

## **OPPONENT'S REVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION THESIS**

**Author:** Polina Olegovna Gruzdeva (Lomonosov Moscow State University)

**Title of Dissertation:** "High-performance sport as a modern states' foreign policy factor"

**Sphere of research:** 41.06.01 – Political science and regional studies (23.00.04 – Political problems of international relations, global and regional development)

**Opponent:** Gabriela Welkow-Jusek. President of Austrian Rhythmic Gymnastics Federation

### ***Review***

Today high-performance sport is considered as one of the key factors for foreign policy. Polycentric world demands new instruments for foreign-policy's goal achievement and sport is believed to be one of the most secure and effective tools. Considering this, topic of the dissertation seems undoubtedly actual. The main problem of studying the relationship between sport and foreign policy is that one must blend subject matters to realize the full capability of modern sport and its continuing impact.

The area of research consists of two solely momentous components. The first is international relations and foreign politics – which is one of the oldest policies, coordinated at scientific level. The second component is sport of high

achievements, together with international Olympic movement, international sport organizations and top-level competitions. Trying to study the process of mutual influence of sport and foreign policy, author also paid attention to the question of globalization and its influence on politics and sport. Sport, then, is inevitably a major factor in all aspects of contemporary international politics and relations.

Author carried out extended work in need to collect, systematize, and analyze scientific data, official documents, and law standards, including numerous Conventions of Russian and foreign nongovernmental agencies, supporting the main goal of the thesis. It should be emphasized that author herself is recognized professional rhythmic gymnastics athlete and therefore has personal experience as a participant and multiple winner of international competitions not merely as an athlete (in 2005-2016) but also as a judge with a high level Austrian judging license (up to now).

The first chapter of the thesis is devoted to literature review which helps author to rise actual research questions and prepare good conceptual framework for her own research, also in this chapter author explains the role of high-performance sport as a political tool all over the world.

Second chapter provides conceptual analysis of sports diplomacy functions as a "soft-power" instrument. Results of this part of research give clear image how the relationship between international sport and diplomacy can play an important part in understanding the impact of international sport on world politics in the broadest sense. As author correctly noted, the mixing of sport, politics and diplomacy is part of the milieu of international relations. Sports diplomacy is the specialization, exploitation and reification of a familiar aspect of state-qua-state interaction. The hosting by Russia of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2014 and FIFA World Cup 2018 brings into sharp relief two

significant developments: first, the consolidation of the Olympic Games as a significant arena for national and global politics; and second, the extent to which cities have re-emerged as major targets for hostile attack.

In the third chapter author examines the international structures of high achievement sport, anti-doping politics and the appearance of a new «New Cold War in sport». The rapid growth of the Olympic movement in the second half of XX century was driven by increasing competition and involvement in sport of all new opportunities and resources, with this approach expediting the capitalization of sport and sports business formation. Reflecting the period of the 1950s, the Cold War greatly enhanced the role that sport played politically for each of the superpowers as well as their satellite or allied nations. Each superpower obviously used its vast resources to aid in the competition for glory and international prestige Sport became one of the new platforms of global competition.

Author proved high standards at both theoretical and methodological level. Thesis brings new insight to the problematic of evaluating results of university research. Author makes synthesis of different theoretical and methodological approaches. However, we can identify several drawbacks. Thus, some of the analyzed systems of the international sport organizations are seriously criticized (IOC, WADA) but author provides just general proposals for change or entirely new system which will be more efficient in both institutional and economic sense.

Presented dissertation of Polina Ol. Gruzdeva fulfils the dissertations demands of a doctoral study program (political science). It answers research questions and verify provisions to be defended, which have been set, and by its contents it actually does bring an innovated knowledge related to the research

.....  
Rhythmische Gymnastik



topic. The candidate proves an acceptable theoretical and methodological background, and ability to apply it in practical application.

As far as the presented dissertation fulfils the criteria, I strongly recommend it to be successfully defended, and I believe the author should be awarded the Ph.D. degree.

Vienna, June 6, 2019

Sports Director  
Rhythmic Gymnastics AUT



Österreichischer Verband für Turnen  
A-1040 Wien, Schwarzenbergplatz 10 | [www.oeft.at](http://www.oeft.at)  
Tel. +43 1 505 51 79-0 | Fax 505 51 79-20 | [office@oeft.at](mailto:office@oeft.at)

Gabriela Welkow-Jusek