

Article type:  
Original Research



# Identification and Prioritization of Effective Sports Policies for National Security Development: A Mixed-Methods Policy Framework

Mehdi. Yari<sup>1</sup>, Majid. Khorvash<sup>2\*</sup>, Elham. Moshkelgosha<sup>3</sup>

- 1 Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Mo.C., Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran
- 2 Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Na.C., Islamic Azad University, Najafabad, Iran
- 3 Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Mo.C., Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Iran

Corresponding author email address: m.khorvash@iau.ac.ir

## How to cite this article:

Yari, M., Khorvash, M., & Moshkelgosha, E. (2026). Identification and Prioritization of Effective Sports Policies for National Security Development: A Mixed-Methods Policy Framework. *Foresight and Health Governance*, 3(1), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.61838/fhfg.46>



© 2026 the authors. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify and prioritize sports policies that contribute to national security development. Using a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, the research integrated constructivist grounded theory with the TOPSIS multi-criteria decision-making technique. In the qualitative phase, 16 experts from sport governance, national security institutions, and academia were selected through purposive and snowball sampling. Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using focused coding, leading to the identification of 32 policy actions grouped into eight strategic themes: roadmap design, inter-sectoral coordination, infrastructure development, support for specific groups, international engagement, alliance-building, sport promotion, and cultural development and support. In the quantitative phase, these policies were prioritized through TOPSIS based on expert weighting. Results indicated that “improving the country’s international image” ranked first, followed by “strategic policymaking and training,” and “strengthening diplomatic relations.” Findings highlight that soft power-oriented and sport diplomacy-based policies exert the greatest perceived impact on national security. The study provides a structured decision-making framework enabling policymakers to allocate resources more strategically. By moving beyond descriptive analysis of sport-security relationships, this research contributes a prescriptive and operational roadmap for leveraging sport as an instrument of national resilience and geopolitical positioning.

**Keywords:** National Security; Sport Diplomacy; Soft Power; Public Policy; TOPSIS; Strategic Governance

## Introduction

The concept of national security has undergone a profound transformation in contemporary international relations. Traditionally framed in military and territorial terms, national security was historically associated with defense capabilities, sovereignty protection, and deterrence strategies. However, since the late twentieth century, scholars have emphasized the expansion of security beyond purely military dimensions toward a multidimensional framework incorporating economic resilience, social cohesion, political legitimacy, environmental sustainability, and human wellbeing (Buzan et al., 1998; Paris, 2001). This broader understanding has been further institutionalized in global policy discourse through the human security paradigm, which reframes security as protection from chronic threats and sudden disruptions to everyday life (United

[Nations Development, 2022](#)). Within this expanded paradigm, national power is no longer defined solely by coercive capacity but also by influence, attraction, and legitimacy.

In this context, soft power has emerged as a central pillar of national strength. Nye (2004, 2023) conceptualizes soft power as the ability of a country to shape the preferences of others through attraction rather than coercion or payment (Nye, 2004, 2023). Cultural appeal, political values, and foreign policy credibility constitute its primary sources. In an era characterized by globalization, digital communication, and symbolic politics, states increasingly compete not only for military dominance but also for narrative legitimacy and global reputation. Consequently, instruments capable of generating positive international perceptions have gained strategic importance.

Sport occupies a distinctive position within the architecture of soft power. As a globally intelligible cultural practice, sport transcends linguistic, ideological, and geopolitical divides. It operates simultaneously at domestic and international levels, influencing identity formation, collective emotions, diplomatic interaction, and global reputation. Research on sport mega-events demonstrates how states employ sporting spectacles to project influence and reshape international narratives (Grix & Brannagan, 2016, 2024). Such events function not merely as entertainment platforms but as strategic diplomatic instruments that enhance visibility, signal modernity, and consolidate geopolitical positioning. Lee and Krieger (2024) further argue that sport diplomacy has evolved into a structured component of foreign policy, enabling informal dialogue channels, trust-building, and symbolic cooperation in otherwise tense political environments (Lee & Krieger, 2024).

At the domestic level, sport contributes significantly to social cohesion and collective identity. Sporting achievements often generate shared emotional experiences that reinforce national belonging and unity. Moustakas (2024) conceptualizes sport as a mechanism for fostering social cohesion through ritualized collective participation (Moustakas, 2024). Similarly, psychological research indicates that engagement with sport—whether through participation or spectatorship—enhances wellbeing, strengthens social bonds, and promotes emotional solidarity (Guo et al., 2024). Youth development frameworks also highlight sport's role in cultivating civic values, leadership competencies, and pro-social behaviors (Camiré et al., 2023). These domestic effects intersect directly with internal dimensions of national security, particularly social stability, resilience, and national unity.

Historically, sport has demonstrated tangible diplomatic effects. The U.S.–China “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” of the 1970s illustrates how sporting exchanges can reduce geopolitical tensions and reopen communication channels between rival states (Millwood, 2022). More recently, host nations of major sporting events have leveraged competitions as platforms for public diplomacy and international branding. Although the strategic effectiveness of such initiatives is debated, empirical studies confirm that governments deliberately integrate sport into foreign policy agendas (Grix & Brannagan, 2016).

Beyond diplomacy and cohesion, sport is embedded within broader security discourses. Turner and Lee Ludvigsen (2024) analyze stadium safety as a political arena in which security practices reflect societal power dynamics (Lee & Krieger, 2024). Steele and Subotic (2024) explore the concept of ontological security, demonstrating how athletes and national icons serve as stabilizing symbols of collective identity (Steele & Subotic, 2024). Menaker et al. (2024) argue for community-based approaches to sport event security, while Vainio et al. (2024) investigate public perceptions of safety in mass urban sporting events (Menaker et al., 2024; Vainio et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies indicate that sport intersects with security at physical, psychological, symbolic, and political levels.

Despite this growing body of literature, existing scholarship remains largely descriptive. Most studies examine how sport influences security-related dimensions such as image, identity, diplomacy, or safety—without providing structured frameworks for policy prioritization. Policymakers frequently confront a broad array of potential sport interventions, ranging from infrastructure development and grassroots participation to mega-event hosting and diplomatic engagement. However, in contexts of limited financial and institutional resources, implementing all potential initiatives simultaneously is neither feasible nor efficient.

Strategic governance therefore requires not only identifying relevant sport policies but also ranking them according to their potential contribution to national security objectives. Multi-criteria decision-making approaches offer analytical tools for structuring expert judgment and deriving consensus-based priorities (Behzadian et al., 2012; Hwang & Yoon, 1981). By

integrating qualitative policy identification with quantitative prioritization techniques, research can move beyond conceptual discussions and offer operational guidance.

Accordingly, the present study addresses a critical gap in the sport-security literature by transitioning from descriptive analysis to prescriptive policy prioritization. Specifically, it aims to (1) identify sports policies perceived by experts as influential in national security development, (2) categorize these policies into strategic themes, and (3) prioritize them using a structured multi-criteria decision-making framework. By doing so, this research contributes a practical roadmap for leveraging sport as a strategic instrument within the broader architecture of national security.

## Methodology

This study was grounded in a social constructivist paradigm and employed an applied, cross-sectional design. A sequential exploratory mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) was adopted to first identify relevant policy dimensions and subsequently prioritize them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In the qualitative phase, a constructivist grounded theory approach was utilized to generate policy categories through iterative data analysis (Charmaz, 2014). In the quantitative phase, a multi-criteria decision-making framework based on the Technique for Order Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) was implemented to rank identified policies (Behzadian et al., 2012; Hwang & Yoon, 1981). Participants consisted of 16 experts in sport policymaking and national security, including senior sport administrators, national security specialists, parliamentary members, and academic scholars. Purposive sampling was initially employed, followed by snowball sampling to identify additional qualified participants. Inclusion criteria required a doctoral degree, at least ten years of professional experience, and demonstrable expertise in sport governance or security policy. The qualitative sample size was determined based on theoretical saturation, achieved after 16 in-depth interviews when no new conceptual categories emerged (Guest et al., 2006).

Data collection in the qualitative phase involved semi-structured interviews guided by an interview protocol designed to elicit expert perspectives on sport policies affecting national security. In the quantitative phase, a TOPSIS decision matrix questionnaire was developed based on qualitative findings. Experts assigned weights to criteria and evaluated policy alternatives on a 1–10 scale.

Trustworthiness of qualitative findings was ensured using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Quantitative reliability was strengthened through aggregation of expert judgments using geometric mean calculations. TOPSIS procedures included normalization, weighted matrix construction, identification of ideal solutions, distance computation, and relative closeness index calculation to derive final policy rankings.

## Findings and Results

### *Expert Panel Characteristics*

A total of 16 experts participated in both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the study. The panel consisted of 14 males and 2 females. All participants held doctoral degrees and had substantial professional experience, with an average of approximately 24 years (see table 1). The expert group was purposefully selected to ensure comprehensive representation from three key domains relevant to the research objective: (1) sport policymaking (including senior federation presidents, Ministry of Sport officials, and members of the National Olympic Committee), (2) national security (including members of the Parliamentary National Security Commission and national security specialists), and (3) academia (university faculty members with relevant scholarly backgrounds).

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 16)**

No.	Gender	Age	Degree	Years of Experience	Professional Field
1	Male	47	PhD	25	Wrestling Federation President
2	Male	54	PhD	22	University Faculty
3	Male	43	PhD	20	Physical Education Management
4	Female	52	PhD	15	Member of Parliament
5	Male	52	PhD	27	National Security Commission
6	Male	57	PhD	31	University Faculty
7	Male	48	PhD	27	National Security Commission
8	Male	45	PhD	17	Diplomacy Expert
9	Male	51	PhD	12	National Security Expert
10	Male	55	PhD	22	Ministry of Sport Legal Deputy
11	Male	51	PhD	22	University Faculty
12	Male	53	PhD	28	National Olympic Committee
13	Male	55	PhD	29	National Security Expert
14	Female	48	PhD	18	University Faculty
15	Male	61	PhD	31	University Faculty
16	Male	55	PhD	29	National Security Expert

### *Qualitative Findings: Identification of Policy Criteria*

Qualitative data were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory. Through initial coding (identification of primary concepts) and focused coding (categorization into higher-order themes), eight major policy criteria were identified. These criteria constituted the macro-level strategic dimensions of sport policymaking related to national security. The eight criteria were:

1. Strategic Roadmap Design
2. Inter-Institutional Coordination
3. Sport Infrastructure Development
4. Support for Specific Groups in Sport
5. Expansion of International Engagement
6. Alliance Building
7. Sport Promotion
8. Cultural Development and Support

A total of 32 sub-policies were categorized under these eight major themes (see table 2).

**Table 2. Sport Policies Influencing National Security Development**

Major Criterion	Sub-Policy	Interview Codes
Strategic Roadmap Design	Development of National Sport & Security Document	P2, P6
	Effective Policymaking and Education	P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P10, P12
	Governmental Support for Sport	P10, P12
	Identifying and Prioritizing Sport Opportunities	P3, P4, P9, P15
	Establishing Performance Monitoring Indicators	P6, P13, P14, P16
Inter-Institutional Coordination	Joint Sport-Security Committee	P1, P5, P6
	Executive Cooperation Protocols	P3, P5, P7, P11
	Comprehensive Sport Crisis Management System	P11
Sport Infrastructure Development	Budget Allocation for Facilities	P2, P4, P5, P6, P8, P10
	Rural Sport Facility Expansion	P4, P6, P10
	Access Programs for Vulnerable Groups	P2, P8, P13, P14
Support for Specific Groups	Sport Scholarships for Talented Youth	P9
	Development of Women's and Inclusive Sport	P4, P7, P16
Expansion of International Engagement	Presence in International Sport Organizations	P1, P4, P6, P10, P14
	Diplomatic Relations Strengthening	P1, P4, P7, P8, P13
	Hosting International Competitions	P7, P10
	Regional Friendly Matches	P2, P4, P11, P12
	National Brand Promotion via Sport	P6, P7, P8, P10
	Cultural Sport Exchanges	P3, P6
	Improving National Image	P3, P6, P10, P12, P13, P14, P15

Alliance Building	Athletes as Cultural Ambassadors	P6, P13
	Bilateral Agreements	P2, P6, P7
	Regional Networks to Reduce Dependency	P1, P7, P11, P13, P16
	Utilization of Traditional Sports	P7
Sport Promotion	Broad Media Coverage	P2, P4, P6, P14
	Political and Celebrity Visibility	P6, P10
	Showcasing Sporting Success Stories	P2, P4, P5, P9, P11, P16
	Encouraging Public Participation	P2, P3, P10
Cultural Development & Support	Public Awareness of Sport's Security Role	P1, P2, P3, P4, P9, P10, P12
	Promoting Patriotism	P5, P6, P7, P15
	Supporting National Teams	P2, P3, P5, P7
	Supporting Traditional Sports	P3

### Quantitative Phase: TOPSIS Prioritization

Based on qualitative results, an 8-criterion decision matrix was constructed with 32 policy alternatives. Each policy's score corresponded to its frequency of reference within interviews under its assigned criterion. Vector normalization (R) was performed by dividing each score by the column sum. Criteria weights were calculated based on total frequency of sub-policy references and normalized (see table 3).

**Table 3. Criteria Weights**

Criterion	Weight
Expansion of International Engagement	0.2696
Strategic Roadmap Design	0.1652
Cultural Development & Support	0.1391
Sport Promotion	0.1304
Infrastructure Development	0.1130
Alliance Building	0.0783
Inter-Institutional Coordination	0.0696
Support for Specific Groups	0.0348

Positive and negative ideal solutions were identified for each criterion. Euclidean distances ( $S^+$  and  $S^-$ ) were calculated, followed by computation of the relative closeness coefficient ( $C_i$ ).

As shown in table 4, The final TOPSIS ranking of all 32 policies was derived using the same procedure. The highest-ranked policy was Improving National Image, followed by Effective Policymaking and Education, and two additional policies under Expansion of International Engagement.

**Table 4. Top 10 Policies Ranked by Relative Closeness ( $C_i$ )**

Rank	Policy	Criterion	$S^+$	$S^-$
1	Improving National Image	International Engagement	0.2280	0.1578
2	Effective Policymaking and Education	Strategic Roadmap	0.2487	0.1226
3	Strengthening Diplomatic Relations	International Engagement	0.2325	0.1127
4	Increasing Presence in International Bodies	International Engagement	0.2325	0.1126
5	Raising Public Awareness	Cultural Development	0.2556	0.1076
6	Hosting Regional Friendly Competitions	International Engagement	0.2379	0.0902
7	National Brand Promotion	International Engagement	0.2379	0.0901
8	Showcasing Sporting Success	Sport Promotion	0.2598	0.0971
9	Budget Allocation for Facilities	Infrastructure Development	0.2634	0.0868
10	Performance Monitoring Indicators	Strategic Roadmap	0.2541	0.0701

### Discussion and Conclusion

The present study sought to move beyond descriptive analyses of sport–security relationships by identifying and prioritizing sports policies perceived to contribute to national security development. By integrating constructivist grounded theory with a structured multi-criteria decision-making framework (TOPSIS), the findings provide empirical support for a strategic reorientation of sport policy toward soft power and diplomatic leverage. The most salient result of the study is the

dominant positioning of international engagement-oriented policies within the final ranking. “Improving national image” emerged as the highest-priority policy, followed by “strengthening diplomatic relations” and “increasing presence in international sport organizations.” Moreover, the criterion “Expansion of International Engagement” received the highest normalized weight (0.2696), substantially exceeding other dimensions. These findings align closely with Nye’s (2004, 2023) conceptualization of soft power, which emphasizes attraction, credibility, and global perception as central components of contemporary national influence (Nye, 2004, 2023). The expert panel’s prioritization suggests that sport is perceived not merely as a domestic development tool but as a strategic diplomatic asset capable of enhancing international legitimacy and geopolitical positioning. This emphasis corroborates research on sport diplomacy and mega-events. Grix and Brannagan (2016, 2024) argue that states increasingly instrumentalize sport to shape international narratives and consolidate foreign policy objectives (Grix & Brannagan, 2016, 2024). Similarly, Lee and Krieger (2024) highlight the institutionalization of sport diplomacy as a formal component of global politics (Lee & Krieger, 2024). The prominence of policies such as brand promotion, friendly regional competitions, and athlete ambassadorship reflects a recognition that symbolic representation and narrative construction can influence global standing in ways that complement traditional security mechanisms. The findings therefore reinforce the argument that national security in the twenty-first century extends beyond coercive capacity toward reputational and relational capital. The second-ranked policy, “Effective Policymaking and Education,” underscores the importance of internal strategic coherence. While soft power initiatives dominate the upper tier of priorities, experts simultaneously emphasized the need for structured roadmap design and institutionalized policy frameworks. This dual emphasis suggests that external projection must be grounded in domestic governance capacity. The identification of “performance monitoring indicators” within the top ten further reinforces the necessity of measurable, accountable governance structures. Such findings resonate with the multidimensional conception of security articulated by Buzan et al. (1998) and Paris (2001), where internal resilience and institutional legitimacy are integral to broader national stability (Buzan et al., 1998; Paris, 2001).

Interestingly, although infrastructure development ranked below international engagement in overall weight, “budget allocation for facilities” still appeared within the top ten policies. This indicates that material capacity remains a foundational prerequisite for diplomatic and promotional initiatives. Without adequate infrastructure, neither elite performance nor event hosting can effectively support international visibility. Thus, the results suggest a layered model of sport–security interaction: infrastructure enables performance; performance enables symbolic capital; symbolic capital enhances national image and diplomatic leverage. The positioning of “Raising Public Awareness” and “Showcasing Sporting Success” within the top ranks also reflects sport’s domestic security dimension. Moustakas (2024) conceptualizes sport as a mechanism for fostering social cohesion, while Guo et al. (2024) demonstrate its contribution to psychological wellbeing and collective solidarity (Guo et al., 2024; Moustakas, 2024). By prioritizing public awareness and emotional engagement, experts implicitly acknowledged sport’s capacity to strengthen internal unity and resilience. These domestic effects align with the human security paradigm articulated by the United Nations Development Programme (2022), where social cohesion and national identity contribute to long-term stability.

The relatively lower weight assigned to “Support for Specific Groups” (0.0348) warrants reflection. Although youth development and inclusive sport are widely recognized as contributors to long-term social stability (Camiré et al., 2023), experts perceived them as less directly linked to immediate national security outcomes compared to diplomatic or reputational initiatives. This may reflect a strategic bias toward externally visible policies in contexts where geopolitical pressures elevate the importance of international image. However, it also suggests a potential underestimation of grassroots sport’s long-term preventive function in mitigating social fragmentation and internal instability. From a governance perspective, the study demonstrates the value of integrating qualitative policy identification with quantitative prioritization tools. The application of TOPSIS provided a transparent mechanism for converting expert judgment into structured rankings, thereby enhancing decision-making clarity in resource-constrained environments. As Behzadian et al. (2012) note, multi-criteria decision-making techniques are particularly useful when policy alternatives must be evaluated

across heterogeneous dimensions (Behzadian et al., 2012). By combining grounded theory with weighted prioritization, the present study offers a replicable framework adaptable to other national contexts.

Several implications emerge for policymakers. First, sport diplomacy initiatives should be embedded within formal foreign policy strategies rather than treated as peripheral cultural activities. Second, reputational enhancement must be supported by credible governance structures and measurable performance systems. Third, investments in infrastructure and grassroots development should be framed as enabling conditions for broader strategic objectives. Finally, public communication strategies highlighting sport's role in national resilience may amplify both domestic cohesion and international credibility. Notwithstanding its contributions, the study has limitations. The expert panel, although composed of highly experienced individuals, was limited to 16 participants within a single national context. Broader cross-national comparative studies could reveal variations in policy prioritization based on geopolitical positioning or economic capacity. Additionally, while the study captures perceived policy impact, it does not empirically measure actual security outcomes. Future research may integrate longitudinal performance indicators or comparative case analyses to assess policy effectiveness over time.

In conclusion, the findings substantiate the theoretical transition from traditional security paradigms toward a multidimensional framework in which sport functions as a strategic instrument of soft power, diplomatic engagement, and social cohesion. By identifying and prioritizing effective policies, this study contributes a prescriptive roadmap that operationalizes sport within the architecture of national security governance.

### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their appreciation to all experts and policymakers who generously shared their time and insights during the interview and evaluation phases of this study. Their expertise significantly contributed to the development and prioritization of the policy framework.

### Declaration

No generative artificial intelligence tools were used in the data collection, data analysis, or interpretation of findings. AI-assisted language editing tools were used solely for improving clarity and grammar of the manuscript, without influencing the scientific content, analytical decisions, or conclusions. The authors take full responsibility for the integrity and originality of the work.

### Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization: M.Y., M.K.; Methodology: M.Y., M.K.; Data Collection: M.Y.; Formal Analysis: M.Y.; Validation and Supervision: M.K.; Writing – Original Draft: M.Y.; Writing, Review & Editing: M.K., E.M. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

### Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

### Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants in the study.

## Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

## Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

## References

- Behzadian, M., Khanmohammadi Otagh Sara, S., Yazdani, M., & Ignatius, J. (2012). A state-of-the-art survey of TOPSIS applications. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 39(17), 13051-13069. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2012.05.056>
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Camiré, M., Santos, F., Newman, T., Vella, S., MacDonald, D. J., Milistedt, M., & Strachan, L. (2023). Positive youth development as a guiding framework in sport research. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 69, 102505. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2023.102505>
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory (2nd ed.)*. Sage.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research (3rd ed.)*. Sage.
- Grix, J., & Brannagan, P. M. (2016). Of mechanisms and myths: Conceptualising states' "soft power" strategies through sports mega-events. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 27(2), 251-272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2016.1169791>
- Grix, J., & Brannagan, P. M. (2024). Sports mega-events as foreign policy: Sport diplomacy, soft power, and sportswashing. *American Behavioral Scientist*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642241262042>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Guo, J., Yang, H., & Zhang, X. (2024). How watching sports events empowers people's sense of wellbeing? *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15, 1471658. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1471658>
- Hwang, C. L., & Yoon, K. (1981). *Multiple attribute decision making: Methods and applications*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-48318-9>
- Lee, J. W., & Krieger, J. (2024). Sport diplomacy and global politics in the twenty-first century. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 9(4), 641-650. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2023.2185580>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Menaker, B. E., Sheptak, D., Kurland, J., & Tekin, D. (2024). Rethinking sport event security. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 9(2), 346-368. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24704067.2023.2165165>
- Millwood, P. (2022). *Improbable diplomats: How ping-pong players, musicians, and scientists remade US-China relations*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108915660>
- Moustakas, L. (2024). Sport for social cohesion: A conceptual framework linking common practices and theory. *Sport in Society*, 27(10), 1549-1567. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2023.2215324>
- Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public Affairs.
- Nye, J. S. (2023). Soft power and great-power competition. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 16(2), 129-148.
- Paris, R. (2001). Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air? *International Security*, 26(2), 87-102.
- Steele, B. J., & Subotic, J. (2024). Icons and ontological (in) security. *European Journal of International Security*, 9(2), 143-159. <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2023.17>
- United Nations Development, P. (2022). *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene*. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/special-report-2022-human-security>
- Vainio, T., Karppi, I., & Sankala, I. (2024). Perceptions and preferences of experienced security in mass urban events. *Cities*, 144, 104626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104626>