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ABSTRACT

The correlation between sports and politics is a long and intriguing one. Human history, from antiquity, demonstrates that sport has always been exploited by the ruling elite to provide a utility 'beyond the game'. Sports has been a useful tool for promoting regional cooperation and integration. Sports diplomacy is a term used to refer to the efforts of the state that involve the use of sports to promote national interests. Kenya's foreign policy is anchored on five interlinked pillars; peace diplomacy, economic diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, environmental diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. The cultural diplomacy pillar seeks to promote the use of sports diplomacy by recognizing the role of sports personalities in promoting Kenya's national interest. This is a deliberate effort to use sports diplomacy in order to realize Kenya's foreign policy objectives. Kenya's foreign policy objectives include promotion of regional integration amongst others. This proposed study examined how Kenya uses sports to promote its regional cooperation and integration within East Africa. The study applied Liberalism Theory. The study employed mixed methods research design. Using Purposive and Snowball Sampling techniques, the study used interview method to collect primary data. Secondary data was also used. The data was then be sorted and analyzed to enable the researcher to make generalizations about correlations of the study variables. The study covered 2010-2019.

Key Words: EAC Regional School Games, EAC Regional Military Games, Regional Inter-Parliamentary Games, Regional Local Authority Games

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INTRODUCTION

The use of the power of attraction in international relations as a means to promote the values, identity, and culture of a nation is an example of sports diplomacy. This type of diplomacy is known as "sports diplomacy." Interaction, integration, social cohesiveness, and the participation in community-based initiatives are the means through which this type of relationship may be built amongst individuals. The process of building political, social, and economic relations is referred to as "sports diplomacy," and it encompasses sports, as well as state and non-state entities.

Athletes and politicians have had an interesting and long-lasting relationship. Murray(2018) argues that sports have always had a political purpose by providing benefits "beyond the game." This is supported by historical records. You may trace this behavior all the way to antiquity. In 776 BCE, as part of the celebrations honoring Zeus, the Ancient Olympiad took place in the Roman Empire. Over time, it evolved into a complex and famous athletic event. Emperor Theodosius I of Rome sought to eradicate Paganism and establish Christianity as the state religion, and in 394 CE he succeeded in doing so (Hugh, 1998). To guarantee the safety of everybody involved in the games, including athletes, spectators, and officials, the war between the several Greek city-states was finally put to a stop by the Olympic Truce. The term *ekecheria*, meaning "a staying of the hand" in Greek, protected visitors from other political systems from harm even when they traversed enemy territory. The Ancient Games also featured representatives from the concept of panhellenism. As with many other towns that were embroiled in political and military competition, Sparta, Argos, and Athens all had a passion for sports. To sum up, sports were being used for "more than the game" and had expanded beyond political arenas.

One definition of diplomacy put out by Morgenthau (1948) is the pursuit of national interests by states by peaceful means. Diplomacy, as stated by Barston (2013), is concerned with the manipulation of

relations between states and between governments and other entities. When seen through the prism of a state, diplomacy is all about providing guidance on, creating, and implementing foreign policy. So, it's the way countries define, organize, and achieve smaller or bigger goals through their official and other representatives and other actors. A variety of interrelated activities, including private conversations, lobbying, visits, threats, and correspondence, can be used to achieve these ends. A diplomat is a representative of the state who acts as an intermediary in diplomatic relations (Alder-Nissen, 2015). Foreign policy tools include diplomacy, economic incentives and sanctions, and the threat or use of force to restrain or punish (Holsti, 1967). Other tools comprise monetary incentives and punishments. Diplomacy, argues Morgenthau (1948), is a morally significant and (more crucially) force multiplier when used properly, making it an underappreciated instrument of foreign policy. Morgenthau believed that states could not advance their national interests within the framework of the international system without resorting to diplomacy in order to prevent conflict from breaking out. Diplomacy could not be as effective when it's only the state doing the talking. The authors argue that "diplomatic messages can be more or less effectively delivered, diplomatic conversations can be more or less effectively conducted, and diplomatic demarches can be more or less effectively undertaken." For a more realistic and successful method of public diplomacy, some states have looked to sports as an agent. Diplomacy in the realm of sports is what this is all about (Constantinou & Sharp, 2016).

The attention that live broadcasts receive from electronic media and social media helps sports to become more popular and draws in a larger audience, both locally and worldwide. Through the use of hashtags and trending topics, social media has helped boost the number of sports fans by capturing moments that may otherwise go unnoticed during a sports season or during a game.

Sunil Chhetri, a professional player in India, posted a video on Twitter in 2018 that quickly went viral. In the video, he begged football fans to attend the Intercontinental Cup matches in Mumbai by filling up the stadiums. Following that, thousands of supporters flocked to see India's game against Kenya, coming together to show their support for their national team by being present at the arena where the match was being played. It was reported by Twitter India (2018) that the video eventually became 2018's most retweeted tweet from India, which demonstrated how digital diplomacy and sports diplomacy were tied to one another.

Statement of the Problem

A nation's foreign policy should always revolve on advancing the nation's national interests. Economic, cultural, diaspora, environmental, and peace diplomacy are the five interrelated pillars upon which Kenya's diplomacy rests. Here are the five cornerstones of Kenya's foreign policy (Njoroge, Atieno & Nascimento, 2017). As a cultural diplomacy pillar, our goal is to promote sports diplomacy in Kenya by highlighting the value of sports stars in furthering the country's goals. There is an obvious effort to achieve Kenya's foreign policy objectives through sports diplomacy, and this is implied in the statements made. First, to promote regional integration and cooperation; second, to enhance regional and global peace and security; third, to advance economic prosperity in Kenya and for the people of Kenya; fourth, to project Kenya's image and prestige; and fifth, to promote international cooperation and multilateralism, as stated in the 2014 Kenya Foreign Policy documents (Adebajo, 2002).

Ever since it gained its independence, Kenya has been a country with a sports legacy that is unparalleled on a global scale and constantly ranks among the best in the world. Over the course of its history, Kenya has played host to a number of international sporting events and taken part in a large number of other global athletic extravaganzas. During these competitions, Kenya's athletes have played a significant part in enhancing

the country's reputation. In 2013, the Kenyan parliament passed the Kenya Sports Act, a piece of legislation that, among other things, is intended to infuse professionalism in the management of sports in Kenya. The legislation also creates a framework for facilitating and coordinating Kenya's participation in international sporting events and for promoting sports tourism in Kenya (Sports Act, 2013). In addition, the legislation is intended to infuse professionalism in the management of sports in Kenya. In addition, the law states in Article 4(k) that Kenya would use sports to foster a feeling of patriotism and national pride, as well as to raise awareness on issues that are of national importance. This is an indication that Kenya acknowledges the potential of sports as a powerful weapon for the advancement of national interests and as a means of engaging in international diplomacy.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine how Kenya uses sports to promote regional cooperation and integration in East Africa. The study was guided by the following question:

- In what ways is Kenya using sports to promote regional cooperation and integration in East Africa?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Liberalism Theory

The liberalist perspective of international relations may be traced back to the writings of thinkers like Immanuel Kant and John Locke. In the 1940s, liberalism arose as a theory of International Relations as a counter to the Realist concepts that international anarchy, national interest, and balance of power are the primary movers of state behavior within the international system (Murray & Pigman, 2014).

Njoroge et al. (2017) posit that liberalism was a reaction to the Realist notions of international anarchy, national interest, and balance of power.

This concept may be broken down into two categories: classical liberalism and neoliberalism, which are also sometimes referred to as liberal institutionalism and globalism. Liberals concur with realists that humans are motivated by their own self-interest, but they also claim that there are universal principles that make it feasible for humans to collaborate on a variety of issues. Realists and liberals agree that humans are motivated by their own self-interest. They do not regard the egocentric nature of human beings as something that would be an impediment to international collaboration, but rather as something that makes it feasible for governments to collaborate with one another. The need for people to work together compels governments, which are just one of many entities involved in international relations, to either found or become a part of international regimes or institutions that provide the standards and guidelines for working together internationally. Liberals believe that world peace can be achieved when there is respect for the uniqueness of each person, when there is freedom of movement across borders, and when there are no restrictions on the interchange of goods. These thinkers held the belief that there should be global institutions, such as the United Nations, that would foster positive ties among nations in order to foster better understanding and cooperation via working together.

Liberals often depict international relations as a vast, seemingly all-encompassing tent that encompasses not just states but also NGOs, international organizations, and the networks that link them (Viotti and Kauppi, 2012). The action of man, according to liberals, is motivated by reason, and as a result, he does not want to inflict damage on another person. As a result of this, liberals have strong convictions regarding the promotion of human rights and welfare. These liberals' values are in line with the aims of sports diplomacy, which include fostering trust, collaboration, multilateralism, and the development of a more peaceful world. These goals are supported by both

state and non-state actors. Because of their entangled ties that revolve around the economics, politics, and socio-cultural elements of life, the behaviors of states toward one another are shaped by the increased exchanges that occur between them (Murray, 2016).

As per Keohane's (2002) perspective, liberal thought emphasizes the importance of comprehending politics in order to create institutions that foster cooperation, welfare, and human rights. In addition, liberals have a firm faith in the historical practices of free markets. Simply expressed, liberals are those who subscribe to the ideals of free markets, which hold that prices on the market should be set by market forces with little to no involvement from the government. The liberal theoretical framework places a significant emphasis on public international law. When it comes to the utilization of international public assets, such as water bodies, there are rules that have been established by international regimes that serve as a guide for the behavior of nations.

The shared purpose of sports diplomacy and liberalism is to mediate peace via collaboration between or among nations while also campaigning for those states' respective national goals. This is where the two philosophies converge. The international organizations in charge of organizing athletic events across East Africa and the rest of the world have been the single most important factor in making this possible. For instance, CECAFA, FIFA, and the International Olympic Committee are some of the organizations that arrange larger athletic events that attract competitors from a variety of countries all over the world. In its most fundamental form, institutional liberalism serves as the theoretical foundation upon which the practice of sports diplomacy is built. Because of this, the theory is applicable to the research that is going to be done.

Empirical Literature Review

Sports as a contributor to Regional Cooperation and Integration

It has been shown that participation in sporting events may strengthen relationships between governments, as well as regional authorities and communities. It has been recognized as a useful instrument for bringing together members of different groups within society by capitalizing on and bolstering the commonalities that exist within these communities. The East African Community (EAC) believes that one of the ways in which people may be rallied for a common cause is via the cultivation of sports, talent, and investments in athletic facilities. As a result, the EAC is putting pressure on its member nations to do just that. The EAC youth policy (2013) states that youth may build their character and abilities via socializing and spending time productively in sports and leisure facilities. On the other hand, youth in East Africa face significant barriers to accessing these kinds of facilities when they do exist. This is evidence that the EAC views sports as a utility that goes beyond the games themselves and plays an important part in bringing people together as a society.

Regional School Games

Students from the same geographical area have been known to form excellent relationships with one another through the medium of competitive school sports. This is one of the measures that must be taken in order to achieve complete regional integration, the end objective of which is political federation. Games are held annually at East Africa's secondary schools, universities, and other higher institutions, and they attract participants from all across the area, which includes Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi. The following sports are some of the ones that are played: soccer, volleyball, basketball, handball, rugby, hockey, swimming, netball, athletics, and the racquet games (table tennis, lawn tennis, and badminton).

Arusha, Tanzania served as the venue for the 2019 East African Secondary Schools Games, which were

organized and run by the Federation of East Africa Secondary Schools Sports Association (FEASSSA). Since it first began, there have been a total of thirteen iterations of this tournament. According to Donnelly and Kidd (2007), the term “sports” means engaging in any form of physical activity that benefits one's bodily health, psychological wellbeing, and ability to interact with others. Included in this category are indigenous games and sports as well as recreational activities, organized or competitive sports, and play. This highlights the importance of athletics as an instrument of soft power that may bridge the gaps between individuals of various cultures, belief systems, and diverse upbringings so that they can work together toward a shared goal of unity that will strengthen their ability to work together.

Since the founding of the East African Community, there have been a total of six competitions of the East African Community's inter-university games. Participation in these types of tournaments is made possible by bringing together college students from all around the region. They participate in the same kinds of athletic activities as the students at the secondary school. These games offer a forum for the discussion of societal issues and a 360-degree look at every facet of human existence in this part of the world.

Regional Military Games

Since 2005, the militaries of the EAC member states participate in annual sports competition hosted by member states on a rotational basis in line with EAC Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation. These sporting events provide a common ground for the sharing of military intelligence, defense cooperation and exploiting new avenues for cooperation geared toward similar trainings for the joint security of the region. The thinking behind the EAC military games is grounded on the principle of collective security that is based on the understanding that members of a regional bloc are “brother's keepers” and need to closely cooperate in order to be able to defend one of their own from any form of threats. The most important goal of the

defense cooperation is to ensure that the military architecture of the member states are working closely to avert any possible threats in the security of the region.

The Armed Forces of the Partner States shall cooperate in visits, information and cultural exchanges, rifle ranges, and sports competitions to enhance cooperation and spirit of comradeship among the Armed Forces of the Partner States, as stated in Article 9(2) of the EAC Protocol on the Cooperation in defense Affairs.

The EAC member states' Cooperation in Defence Affairs is structured in a way that acknowledges the value of sports beyond only playing games and competing. According to Rwengabo (2017), the EAC's organizational logics serve as operational frameworks for regulating and standardizing actor behaviors, and the design of the organization suggests that member states of the EAC will codify international security cooperation in terms of decision-making rules and the enforceability of security-cooperation instruments. With an eye toward helping toward the EAC's future integration, the conduct of the military games is institutionalized (Sezibera, 2013).

Regional Inter-Parliamentary Games

Parliamentary diplomacy is one of the tools that the East African Community utilizes to further cooperation and integration. According to EAC (2015), "Parliaments in the region are to put aside their debating skills on the floor of the respective Houses, swapping such skills with sporting skills." The utilization of games as a means of cultivating ties amongst lawmakers has facilitated the development of parliamentary diplomacy both within and outside the area. Eleven times have taken place since it first started being hosted. By use of these, the lawmakers investigate the policy flaws that thwart integration and collaboration initiatives. Once more, the lawmakers investigate the legislative domains that, if improved, might result in improved international collaboration. These are performances that take place off of the playing grass itself.

Regional Local Authorities' Sports

Both state and non-state actors acknowledge the significance of sports diplomacy as a nonviolent instrument in the realm of international affairs. The aforementioned approach is employed to foster both domestic and international tranquility, facilitating the processes of nation-building, peace-building, and the establishment of trust and reconciliation inside and among nations. The Olympics serves as a prominent illustration of utilizing sports for diplomatic objectives. Its original intention was to function as a technique for nations to establish a temporary ceasefire, fostering international harmony and comprehension amidst periods characterized by conflict and warfare.

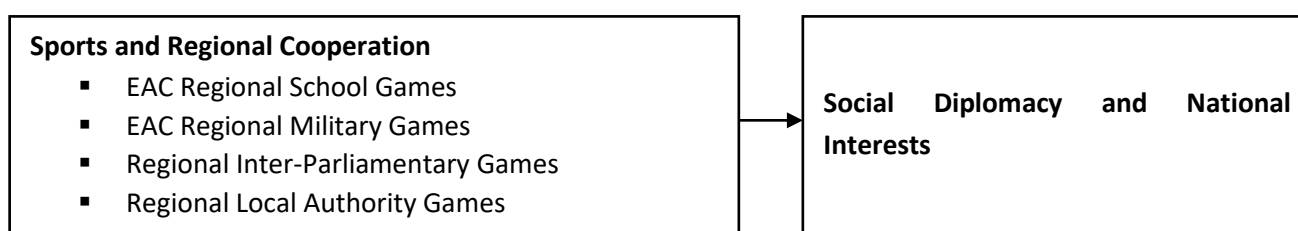
The Rugby World Cup was held in South Africa in 1995, following the dissolution of the Apartheid system. According to Gates and Nygård (2013), Nelson Mandela strategically utilized sporting events as a means to promote the unification of South Africa, specifically by transforming Rugby from a sport largely associated with the white population to a sport that encompassed individuals from all racial backgrounds. The games served as a significant milestone in South Africa's efforts towards societal unity and healing in the aftermath of the Apartheid era.

According to Gates and Nygård (2013), sports clubs employ sports events as a means to demonstrate their position against racism, prejudice, and intolerance within the realm of football. UEFA implements antiracism initiatives with the aim of exerting influence on the behaviors and perspectives of football enthusiasts, fostering harmonious attitudes towards individuals of many backgrounds. The matches held in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League have served as platforms for the dissemination of anti-racism messages. In the year 2009, prominent displays of the United Against Racism Logo were observed on large screens, accompanied by announcements broadcasted through public address systems throughout matches. Additionally, a 30-second video clip advocating against racism

was prominently showcased. Prominent footballers, including Cristiano Ronaldo, Arda Turan, Thomas Buffel, Fraser Forster, and Fernando Torres, actively participated in promoting a positive perception of the sport, thereby aligning themselves with the values and ideals that football embodies.

In the context of the reconciliation effort, Rwanda has employed athletics as a unifying mechanism subsequent to the genocide that occurred in 1994. According to The Commonwealth (2017), Rwanda has employed the sport of cricket as a means of fostering reconciliation in the aftermath of the genocide that occurred in 1994. The Gahanga Cricket Stadium, which is situated in proximity to the sites associated with the Rwandan genocide, holds the distinction of being the inaugural cricket stadium in Rwanda. The primary aim of the stadium is to enhance the sport of cricket and serve as a unifying element for the players who have been affected by the genocide, as stated by The Commonwealth (2017). Cricket serves as a means of fostering peace by bringing individuals together under the umbrella of sportsmanship. During the International Forum on Sport for Peace and Development held in New York in June 2013, former United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon emphasized the unique capacity of sports to contribute to peace and development goals, encompassing areas such as health, education, and

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

The research strategy that is being considered for this study is a mixed methodologies research design. Combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques, as in mixed methodologies

gender equality. The Forum concluded by proposing the establishment of an International Day of Sport, with the objective of integrating the role of sport in education, human development, promoting healthy lifestyles, and fostering global peace. The adoption of a resolution in August 2013 by the General Assembly, declaring 6th April as the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, can be considered a significant achievement.

The issue of security in the context of a host country's sporting event has been a significant obstacle to the practice of sports diplomacy. In light of the civil conflict that had transpired in Sri Lanka, Australia and India declined to participate in the 1996 World Cup, citing concerns regarding the safety and security of their players. In the context of the 2003 World Cup, it is noteworthy that the British cricket team declined to compete against Zimbabwe. This decision was primarily motivated by the intensification of the political turmoil within Zimbabwe during that period. In 2003, the New Zealand Cricket Board made the decision to withdraw from a cricket match in Kenya's capital city, Nairobi, as a precautionary measure against a potential terrorist attack. This action was taken with the primary objective of ensuring the safety and well-being of the players, placing it as a higher priority than the scheduled game.

research, aims to bolster the findings of a study and add to the existing body of knowledge. For this study, mixed methods were more appropriate in offering the researcher an opportunity to draw generalizations from the trends and infer meanings

which can be falsified through proven scientific methodologies. Given that the proposed research topic falls within the discipline of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), the study adopted a case study approach by focusing on Kenya. The findings of the study can be generalized to other states. The target population was drawn from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of East African Community and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Trade, County Assemblies' Forum (CAF), Ministry of Defense, Parliamentary Committee of Defense and Foreign Relations and Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB). The composition of this study population was informed by the fact that it is these departments that are primarily involved in driving Kenya's international sporting events.

The study drew its sample from officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Ministry of Sports, Ministry of East African Community and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Trade, County Assemblies' Forum (CAF), Ministry of Defence, Parliamentary Committee of Defense and Foreign Relations and Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB). The composition of this study population was informed by the fact that it is these departments that are primarily involved in driving Kenya's international sporting events. The sample also included respondents with specialized knowledge on sports diplomacy and foreign policy issues.

The study used both primary and secondary data. To collect primary data, the study employed semi-structured interviews [Interview Guide attached in appendix I] to gather information on how Kenya uses Sports Diplomacy to promote its national interests in the East African region. The interviews were conducted on face-to-face meetings and also through online video communication platform.

To collect secondary data, document analysis technique will be used to collect data on foreign policy, sports policy documents, memoranda of understanding (MoUs), treaties, protocols, memoirs of leaders, speeches during diplomatic gatherings

and records from key meetings, press releases, document from embassies, newspaper articles, peer reviewed journals conference reports, position papers and internet sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sports National Interest

The idea of national interest started gaining prominence in the 17th and 18 century in Italy and England when the use of 'reasons of the state', 'dynastic interests' and 'will of the sovereign' started losing their efficacy and there was need to turn to terms that reflected the changing dynamics of political diplomacy (Burchill, 2005). These are the set priorities of a state that are to be pursued while in continuous interaction with other states in the international system. These goals are always consistent, it is the order of priority that change depending on the prevailing circumstances. Hans Morgenthau described national interest as "the survival-the protection of physical, political and cultural identity against encroachments by other nation-states." (Morgenthau, 1952).

In efforts to augment the official efforts of diplomacy by the state bureaucrats, states often resort to the use of sports to bolster their relations. Sports has therefore provided many governments with the needed contacts for the purposes of relations with low-costs while proving a high profile resource for publicizing their policies on international issues or even toward specific state entities (Houlihan, 2000). This view further adds weight to the use of sports diplomacy as an essential tool for the pursuit of national interest goals.

Sports as an Enhancer of Regional Cooperation and Integration in E.A

This study established that Kenya has often engaged in sporting activities to improve her relations with her neighbours while championing for her regional objectives. In agreement with the objectives of this study, it is established that there exists a strong link between sports and integration efforts within the region of East Africa.

Since the revamp of the East African Community, the region has witnessed renewed efforts, the process of integration has been fast-tracked from different facets to attain the goals of integration. Some of the games played are football, volleyball, netball, handball, swimming, athletics, hockey, rugby and the racquet games. The participants of these games vary depending on the institution from which they come. There are regional school ball games, inter-parliamentary games, military games and the local authorities' ball games.

These school ball games have brought together many learners who participate in these games. These learners are drawn from secondary schools and universities. The secondary schools edition has been held thirteen times since its inception while the universities edition has been held six times. These games do more than just the recreational bit of it. It serves the purpose of providing a platform for exchange of ideas through conversations and discourses. The people are brought together through the commonality of the language of communication which is Kiswahili, common interests, beliefs and even values. Governments use sports to show how individuals from different countries can come together over a shared love of athletics, even if they may be politically distant (Jackson & Haigh, 2008).

According to one responder, "Sports diplomacy is a powerful tool for reaching individuals from every corner of the globe for it transcends borders, increases dialogues and exposes the participants to diverse cultures." This viewpoint is further supported by the study. Even outside of formal diplomatic channels, people can find common ground via shared beliefs, hobbies, and athletic pursuits. In the long run, the ties between governments may be influenced, shaped, and informed by the bonds that people make via sports.

This view is hinged on the belief that it is possible for a people to be united by their commonalities and ideals other than to be divided by their differences. This is a manifestation that states could profess different political beliefs and systems but

the common human bond that brings them together.

The military games have been in play since 2005 on a rotational basis of hosting. The East African Community military games and cultural event is organized within the Framework for Cooperation in Defense in accordance with Article 125 of the Treaty and Article 2 of the Protocol on Cooperation in Defense Affairs. These games bring together the participating military personnel. This study established that these games provide the ground on which the personnel explore ways of collaboration like joint training, joint defense pacts, sharing of military intelligence, harmonizing the courses administered at the military colleges and even the exchange visits amongst them. A respondent added that, "Exploring means of cooperation would only mean that, these nations are harmonizing their security architecture to have a single common unit of defense as a region as the states fasten their efforts toward a political federation."

This points toward the fact that Kenya is fully committed to make her borders secure and safe through her defense engagements with states within the East African Community. These engagements and familiarization is necessitated by the participation in the sports event organized by the Defense ministries of the component states of the East African Community. In 2019, the 12th edition of the regional military games were held in Kenya at the Kasarani Sports Centre. During the closing ceremony, President Uhuru Kenyatta emphasized the "importance of the games in re-engaging Kenya in the region. In keeping with our goals of fostering regional brotherhood and sisterhood, it has contributed to the expansion and development of collaboration among partner states. For this reason, I want to express my gratitude to our brave troops for defending our nation and its citizens. Both individually and collectively, you enrich your own countries and the world at large. To guarantee the success of regional efforts towards universal peace, I urge our defense

forces to continue in the spirit of solidarity and partnership. I also urge the governments of the East African Community to support all measures that are designed to establish and strengthen the bonds of friendship among the defense forces of partner states.”

This is a clear demonstration of the use of sports as an avenue for rooting for Kenya’s goals of partnerships and cooperation, peaceful and harmonious coexistence through the use of sports as an engine. The defense cooperation partnerships helps Kenya deal with security threats that might originate from the region. This view is in tandem with every states primary goal of ensuring her survival by acquiring the necessary military and defense capabilities to protect her territorial borders in case of any attacks.

Houses of Parliament are key drivers of a country’s domestic and foreign agenda. The parliaments of the states constituting the East African Community usually participate in games. The 10th edition of the regional inter-parliamentary games were held in 2019 with Uganda as the host state. Before the commencement of these games, there are conference organized to do a postmortem on the successes achieved toward the goal of attaining integration and multilateralism. This view is further supported by a respondent whom we interviewed on phone, he noted that, “there was a pre-tournament conference with all the participating parliamentarians which basically assessed the achievements of the EAC and explore on more ways of enhancing cooperation to steer the goal of integration. The leaders maximize on this opportunity to further build the blocks of the EAC which is part of our foreign policy objectives as a country.”

This is a clear indication that sports diplomacy provides an avenue through which Kenya can advance her national interface away from the conventional channels of diplomacy. Sports is a captivating and universally enjoyed phenomenon that transcends all barriers. It is a leisure activity that people from diverse backgrounds engage with,

whether as spectators, participants, or enthusiasts, at various levels of expertise (Darnell, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The practice of employing sports, athletes, and sporting events in order to advance the goals of a country's foreign policy is known as "sports diplomacy." The fundamental purpose of this study project was to carry out an investigation on the part that sports diplomacy plays in furthering Kenya’s national goals and objectives within the East African region. The research established how sports diplomacy promotes regional integration and cooperation.

Kenya's diplomatic efforts in its bilateral and multilateral engagements include the use of sports as a diplomatic weapon. These efforts utilize state and non-state actors to represent the state in these connections, and one of these actors is Kenya's national soccer team. These engagements include the investigation of various strategies that investigate the role that sports diplomacy plays in the promotion of Kenya's foreign policy goals such as national branding, multilateralism, soft power, international relations, investments, sports tourism, development projects, co-existence, interaction with neighbors, and integration.

Kenya has a history of using sports diplomacy to further its foreign policy objectives, such as increasing economic prosperity for the Kenyan people, improving the country's political image, and fostering harmonious relations with its neighbors. The cultural diplomacy component of Kenya's foreign policy lends credence to this viewpoint. In spite of Kenya's successes in sports and sports exchanges, which form the foundation of sports diplomacy, there remains a vast amount of unrealized potential in the country's Ministry of Sports, Culture and Heritage, Kenya's sports federations, Kenya's sportspeople, and Kenya's sporting events. All of these areas need to improve in order to realize this potential.

The study recommended that the government of Kenya needs to honor all of Kenya's athletes,

whether they are currently competing or have already retired. These athletes are a benefit to Kenya since they promote the country's brand outside. Their participation in international sporting events serves as a representation of Kenya's culture, beliefs, and values, making it an asset to the nation's branding and rebranding efforts. Athletes' participation is necessary for the use of sports as a diplomatic instrument. As a result of the

positive impact that successful athletes have on the public's perception of a nation, all athletes have an obligation to be instilled with a passion for their sport and to have the sense that they are supported by the people, the government, and the organizations of their home countries in order to foster improved athletic ability and to keep athletes in their home nations.

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