the data available. Further, our approach is limited with respect to quantifying essential qualitative constructs, such as culture and historical and contextual developments (Henry et al., 2020). Based on this, we consider our approach to be one among others that, seen together, can develop a coherent and nuanced picture of the questions we aim to understand.

Dependent variables

We present two sets of models and, hence, two dependent variables: willingness to fight and national pride. We do this to gain a better understanding of the multidimensional effects of being a host and experiencing international sporting success. The variable *willingness to fight* proxies the relationship directly. *National pride*, for its part, is deployed to capture presumably ‘good’ nationalistic or patriotic tendencies in society. This follows other studies that highlight the ‘positive form of identification’ associated with this term (Gustavsson & Stendahl, 2020). The way the survey item is measured (please see below) helps distinguish it from ‘national chauvinism’, which carries a more negative, aggressive connotation (Ariely, 2020; Jakobsen et al., 2016).

The dependent variables are drawn from seven waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) (1981–1984, 1989–1993, 1994–1998, 1999–2004, 2005–2009, 2010–2014 and 2017–2022) and five waves of the European Values Study (1981–1984, 1990–1993, 1999–

2001, 2008–2010, 2017–2021). *Willingness to fight*, which is our main dependent, is originally a dichotomous variable based on the following survey question: *Of course, we all hope that there will not be another war, but if it were to come to that, would you be willing to fight for your country?* (yes=1; no=0). *National pride* ranges from 1–4 and is re-coded so that the highest value implies that the respondent is ‘very proud’. Following previous studies (e.g. Barro & McCleary, 2003; Jakobsen & Jakobsen, 2011), we calculated country-year averages of these survey-based measures and incorporated them into our panel dataset.

Even if it fails to distinguish between offensive and defensive wars, *willingness to fight* is a unique variable in that it allows for a comprehensive analysis over both time and space. Still, some challenges do apply. First, the prelude to the survey question (‘Of course, we all hope...’) may induce respondents to reply negatively. The wording of the question, though, is basically the same in every country (although the question is translated into the local language), so any bias is unlikely. Also, consider that the sample mean is quite high (0.708). Second, the question might, in part, proxy regime legitimacy. Hence, autocracies might be associated with values that are ‘artificially’ low, since democratic regimes are generally associated with a higher level of legitimacy. This issue notwithstanding, the problem is rectified by us including a control for regime type (more on this later).

Independent variables

Our two main independent variables of interest are *host* and *success*. These are based on a comprehensive set of internationally recognised sporting events (Storm & Jakobsen, 2024): the Summer Olympics, Winter Olympics, FIFA World Cup, UEFA European Championship, Cricket World Cup, Commonwealth Games, Copa América, Africa Cup of Nations, AFC Asian Cup, OFC Nations Cup (Oceania), Rugby World Cup, Rugby League World Cup and the Ice Hockey World Championships.

As for coding, if the survey in a given year was held in the same or the following year as one of the events presented in Table 1, the given country-year is assigned the value corresponding to its placement in that event on the variable *success*. For the variable *host*, the corresponding (and the following) country-year is given the value that equals a No. 1 placement. For both *host* and *success*, $t+2$ is assigned 50% of the value presented in Table 1. For *host*, $t-1$ is also assigned 50%.

Table 1. Events and score for *host* and *success*

| <i>Event</i> | 1 st | 2 nd | 3 rd | 4 th |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Summer Olympics | 4 | 3 | 2 | -- |
| Winter Olympics | 3 | 2 | 1 | -- |
| FIFA World Cup | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| UEFA Eur. Champ. | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Rugby World Cup | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Cricket World Cup | 3 | 1 | -- | -- |
| Copa América | 3 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.25 |
| Africa Cup of Nations | 3 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.25 |
| AFC Asian Cup | 3 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.25 |
| Rugby League WC | 2 | 1 | 0.5 | 0.25 |
| Ice Hockey WC | 1 | 0.5 | 0.25 | --- |
| Commonwealth Games | 2 | -- | -- | -- |
| OFC Nations Cup | 1 | 0.5 | -- | -- |

If two countries share the event, the main host will acquire 75% of that score, while the junior host will get 50%. When shared by three or more, the senior host will acquire 75%, and the others will each get 25% of the score.¹

Controls

We also employ a comprehensive set of controls in our model estimations. First, with data from the WVS, we include *confidence in armed forces*. This ranges from 1 to 4, where the highest value signifies that the respondent has ‘a great deal’ of confidence. We expect this

¹ For the Cricket World Cup in the West Indies, all the host countries acquire 1/3 of the score except for the country hosting the final, which acquires 50%. For the Euro 2021, the United Kingdom acquires 62.5% (main and other host) and the other hosts 12,5%. Semi-finals count as 4th place in case of no bronze final.

variable to be highly positively related to our dependent(s), in line with previous research (Jakobsen et al., 2016).

Second, we need to account for external threats or threat perceptions, under the plausible assumption that citizens' concerns about security risks emanating from their regional neighbourhood are likely to influence their (expressed) willingness to fight for their country. We do this by including a dichotomous measure coded 1 for country-years having some form of mandatory military recruitment (*conscription*). Data are drawn from the Military Recruitment Data Set² and from Jakobsen & Jakobsen (2019), with values for the latest years assembled by us.

Third, we include *per capita GDP* (at purchasing power parity) as well as *population* size (both are logged, and both are gathered from the World Bank.³). The use of the GDP variable is inspired by Seippel (2017), which shows that rich Western nations are less prone than others to be proud of their sporting heroes. Controlling for population size corresponds with Storm & Jakobsen (2020) and builds on the expectation that reactions to athletes' hostship and/or sporting success may vary with population size.

Fourth, and as pointed out by Kunovich (2009), less democratic nations tend to be more nationalistic or patriotic. This is so even as we suspect that their willingness-to-fight values might be somewhat suppressed by their enjoying less legitimacy among the populace, as we noted earlier. We, therefore, include a measure of democracy. Data on democracy are harvested from the Center of Systemic Peace website using the *polity5* index. The index ranges from -10 to +10, with -10 representing pure autocracies and +10 representing fully democratic nations.⁴ Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 2.

² See <https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/239260>

³ See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator>

⁴ Center for Systemic Peace: *The Polity Project*: <https://www.systemicpeace.org>

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

| Variables | N | Min | Mean | Max | Std.dev. |
|------------------------|-----|--------|--------|--------|----------|
| Willingness to fight | 357 | 0.167 | 0.708 | 0.980 | 0.167 |
| National pride | 428 | 1.604 | 2.393 | 2.986 | 0.308 |
| Host | 430 | 0 | 0.237 | 6 | 0.856 |
| Sport | 430 | 0 | 0.419 | 8 | 1.100 |
| Confidence in military | 430 | 0.434 | 1.733 | 2.791 | 0.382 |
| lnGDPpc | 430 | 6.900 | 9.664 | 11.680 | 0.940 |
| lnPopulation | 430 | 12.448 | 16.658 | 21.062 | 1.617 |
| Polity5 | 430 | -10 | 6.321 | 10 | 5.292 |
| Conscription | 430 | 0 | 0.581 | 1 | 0.494 |

Results and Discussion

We present a total of four models: one fixed-effects (FE) and one random-effects (RE) model for each of our two dependent variables. We especially emphasise results from the FE models, for two reasons. First, this method enables us to control for unobserved time-invariant heterogeneity (Mehmetoglu & Jakobsen, 2017). Second, the WVS and EVS data now encompass many years, including countries that have hosted or enjoyed success at major events. This type of modelling is inherently meaningful because we can capture ‘within effects’, which we would not have been able to do if the time series were shorter. (Our RE models also include the ‘between effect’, in addition to the ‘within effect’.)

Results from the statistical analysis

With respect to the control variables, Table 3 shows that *confidence military* and *conscription* are highly significant and positive in the models using *willingness to fight* as the dependent, while the rest are insignificant. Of more importance to our project, Table 3 also informs us that one of our main independent variables – *host* – is negative and statistically significant at the 10% level (FE) and 5% (RE) levels, respectively, in the models in which *willingness to fight* is the dependent variable. *Host* does not affect national pride, though, nor does sporting *success* affect the dependent variables significantly.

While not yielding a clear-cut answer, the result on *host* is moderately consistent with the Drive Discharge Model (DDM) (Hurcombe & Dine, 2023). This model argues that

sport is part of a civilising process whereby it discharges impulses of aggression in mankind, making war and conflict less likely to occur. In other words, and based on our results, sport handles aggression by containing it in rules of conduct. Nationalistic tendencies do not seem to be present. Instead, sport may primarily be associated with patriotism – nationalism’s ‘good’ variant – corresponding to aspirations prevailing during the first modern Olympic Games (Keefer et al., 1983). Thus, having the world over for a sporting competition may increase understanding among nations, with the caveat that levels of significance are not high. This finding is also largely consistent with other studies, which suggest that playing host is associated with increased happiness and subjective well-being (e.g. Kavetsos, 2012b; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010).

Table 3. FE and RE models on *willingness to fight* and *national pride*, 1981–2022

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Willingness to fight</i> | | <i>National pride</i> | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------|
| | #1 FE | #2 RE | #3 FE | #4 RE |
| Host | -0.013* | -0.014** | -0.001 | -0.000 |
| | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.010) |
| Success | -0.001 | -0.005 | 0.001 | -0.001 |
| | (0.006) | -0.005 | (0.009) | (0.009) |
| Confidence military | 0.004 | 0.108*** | 0.194*** | 0.210*** |
| | (0.026) | (0.020) | (0.038) | (0.034) |
| Per capita GDP | -0.068*** | -0.054*** | 0.028 | -0.020 |
| | (0.054) | (0.008) | (0.018) | (0.015) |
| Population | 0.007 | -0.010 | -0.080 | -0.004 |
| | (0.054) | (0.007) | (0.080) | (0.015) |
| Democracy | 0.002 | -0.001 | 0.003 | 0.001 |
| | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.003) | (0.003) |
| Conscription | 0.073*** | 0.087*** | -0.021 | -0.063** |
| | (0.019) | (0.015) | (0.028) | (0.025) |
| Intercept | 1.123 | 1.166*** | 3.111** | 2.384*** |
| | (0.878) | (0.146) | (1.285) | (0.299) |
| R^2 | 0.249 | 0.387 | 0.111 | 0.164 |
| N | 357 | 357 | 428 | 428 |
| Groups (nations) | 108 | 108 | 110 | 110 |

Note: Standard errors are shown in parentheses. Levels of statistical significance at *10%, **5%, ***1%. Per capita GDP and population are log-transformed.

Results from an in-depth look at the data

It is important to stress, though, that a more in-depth look at our data also reveals some evidence supporting the contrasting Culture Pattern Model (CPM) (Sipes, 1973). As mentioned earlier, this approach contends that individual aggressive conduct is, for the most part, learned behaviour, representing cultural characteristics that are eminently context-variant. Such a mechanism relates to the view that sport may instead promote the ‘bad’ version of nationalism.

Attempting to identify cases supporting the CPM approach, we found 11 countries in our sample that scored higher on *willingness to fight* in years where they enjoyed the effects of sporting success compared to less successful years. One example is Egypt. In 2008 and 2019, it reached 0.784 and 0.896, respectively, on *willingness to fight*, with its corresponding success scores being 1.5 and 1.0. This can be contrasted to 2013, when Egypt’s *willingness to fight* value was a mere 0.582, and its success in sport was negligible. As for hostship, Chile, Czechia, Ghana, and Germany, all experienced higher levels of *willingness to fight* following their hostship of major sporting events. This indicates that context and culture can matter even if the general pattern is weak or suggests the opposite causal direction.

From a broader perspective, the output from our models largely corresponds to the gist of the broader literature on the phenomenon of nationalism. Earlier, we highlighted that the concept is really plural. Nationalism can cause individual and state aggressiveness, but it can also lead to the opposite outcome. Alternatively, the relationship between sport/nationalism and individual or collective aggressiveness might be rather innocuous in most cases, which will necessarily lead to weak levels of significance in any broad statistical examination. Or it may simply be the case that the effects of the ‘negative’ cases identified above are largely cancelled out by ‘positive’ ones.

Conclusion, Implications and Future Research

Summary

This article aimed to gain a firmer understanding of the association between international sporting success and major event hostship, on the one hand, and citizens' willingness to fight for their country, on the other. We have taken a nuanced approach by including national pride as part of the question. Our results indicate that international sporting success is generally disconnected from *willingness to fight*, whereas hostship slightly impacts the main dependent variable. Importantly, our data reveal that nationalistic tendencies – i.e., the 'bad' version of nationalism – are not associated with sport. Thus, our results fail to confirm our hypothesis. Our findings could instead be interpreted as (weakly) consistent with the Drive Discharge Model (DDM) of social psychology scholarship (Hurcombe & Dine, 2023).

Beyond this statistical pattern, however, in some nations, *willingness to fight* does increase when a state is successful in sport, or when it hosts major sporting events. This indicates that cultural patterns and (national) context could have a significant role to play in these matters. Such nuanced findings connect well with key arguments from the broader literature on nationalism and international relations (Posen, 1993; van Evera, 1994), which posits that there is no straightforward relationship between nationalism and interstate conflict.

Limitations and future research perspectives

The results presented here point towards some promising future research avenues. First, it is important to understand that many factors can potentially affect our two dependent variables. Our models have aimed to include a set of appropriate covariates, even if we do not seek to claim that all potential aspects are covered. For example, aggressive neighbours who threaten others' national security could potentially affect willingness-to-fight levels (both at home and abroad) – beyond what *conscription* could account for. Further, and as mentioned

earlier, our econometric approach is not well-suited to considering inherently qualitative constructs. For example, contextual and cultural aspects are very difficult to quantify reasonably. This calls for supplementary analysis and alternative lenses, such as qualitative case studies, ethnographic research and historical analyses, to provide additional insights into the complex processes generating willingness to fight.

Second, and somewhat connected to this, future studies should dive more deeply into nations whose populations appear to be particularly affected by international sporting success or hostship. More detailed investigations into such an association, by way of case studies or small-*N* analyses, would constitute a potentially fruitful endeavour. This is especially so as such approaches could help us acquire a firmer understanding about the extent to which cultural context matters.

Third, effects on willingness to fight may also vary depending on the type of sport in question. Future research could, for example, single out more combative or inherently ‘aggressive’ sports, such as wrestling, boxing or shooting-based competitions, for closer scrutiny. Fourth and finally, future studies could expand the theory to better account for the nuances evidenced by the empirical models presented herein. Our results, it should be emphasised, indicate that there is no clear-cut answer to the question of *what kind of* nationalism sport enhances. Further and better theoretical considerations could help us understand this finding in more detail.

Following these avenues forms a future research agenda that would enhance our understanding of the relationship between sport and the question of war and peace, which this paper has aimed to test and open empirically.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Funding

The research presented here has not received any funding.

References

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.
- Ariely, G. (2020). How People View Patriotism: The Evidences from Cross-National Surveys. In M. Sardóc (Ed.), *Handbook of Patriotism* (pp. 633–650). Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-54484-7_55
- Ashton, J. K., Gerrard, B., & Hudson, R. (2003). Economic impact of national sporting success: Evidence from the London stock exchange. *Applied Economics Letters*, *10*(12), 783–785. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350485032000126712>
- Barro, R. J., & McCleary, R. M. (2003). Religion and economic growth across countries. *American Sociological Review*, *68*(5), 760–781. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1519761>
- Bertoli, A. D. (2017). Nationalism and conflict: Lessons from international sports. *International Studies Quarterly*, *61*(4), 835–849. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ISQ/SQX029>
- Cottam, M. L., & Cottam, R. W. (2000). Nationalism and Politics. In *Nationalism and Politics*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781626370067>
- Dennis, M., & Grix, J. (2012). *Sport Under Communism: Behind the East German "Miracle."* Palgrave Macmillan.
- D'Hoore, N., Helsen, K., & Scheerder, J. (2023). The elite breakaway sustains its lead on the peloton: social leverage, major sport events, and cultural decolonisation. *Leisure Studies*, *42*(6), 833–848. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2157466>
- Donnelly, P. (2011). From War Without Weapons to Sport for Development and Peace: The Janus-face of Sport. *SAIS Review of International Affairs*, *31*(1), 65–76. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sais.2011.0015>

- Druckman, D. (1994). Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective. *Mershon International Studies Review*, 38(1), 43.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/222610>
- Dunning, E. (2003). Violence and Sport. In W. Heitmeyer & J. Hagan (Eds.), *International handbook of violence research* (pp. 903–920). Springer.
- Elias, N., & Dunning, E. (1986). *Quest for excitement. Sport and leisure in the civilizing process*. Basil Blackwell.
- Elling, A., Hilvoorde, I. V., & Den Dool, V. R. (2014). Creating or awakening national pride through sporting success: A longitudinal study on macro effects in the Netherlands. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 49(2), 129–151.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690212455961>
- Evans, M. D. R., & Kelley, J. (2002). National pride in the developed world: survey data from 24 nations. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 14, 303–338.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/ijpor/14.3.303>
- Giulianotti, R. (2011). Sport, peacemaking and conflict resolution: a contextual analysis and modelling of the sport, development and peace sector. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34(2), 207–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2010.522245>
- Grix, J. (2013). Sport Politics and the Olympics. *Political Studies Review*, 11(1), 15–25.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1478-9302.12001>
- Gustavsson, G., & Stendahl, L. (2020). National identity, a blessing or a curse? The divergent links from national attachment, pride, and chauvinism to social and political trust. *European Political Science Review*, 12(4), 449–468.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773920000211>
- Haut, J., Grix, J., Brannagan, P. M., & Hilvoorde, I. van. (2017). International prestige through ‘sporting success’: an evaluation of the evidence. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 14(4), 311–326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16138171.2017.1421502>

- Henry, I., Dowling, M., Ko, L.-M., & Brown, P. (2020). Challenging the new orthodoxy: a critique of SPLISS and variable-oriented approaches to comparing sporting nations. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 20(4), 520–536.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2020.1719428>
- Herrmann, R. K., Isernia, P., & Segatti, P. (2009). Attachment to the Nation and International Relations: Dimensions of Identity and Their Relationship to War and Peace. *Political Psychology*, 30(5), 721–754. <https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1467-9221.2009.00723.X>
- Hurcombe, M. J., & Dine, P. (2023). *Introduction: Exploring the War-Peace-Sport Nexus*. 1–15. <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/en/publications/introduction-exploring-the-war-peace-sport-nexus>
- Jakobsen, J., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2011). Economic nationalism and FDI: The impact of public opinion on foreign direct investment in emerging markets, 1990-2005. *Society and Business Review*, 6(1), 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17465681111105841>
- Jakobsen, J., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2019). Tripwires and free-riders: Do forward-deployed U.S. troops reduce the willingness of host-country citizens to fight for their country? *Contemporary Security Policy*, 40(2), 135–164.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2018.1492066>
- Jakobsen, J., Jakobsen, T. G., & Ekevold, E. R. (2016). Democratic peace and the norms of the public: a multilevel analysis of the relationship between regime type and citizens' bellicosity, 1981–2008. *Review of International Studies*, 42(5), 968–991.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210516000097>
- Jakobsen, J., Solberg, H. A., Halvorsen, T., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2013). Fool's gold: major sport events and foreign direct investment. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 5(3), 363–380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2012.717099>

- Kavetsos, G. (2012a). National Pride: War Minus the Shooting. *Social Indicators Research*, 106(1), 173–185. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-011-9801-1>
- Kavetsos, G. (2012b). The Impact of the London Olympics Announcement on Property Prices. *Urban Studies*, 49(7), 1453–1470. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26150936>
- Kavetsos, G., & Szymanski, S. (2010). National well-being and international sports events. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 31(2), 158–171. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joep.2009.11.005>
- Keefer, R., Goldstein, J. H., & Kasiarz, D. (1983). Olympic Games Participation and Warfare. In *Sports Violence*. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-5530-7_11
- Ko, J. (2022). Not So Dangerous? Nationalism and Foreign Policy Preference. *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(3), 53. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ISQ/SQAC053>
- Kosterman, R., & Feshbach, S. (1989). Toward a Measure of Patriotic and Nationalistic Attitudes. *Political Psychology*, 10(2), 257. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3791647>
- Kunovich, R. M. (2009). The Sources and Consequences of National Identification. *American Sociological Review*, 74(4), 573–593. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240907400404>
- Lion, A., Vuillemin, A., Léon, F., Delagardelle, C., & van Hoye, A. (2022). Effect of Elite Sport on Physical Activity Practice in the General Population: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 20(1), 77–93. <https://doi.org/10.1123/JPAH.2022-0123>
- Matheson, V. A. (2006). Mega-events: the effect of the world's biggest sporting events on local, regional, and national economies. In *The Business of Sports* (Issue 1). <https://ideas.repec.org/p/spe/wpaper/0622.html>
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W. W. Norton & Company.

- Mehmetoglu, M., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2017). *Applied Statistics Using Stata: A Guide for the Social Sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Müller, M., Wolfe, S. D., Gogishvili, D., Gaffney, C., Hug, M., & Leick, A. (2022). The mega-events database: systematising the evidence on mega-event outcomes. *Leisure Studies*, 41(3), 437–445. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2021.1998835>
- Mylonas, H., & Kuo, K. (2017). Nationalism and Foreign Policy. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ACREFORE/9780190228637.013.452>
- Orwell, G. (1945, December 14). The Sporting Spirit. *Tribune*.
- Peeters, T., Matheson, V., & Szymanski, S. (2014). Tourism and the 2010 World Cup: Lessons for developing countries. *Journal of African Economies*, 23(2), 290–320. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jae/ejt031>
- Posen, B. R. (1993). Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power. *International Security*, 18(2), 80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539098>
- Powers, K. E. (2022). *Nationalisms in international politics*. Princeton University Press.
- Reynard, S. (2020). Sport as a Peacebuilding Tool? *Peace Review*, 32(4), 448–453. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2020.1921399>
- Schiller, K. (2015). Siegen für Deutschland? Patriotism, Nationalism and the German National Football Team, 1954-2014. *Historical Social Research*, 40(4), 176–196. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.40.2015.4.176-196>
- Seippel, Ø. (2017). Sports and Nationalism in a Globalized World. *International Journal of Sociology*, 47(1), 43–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00207659.2017.1264835>
- Sipes, R. G. (1973). War, Sports and Aggression: An Empirical Test of Two Rival Theories. In *New Series* (Vol. 75, Issue 1).
- Storm, R. K., & Denstadli, J. M. (2023). Mass Participation-Effects from Major Sporting Events: Establishing a Research Frontier. In H. A. Solberg, R. K. Storm, & K. Swart (Eds.), *Research Handbook of Major Sporting Events* (pp. 758–773). Edward Elgar

- Publishing. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366621926_Mass_Participation-Effects_from_Major_Sporting_Events_Establishing_a_Research_Frontier
- Storm, R. K., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2020). National pride, sporting success and event hosting: an analysis of intangible effects related to major athletic tournaments. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12(1), 163–178.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2019.1646303>
- Storm, R. K., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2024). Does international elite sporting success or hosting major events affect self-rated health? An examination of potential positive externalities related to international sporting tournaments. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 29(2), 187–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2021.2004914>
- Storm, R. K., Jakobsen, T. G., & Nielsen, C. G. (2020). The impact of Formula 1 on regional economies in Europe. *Regional Studies*, 54(6), 827–837.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2019.1648787>
- Storm, R. K., Nielsen, C. G., & Jakobsen, T. G. (2018). Can international elite sport success trickle down to mass sport participation? Evidence from Danish team handball. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 18(8), 1139–1150.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17461391.2018.1489000>
- van Evera, S. (1994). Hypotheses on Nationalism and War. *International Security*, 18(4), 5.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2539176>
- Viroli, M. (1997). For Love of Country: An Essay On Patriotism and Nationalism. In *For Love of Country*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/0198293585.001.0001>
- Wolfe, S. D. (2024). The juggernaut endures: protest, Potemkinism, and Olympic reform. *Leisure Studies*, 43(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2023.2195201>