PROJECT report / portfolio

Project name (as stated on LIFE website): Sports in International Politics

Supervisor(s): Benjamin Klasche, Terry McDonald

Participants: Abubakar Olajide Adebayo, Karol Ahja, Alena Darafeichyk, Mari Einberg, Hardi Hansalu, Karel Jõeleht, Maxim Kamrysh, Kärt Koppel, Aleksandr Kraizmer, Peter-C Madubuko, Sami Matikainen, Madli Mirme, Reigo Mond, Konsta Juhani Mäkelä, Peter Nikkonen, Maarja Pildre, Daniel Pisarkov, Timo Planman, Tuomas Kristian Sjögren, Sergei Svetlov, Hendrik Tali, Roman Tchurilov, Rene Toomas

1. Description

Sports in International Politics explores the links between major sports events and International Relations. For example Olympics boycotts or the disappearance of Chinese tennis player Peng Shui and other controversies in the international arena. The project aims to show how international politics affects our social life and how events in the world of sports can point to political issues. In this project, we explore the impact and circumstances of a select group of these occasions. Four teams researched an issue each of their choosing, and then produced an informative video that summarizes the history of their chosen event and the geo-political impact it had (or has still). The videos are based on academic research.

**Group 1** has chosen to analyze the Team Korea at the Winter Olympics 2018 through the International Relations theory of Liberalism

**Group 2** has chosen to research Qatar hosting FIFA World Cup 2022 and how it links to the world systems theory in International Relations.

**Group 3** has chosen to research the relations between the USA and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and basketball`s role in creating an opportunity to build a diplomatic bridge between two different ideologies. International Relations theory of social liberalism was used in order to emerge this particular case with an academical international relations theory.

**Group 4** has chosen to research the Football War between El Salvador and Honduras and has used the help of international relations theories of Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism.

2. Importance

The project outcomes are to produce a research summary and bibliography related to the chosen subject and to write and produce and promote an informative youtube video to explain the history of the event and its impact on international relations. The videos have been released as a series, which will potentially be continued in subsequent semesters.

The project has incorporated academic writing and script writing skills, video production and acting, and PR and promotion.

Different groups have used different sources for the basis of their research and here are some examples:

**Group 1:** We mainly used academic sources and different articles. We have learned how to conduct searches in different databases beforehand and these skills have proven useful for finding the most relevant articles for our project. We are using the international relations theory of liberalism to analyze our chosen topic of Team Korea at the Winter Olympics 2018, because it is the best suited theory considering the event. We started our research from the broader history of North and South Korea and the international relations theories and went more specific in our research to find sources about Team Korea specifically.

Here are some of the sources we have used for our research:

1. Baylis, J., Smith, S., & Owens, P. (2014). The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations (6th ed.). Oxford University Press.
2. Jackson, R., & Sørensen, G. (2013). Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches. Oxford University Press, USA.
3. Murray, S. (2018). Sports Diplomacy: Origins, Theory and Practice (Routledge New Diplomacy Studies) (1st ed.). Routledge.
4. Inter-korean sports diplomacy as a tool of political rapprochement – research article (https://journals.prz.edu.pl/hss/article/view/181 ) <https://www.38north.org/2021/04/the-challenges-of-south-and-north-korea-hosting-the-2032-olympics/>
5. After the Pyeongchang Olympics: Prospects for Inter-Korean Relations – (<https://isdp.eu/publication/pyeongchang-olympics-prospects-inter-korean-relations/> )

**Group2:** For research we used academic sources, articles and reports related to the subject. For example Human Rights Watch’s reports on labor abuse, human trafficking and other human rights tragedies of migrant workers in Qatar.

The IR theory research of our work is based on Wallerstein's World Systems Theory (Wallerstein, I. (1974). The Modern World-System I Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century, With a New Prologue).

Examples of other sources:

1. Ganji, S.K. (08.08.2018). *Leveraging the World Cup: Mega Sporting Events, Human Rights Risk, and Worker Welfare Reform in Qatar*. Sage Journals. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/233150241600400403>
2. Human Rights Watch. (12.06.2012). *Building a Better World Cup. Protecting Migrant Workers in Qatar Ahead of FIFA 2022.* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2012/06/12/building-better-world-cup/protecting-migrant-workers-qatar-ahead-fifa-2022>
3. Al Thani, M. (2021) *Channeling Soft Power: The Qatar 2022 World Cup, Migrant Workers, and International Image.* The International Journal of the History of Sport. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2021.1988932>

**Group 3:** Since this event was not mostly researched by institutions or any kind of particular researchers then most of our articles were different news sources, interviews and video sources. In some ways, the research on this topic was hard, because news sources can write anything about these kinds of events, considering this event was very public and groundbreaking.

The news sources links listed:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/reliable-source/wp/2018/06/12/a-brief-guide-to-dennis-rodmans-long-weird-history-with-north-korea/

and https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18813038.dennis-rodmans-friendship-north-koreas-kim-jong-un/

We used these sources because they give a good overall picture of the events that happened during the visits of Dennis Rodman in North Korea. These are only some of the sources that we have used.

In addition, we used the concept of “social liberalism” in order to emerge this particular case with an academical international relations theory. We mainly relied on Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse and Thomas Hill Green’s definition of social liberalism since they are viewed as the forefathers of social liberalism. More research was used to see how other authors have defined that particular international relations theory in order to complement the aforementioned scholars’ works.

Sources: John W. Seaman’s book (1978) “L. T. Hobhouse and the Theory of "Social Liberalism".”

and Colin Tyler’s book (2010) “The Metaphysics of Self-realization and Freedom Part 1 of The Liberal Socialism of Thomas Hill Green”

**Group 4:** The theoretical framework for the project is Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism. Postcolonialism enables us to explain historically and systematically the context of the situation in the countries in question, while Neocolonialism gives an understanding of the situation itself. For general understanding of Neocolonialism we used Diana Haag’s dissertation Mechanisms of Neo-colonialism; the focus of this paper, however, is quite limited. As for Postcolonialism, we used Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts, second edition. We find these sources helpful in general understanding of the theoretical framework.

For a closer look at the region of Central and Latin America we used *Latin America, Economical Imperialism and the State: The Political Economy of the External Connection from Independence to the Present*, edited by Christopher Abel and Colin M. Lewis, as well as entries about El Salvador and Honduras in the Encyclopedia Britannica and two books on the conflict itself by Ryszard Kapuściński titled *The Soccer War* and *Just and Unjust Wars* by Michael Walzer. The sports aspect of our topic is covered with the help of an article by Ella Adriana Chirinos titled *“National Identity and Sports in Latin America: The Hundred-Hour Football War between El Salvador and Honduras.”*

3. Activities & Stakeholders

**The goals of the project have been fulfilled in three steps:**

The first step was research - in which we engaged in historical analysis, international relations theory research and application, academic writing, and of course language skills. It produced a research summary and bibliography related to an event in which sport and international relations have come together in dramatic fashion, using literature from the field of International Relations.

The second stage was production - in which we engaged in video and audio recording, editing using advanced software, script writing, interviewing techniques, and citation skills.

The third stage was promotion. This was based on the fields of marketing, public relations, psychology, and required skills in visual arts, visual editing, graphic design, and copy writing.

**Stakeholders:**

The two fields most impacted are sports and international relations. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tallinn University studies of Sports, International Relations and History can contribute from the results of our project. The project has an informative goal for the general public, to raise awareness on how international relations affect sports and vica versa.

5. Sustainability

The project outcome videos are uploaded and shared on YouTube. The ownership of the channel will be transferred to project supervisors. The underlying expectation is that the project can be continued in the following semesters.

6. Results and annexes

The groups have finished their academic research and have submitted their written papers on their chosen subject.

Based on the research and written paper each group wrote a shorter video script, taped the video, produced it and uploaded it to Youtube and shared with interested parties (different Facebook groups etc).

Written papers are added as annexes.

7 . Project Action Plan.

Group 1

| Tasks | Deadline | Student(s) responsible |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Deciding a liaison | 17.02 | everyone |
| Setting up communications for the group | 17.02 | everyone |
| Three ideas from everyone for voting | 20.02 | everyone |
| Choosing main and back-up idea | 20.02 | everyone |
| Theory research | 27.02 | Peter |
| Dividing the tasks | 27.02 | everyone |
| Finishing Action Plan | 02.03 | Madli, everyone |
| Choose International Relations theory/concept | 02.03 | everyone |
| Structure | 02.03 | everyone |
| Theory: liberalism | 06.03 | Peter, Reigo, Abubakar |
| Research: General | 13.03 | Mari,Hardi |
| Initial written paper | 13.03 | Madli, Reigo |
| Send progress report to supervisors | 17.03 | Madli |
| Mid-term report finished | 20.03 | Madli, Abubakar |
| Mid-term report deadline | 21.03 | Madli |
| Video production meeting | 27.03 | everyone |
| Mid-term presentation | 28.03 17-19 | Abubakar |
| Research: Detailed | 28.03 | Mari,Hardi |
| Written paper with academic sources | 28.03 | Madli, Reigo, Abubakar |
| Script for the video | 03.04 | Madli, Hendrik, Reigo |
| Acting in the video | 03.04-17.04 | everyone |
| Shooting of the video | 03.04-17.04 | Reigo, Hendrik |
| Editing of the video | 18.04-01.05 | Reigo, Hendrik |
| Video finished and uploaded | 02.05 | Reigo, Hendrik |
| Promotion of the video | 02.05-14.05 | Hendrik |
| Group Portfolio finished | 14.05 | Madli |
| Self reflections handed in | 17.05 | everyone |
| Final presentation | 17.05 17:00 | Madli |
| Submitting self-reflective reports | 17.05 | Everyone |

Group 2

| Tasks | Deadline | Student(s) responsible |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Choosing a liaison | 18.02 | Everyone |
| Creating team communication channels | 18.02 | Tuomas |
| Choosing the ideas | 22.02 | Everyone |
| Creating the action plan | 03.03 | Maarja |
| Choosing an IR theory/concept | 03.03 | Everyone |
| Research (substance ja theory) | 23.02-01.04 | Tuomas |
| Progress report | 17.03 | Maarja |
| Completing mid-term report | 24.03 | Maarja |
| Mid-term evaluation/feedback session | 31.03 10:00-12:00 | everyone |
| Written script with academic sources | 10.04 | everyone |
| Script for the video | 01-10.04 | Tuomas |
| Video production workshop | 06.04 | Konsta |
| Video production | 11.04-02.05 | Konsta |
| Marketing of video | 02.05-14.05 | Kärt |
| Making the portfolio | 01.04-10.05 | Maarja |
| Final presentation | 17.05 | Tuomas |
| Submitting self-reflective reports | 17.05 | Everyone |

Group 3

| Tasks | Deadline | Student(s) responsible |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dividing the tasks | 01.03 | everyone |
| Action plan | 03.03 | everyone |
| Choose International Relations theory/concept | 26.02 | everyone |
| Research (theory) | 09.03 | everyone |
| Theory: social liberalism | 19.03 | KAREL,ALEKSANDR |
| General case overview | 19.03 | KAREL, ALEKSANDR, KAROL, DANIEL |
| Completing mid-term report | 21.03 | KAREL, KAROL, DANIEL, ALEKSANDR |
| Send progress report to supervisors | 21.03 | KAREL, KAROL |
| Deciding the filming spots | 22.03-31.03 | everybody |
| Midterm-Presentation | 29.03 2-4PM | KAROL |
| Analyzing feedback and improving the project | 30.03-06.04 | everybody |
| Script for the video | 30.03-07.04 | KAREL, ALEKSANDR, KAROL |
| Filming | 08.04-13.04 | PETER, KAROL |
| Editing of the video clips | 14.04-01.05 | PETER |
| Video production | 14.04-01.05 | PETER |
| Written paper with academic sources | 15.04 | ALEKSANDR, KAREL |
| Video finished and uploaded | 02.05 | PETER |
| Video promotion | 02.05-16.05 | DANIEL |
| Self-Reflection | 15.05 | everyone |
| Final presentation | 17.05 | DANIEL |

Group 4

| Tasks | Deadline | Student(s) responsible |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Choosing the liaison and the group leader, choosing the topic and methodology (our choice was post-colonialism) | 2.03 | Everyone |
| Gathering the information (basic facts about the event, theoretical basis for our research) | 22.03 | Timo Planman  Rene Toomas  Maxim Kamrysh |
| IR Analysis (applying the methodology to the event) | 28.03 | Roman Tchurilov  Alena Darafeichyk |
| Theoretical outline (Neo-colonialism) | 18.04 | Roman Tchurilov |
| General information | 18.04 | Alena Darafeichyk |
| Analysis part | 24.04 | Roman Tchurilov  Alena Darafeichyk |
| Midterm report | 29.03 | Everyone  Alena Darafeichyk - presenter |
| Writing the Script for the video   1. Researching about our mode of presenting the information in the video (e.g. style of the script) 2. Writing the draft | 30.04 | Sami Matikainen  Maxim Kamrysh  (everyone can contribute) |
| Video production | 05.05 | Sami Matikainen  Alena Darafeichyk |
| PR stage | 15.05 | Sergei Svetlov Rene Toomas |
| Self-Reflection | 17.05 | Everyone |
| Final Presentation | 17.05 | Rene Toomas Maxim Kamrysh |

8. Media coverage

Sports In International Politics Youtube channel can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGWC9wsa6nQEod_28kHUMMw>

1. Episode 1 was uploaded on 02.05.2022 and has 138 views (14.05.2022).
2. Episode 2 was uploaded on 05.05.2022 and has 248 views (14.05.2022).
3. Episode 3 was uploaded on 09.05.2022 and has 32 views (14.05.2022).
4. Episode 4 was uploaded on 13.05.2022 and has 144 views (14.05.2022).

The videos and channel have been shared by the project members on social media (Facebook, Instagram), also in different Facebook groups and Facebook pages.

9. Learning experience

**Group 1**

**Abubakar Olajide Adebayo:** I personally enjoyed and learned while working on the project. I learned that being positive and listening to everyone’s opinion can help a group or set of groups expedite and smoothly achieve their designated tasks. This goal is also in line with the project we worked on, which is sport in international relations, where diplomacy and democratic ways can help unite people.

We were able to meet every deadline by corporation and everyone gave their utmost best in their chosen tasks. This gave me a sense of belonging within the group. The project widened my knowledge more about politics and sports, on how every sphere of life can affect and influence everyday politics.

**Mari Einberg:** What I learned from this project the most is the importance of teamwork. Although our team had great teamwork and chemistry, I still learned how important all team members' output is. Also how important a role a team leader plays, I think Madli did an amazing job keeping us on track. Of course other members were great too. For me maybe the most interesting part was filming the video and recording of the voice, as I really have never done such things before. It was also a lot of fun.

I think this kind of project actually helps you meet different people with different backgrounds. As our teamwork was very good, I think the project goals are quite achievable.

**Hardi Hansalu:** For me the biggest surprise was how simple everything feels when the group is working perfectly together. Being in a group project is not a new thing for me, but this project is definitely one that went the smoothest. I think one of the main reasons for our success was a nice balance between freedom and discipline. We gave our group members enough time and freedom to work on their tasks, but were strict on the deadlines. Also it’s important to establish good relationships from the beginning and find a suitable topic, so everyone would be interested and motivated. Furthermore everyone could choose a topic they felt most comfortable in. Working with this project has given me ideas and recipes for successful group work.

**Madli Mirme:** I think the main thing I can take back from this project is that sometimes you just get lucky. Seven people were thrown together rather randomly and everyone contributed, tasks were finished on time and the result was great. I was acting as project manager in our group and the project gave me proper experience of being in that role and also some ideas about how to succeed in other areas of life as well. The topic of the project was straight away fascinating for me as a big sports fan, which lets you understand that it is easier to do things you love. I think our group achieved every goal and fulfilled every task we set for ourselves and it makes me very proud of us.

**Reigo Mond:** There were 2 main things I learned from this LIFE project. Firstly, I got to learn about International Relations theory – an academic field that I hadn’t heard about before. My introduction to it was more general and through introductory books, that was necessary to compile the theoretical part of the project. Although, I have already had a chance to practice my knowledge of it, and in an international setting. On a youth exchange I recently went to, there were 3 IR students from Czechia, U.S.A and Serbia. Thanks to this course I had long discussions with them on the topic. The second learning experience was about video production. I have edited videos before but this project taught me the other aspects of production as well, like planning. Planning beforehand (through action plans, creating scripts and getting filming equipment) is really necessary to achieve the goals you want to get to.

**Peter Nikkonen:** The project was really exciting and the first of its kind for me. During this project, I learned more about my own study area which is politics and international relations but above all, it was also great to learn new things that are not directly related to my studies. It was also great to meet new people. Our goal was to make a Youtube video where we connect sports and politics. Thanks to our group who all participated actively and brought their knowledge and experience from their specializations, my personal opinion is that we did an excellent job. We’ve also received good feedback from others which shows that definitely achieved our goals

**Hendrik Tali:** The project's aim was to bring together sports and international politics and it did that effectively. The overall project went super successfully. Our team's assignments were really well divided, so that the work we did was efficient. Everyone had their part in the making. Some made the written part, some made the video part and some made the marketing part of the video. It’s a great cooperation from which we made a great video - better than others.

What I learned from this group work is that not every group work is a horror. In our group everyone was super helpful and understanding. Even if we couldn’t make it to see each other at certain times, we still somehow made it and did everything. I learned that in order to make something great teamwork is the key - alone you cannot achieve anything.

**Group 2**

**Konsta:** Although I had some previous information about Qatar hosting the FIFA World Cup and the human rights issues connected to it, this project gave me a much deeper insight into the reality of the situation. This project allowed me to combine information I had learned during my other courses, such as International Relations theories, and enhance my previous skills outside my curriculum such as video editing. As the project was an interdisciplinary team project, I got to share and listen to different ideas with new people from different backgrounds. I helped in forming the theory, discussing what should be included in the video and got to shoot and edit the video. Although we had divided some roles among each participant, I think everyone contributed to all the steps of the project.

**Kärt:** Although I have a lot of interest and passion for sports, I don't know much about football. Thanks to our group work, I learned how big and important the World Cup is and how it can affect people around the world. Although the World Cup is taking place in Qatar this year, we still have a lot to learn from this event. Standing up for human rights should be a priority today before such a big event takes place. I contributed to our work by being active in group discussions and arguments from the beginning. I helped to create new ideas or guide us in our conversation as we worked on the project. In addition, I participated in zoom feedback conversations to be aware of what feedback we are receiving and what needs to be done in the future. I helped to create a video for our project as one of the presenters of the video and participated in the writing of the academic text.

**Maarja:** Being a big fan of sports and a major couch-athlete I have always watched big sporting events like the Olympics and World Cups and even as I have noticed headlines about Qatar 2022 and the issues surrounding it, I never thought much about the political background of sports events and this project stood out to me from the first glance of LIFE projects. Having no previous knowledge of international relations theories, reading about that was very interesting and opened my eyes to look at the world and events and how they are organized from a different perspective. As I am an education sciences student I took a look at Qatars’ education background and how the problems of the education system may have contributed to the labor issues Qatar faces.

I was also our group liaison and responsible for communicating with the project supervisors and other groups. All our project tasks were performed by all group members under the supervision of the team-member responsible for said task, with the exception of video editing, which was done by Konsta with help from Tuomas.

**Tuomas:** I am a very big friend of football and knew in advance about the football World Cup in Qatar, but I didn’t know much about the human rights violations and ill-treatment of construction workers. In the project, we got to explore how politics can connect to sport. We also studied the Qatar World Cup from the perspective of international relations and applied a theory with it. From the beginning, I was actively involved in the group discussions, attended meetings and feedback sessions, did research on the topic, wrote them down, and was one of the presenters in the video. I gained experience not only from a research perspective but also on how the research results are presented to the audience through a video. Overall, I had a positive feeling about the whole project, all the team members participated equally, and the end result of the project was excellent. This experience will definitely give me new skills for the future.

**Group 3**

**Karol Ahja KAANB20:** I did not look forward to the ELU project. It meant working with total strangers and most probably on something that was not very helpful with my studies at university. A certain recipe for a discomfort zone. Still, I knew it was mandatory and tried to keep an open mind. I acknowledged that the goal of ELU is to prepare students for real life situations, because life is full of unfamiliar projects with strange people. To overcome obstacles, create something innovative and make it all work – that's what ELU is about.

Looking through the list of possible projects the Sports in International Politics caught my eye immediately. I have always liked sports. I`ve trained, competed and spectated different sports for decades. That was the part that pulled me towards the project. I felt confident that, if need be, I can discuss endlessly about popular sports. Of course, I didn't turn a blind eye to the politics part as well.

Over the years there have been lots of situations, where athletes have demonstrated their views and spoken their mind about the acute issues in the world. I have always admired such behavior and courage.

So, my expectation was to be a part of a group with whom we would discuss heroic acts of famous athletes.

The groups in this project were formed randomly. So, I had no knowledge of the people with whom I was going to work together. As the question of our group`s liaison had to be solved, I volunteered, because I had no idea whom to trust in our group at that point. I was afraid to lose any information that might be sent from our supervisors.

The whole process of working together started rather awkwardly as was expected. I took part in discussions and anticipated everyone's input and opinions on how to work. It was difficult to find suitable times to meet for the whole team since our schedules were totally different. Still, we overcame that and got together to work for many hours in one room. As an andragogy student I tried to find everyone`s strong sides to energize the group`s synergy when we discussed the action plan and tasks. We relied heavily on one of our group members, who was academically on a higher level. The part about politics in our project overwhelmed us since the requirements about the theory part were high and none of us really knew anything on that level. We learned a lot about the theory we used and also the historical part that came with it.

Participating in an edited Youtube video was a new experience for me. I volunteered as the narrator since I have some experience in public performing. Editing job was done by a student whose major is visual communications. That played out nicely for us because he was competent and fast in shooting and editing.

Altogether this project gave insight into different studies at our university and also taught a lot about starting a group and working together on a project for which we had little knowledge or experience. We did not go through all the typical group dynamic phases. Mostly because we were focused on achieving the goal. We accepted and respected each other.

**Aleksandr Kraizmer:** During this project, our group had a chance to work as a unified team to reach our main goal- to film a video about a certain sports event, which somehow affected the political situation in the world. It was 5 of us, 4 of which represented different studies. We had several meetings, which were very productive and it was a great opportunity to meet new people and to learn something about their field of study.

As a result of these meetings, together with continuous communication and a little bit of homework, we were able to produce a good video about our topic- Dennis Rodman in North Korea.

In this project, the part I was responsible for was making an academic paper, which was the theoretical basis for the future video. Together with Karel Jõeleht, our exercise was to analyze Dennis Rodman’s visits to North Korea and to explain how these visits helped to improve the United States and North Korea relations using the international relations theory- sociological liberalism. Because I had some knowledge about this particular case, and Karel had experience in working with international relations theories, putting these two things together was a challenging exercise, but we managed it because of great teamwork and constant communication. Also, my legal specialty was useful in analyzing various scientific sources and articles, which were the basis of the paper.

Before this project, I didn't have knowledge about international relations theories and their impact on our world. Our team had an opportunity to study some of them, because one of our exercises was to choose the most preferable theory to our case. By analyzing them I understood the importance of it, and speaking for myself I can say that in the end, this project explained to me the importance of such things. I cannot say that this knowledge will be useful to me in my legal profession, but the fact that it is necessary for erudition and understanding all the complexities of politics is obvious.

But, the most valuable experience in this project for me was working with a group of people who were initially unfamiliar to me, with different educations and interests. This working process showed and explained to me the importance of the ELU project since one of its main exercises is interdisciplinarity. In particular, to reach a common goal, it is usually needed to combine various skills of various people to achieve the final goal, and finishing this project I realized that this experience could be very useful in future workplaces, because the conditions in which we were set very similar to those that we will all have to face in the future.

**Karel Jõeleht**: During the project I got much valuable experience working as a team to reach one common goal. The learning process was fun and educational particularly because of the fact that our team consisted of people from various fields of study. Our respective skills came in handy when finishing the mutual goal which was producing a video about sports diplomacy by using an international relations theory for academic analysis.

My main contribution to the team effort was producing an academic paper for our script writing. I analyzed the case, which was Dennis Rodman’s visits to North Korea, and brought out the most relevant facts which later on helped us to reach the final goal of filming a video. My academic background of Asian studies for analyzing this particular case was helpful, because I have previously analyzed the geopolitical and international relations aspect of the region. Therefore, it helped me to put Dennis Rodman’s visits to North Korea into context.

Prior to this project I had not learned much about the various international relations theories. During this project our team had a lot of opportunities to learn about different international theories in order to choose the one that would be suitable for our case. This acquired knowledge of international relations theories will be very helpful for me in the future when analysing the relation between countries particularly in the East-Asian region. The acquired knowledge of international relations theories is also helpful in orienting in the everyday political sphere whether it be international or domestic.

Moreover, the group work between people from different academic disciplines was also a very good chance to get a glimpse into other fields of studies. It also showed how important interdisciplinary studies are in developing a more effective working environment in our society and helping to understand each other's standpoint in the various fields of social dimensions. ELU project’s group work experience will be very helpful in future when adapting to a new workplace.

**Peter-C Madubuko:** I honestly was not excited to work on this ELU project cause I had so much work to do on my thesis and did not want to carry another project. But once we started working everything went smoothly and everyone completed their tasks which was amazing. I enjoyed working with this group of people even though sometimes our schedules got in the way. I really enjoyed the topic we chose as a group because I am really into basketball and I have watched quite a couple documentaries on the Bulls and Denis Rodman. So learning about how many times he went over to North Korea and even hosting a game with the Harlem GlobeTrotters was really interesting to see.

I was mainly in charge of filming and editing the video for this project cause that’s what i am majoring in. Filming went smoothly, we found a nice location in school and finished shooting in less than an hour. I honestly have never edited any projects prior to this project so i was really impressed by my work if i am being honest. I did not have a long period of time to edit but a couple late nights paid off.

This project showed me how important interdisciplinary studies is because everyone brought something different and unique to the project. This ELU project will help me fit into different work environments. So at the end of the day I am happy to have been involved in such a project.

**Daniel Pisarkov:** I have heard a lot of positive and negative feedback about the ELU project since it means that you have to work with students who are from absolutely different study fields, but again not in a bad way. To be honest, I went into this project without any expectations, I was a little bit anxious about my group because I didn’t know who they were.

When I finally met up with my group, I got this good feeling about it. At first, we had 6 members, but then one of our members left for another project, but it didn’t really change anything, we still had our plan made and everything was going smoothly.

I think one of the hardest parts of this kind of project and group work is finding a good time that suits everyone since we are all adults, we have work, family, and other adult responsibilities. Another thing that I would like to point out, is that we had to find ways to record our video and audio.

We decided to record video and audio separately and then put them together because then the final video will look better. Despite all the difficulties, we managed to finish our project.

I learned from this project that no matter what you are majoring in, you can still make something really good with the people you don’t know. I also learned about history a little bit since I wasn’t really familiar with our project topic which was Sociological Liberalism on Dennis Rodman’s visit to North Korea.

**Group 4**

**Timo Planman:** *Despite a few difficulties on the way, our group managed to organize itself effectively to finish the project and find suitable roles for everybody.*

Overall, the LIFE project is a fantastic idea, as it gives TLU students experience on how to work together in a team doing a project, in an environment similar to an actual workplace, where we need to coordinate the effort ourselves without teacher’s hand-holding guidance. The topic I chose was sports and international politics, which was a natural choice for me as a Politics and Governance student focusing on International Relations.

My group chose the topic of the Football War of 1969 between Honduras and El Salvador for our video essay, after we brainstormed for topics together in a group call. I would say the group members have been friendly and helpful with each other, and everybody has been active. In the beginning and for some time after we had a bit of an issue that no one was willing to take up leadership and direct the group in a decisive manner.

This demonstrates a need for structure when working on a project. We were left behind by the other groups and behind schedule for a bit due to this issue, but regardless we managed to get our project together thanks to our whatsapp group, and gave everyone clear roles to work on.

My role in the beginning of the project was to gather and write down information about the war, and about the cultural significance of football in Latin American cultures and how that impacted the events leading up to the war. This was a role that suited me well, as I enjoy writing as well as learning about history and culture a lot, and I don’t have any video producing experience. Later on, I was assigned a job to look for and gather pictures and videos from the war and from the events before it, to use as footage for our video.

Overall, working on the LIFE project has been a good experience. It has demonstrated well that for projects to work well someone needs to take charge and direct the effort for it to be successful. Our group has managed to put in a good effort, and I look forward to the video being ready. It will explain the interesting events and backstory of a fairly unknown and very peculiar conflict in history.

**Maxim Kamrysh:** *Efforts we put into the project have paid off with the result that even surprised me.*

I decided to participate in the project because of my interest in politics and geopolitics. Soon it became clear that International Relations as a science is more complex than news reports and pieces by famous journalists on BBC or DW. However, this fact did not exactly surprise me, and so I had to make some dives into the field of International Relations, learning mostly about different theories used in the field.

Our team is varied, and not all of the members have participated in the project equally, which is a general tendency that I observed during my participation in many projects in Tallinn University: some group members always have to work more for the sake of reaching the established goal. My role in the project was that of its leader, although unofficially, and language editor.

My main contribution has been writing the bulk of the mid-term report, solving frequent issues, assigning tasks to other members of the group, making notes and summaries from the materials, looking for equipment for recording the voice for the video, writing almost the whole script for the video and sifting through the materials for the video that were uploaded by other team members. I personally felt overburdened by different tasks and responsibilities, sometimes also noticing my group’s neglect.

As for personal development, there were few new or interesting things for me to learn. Learning about the world of International Relations theories and writing the script for the video are the main highlights of the course. Writing the video script was particularly novel, since I had to account for the fact that it should be read with ease by the speaker and go well with the footage. In general, I believe that the majority of the tasks and responsibilities were not at all new, but simply tested my organizational and editorial skills.

In conclusion, I consider the course to be marginally useful for my academic development, maybe even a waste of my potential. The concept of ELU itself does not work, in my opinion. First, because for the course to have a noticeable effect on students’ development it should last for two semesters, a goal that is hardly achievable in the current system. Second, the premise of studying something completely new is ridiculous in the framework of the current higher education in Estonia, because students’ specialization, the degree to which they are focused on one particular field, is very low: in other words, students already study many varied things for minor periods of time. Thus, there is no need for special courses like ELU that simply exacerbate the existing problems in higher education. My feedback is not only influenced by this ELU course, but also by another ELU course I took during my BA program at Tallinn University. However, I am still quite surprised by the result we have managed to achieve - our video is of high quality.

**Roman Tšurilov:** *Although we all had difficulties getting on the right track, we have managed to mobilize ourselves and produce content on a topic that we all found interesting.*

I am far from being an avid enjoyer of sports. The same goes, but at a greater degree, for football. Yet, surprisingly, I found myself drawn to the topic of the Football War between El Salvador and Honduras.

The project allowed me to approach the topic of football through a more interesting, for me at the very least, political angle. I found it to be an interesting task to bridge the realm of sports with the realm of politics on a more scientific level. As such, based on my experience with studying politics, I became involved with working on the theoretical aspect and assisting others with questions in the realm of political science.

My main lamentation that I could not dedicate myself more to the project due to being severely burdened by my workload in academy and in personal life. Nevertheless, I am joyful that despite my personal hardships, as well as some collective struggles in getting our group on the right track, I have managed to offer my knowledge in the realm of political science, which, ultimately, helped our group create a video on the researched topic.

**Sergei Svetlov:** *This job taught me how to get out of stressful situations and achieve goals in the shortest possible time.*

It’s great that in our university we have an ELU project, because during the project we meet new people from different parts of Tallinn university, we can share our views and work together. As soon as I saw the topic of the project, I immediately decided to take part in it, because I love sports very much, and it was interesting for me to find out how sports are intertwined with politics.

All members of the group contributed to the work of the group. In case of problems or misunderstandings, we tried to solve them immediately and supported each other, when some members of the group had problems with work. There was also close cooperation and communication on social networks, where we shared with each other the information collected during this work and discussed issues. My task was post-production and distribution of the video. I also collected visual material for the video. Although we had some serious difficulties during the work, we successfully completed the project and made a very high-quality video.

Separately, I would like to say a huge thank you to our project leaders Terry and Ben. They helped us solve the problems that arose and with their help we got on the right track.

This project taught me a lot. First, I really understood how closely related sports and politics are. I learned a lot of both historical material and facts from modern life.

Secondly, I gained a lot of experience in teamwork. Although we had serious difficulties and disagreements on some issues, we were able to unite and achieve our goals.

**Alena Darafeichyk:** *Making a creative thing out of the thin air absolutely fascinates me. What fascinates me even more is the fact that we managed to do so.*

Being quite a fan of both International Relations and sports, I found the idea of this project very interesting. Combining the two does not only make for an interesting project, but also the opportunity to show others how deeply connected these topics can be. I feel like we have chosen the right media – a YouTube video – to reach out to the general public and show them how influential sports actually can be.

The team was quite large and pretty varied. Obviously, we could immensely benefit from the presence of other experiences, especially in the domain of video production. Nevertheless, we did manage to complete the project. Our main problem consisted in the unfair workload. As far as I can tell, it is a consequence of the difficulty of the project. It required quite an effort; unfortunately, as students, we have to participate in our main studies during the project as well. This has led to difficulties with time management, especially in the beginning of the project.

I feel like the most important outcome for me is not academic. This project gave me an excellent opportunity to learn how to deal with people that I have never met before. These interpersonal skills are very important for all of us. Another thing is that I had to discover and even expand my limits in terms of workload; I got to do things I have never done before. Also, an understanding that you can make something so creative out of scratch is absolutely fascinating.

**Rene Toomas:** *If we have achieved anything with this project it is to beautifully demonstrate that sport and politics are the two sides of the same coin.*

Looking back I found participating in the Life project fascinating. Since I am not a student at the moment, I took part in the project through the Open Academy. It was interesting to work as a team with students again. I chose the Life project Sports in International Politics because of the field of sports, an angle which is seldom used in the exploration of international relations. Since quite a few people in our group are studying international relations, it was not difficult for us to find our way in choosing the topic of our project video. Although we spent a lot of time discussing which international relations theory we should imply. At first our group collectively researched the topic providing materials and then we decided on certain roles for each member of the group.

My everyday work deals with defense policy and international relations. I saw this as an opportunity to place myself into a role in the team which I would not normally take. I took it upon myself to do the presentations, promote the video when it was finished, create and manage folders for the materials. As I saw that some of my teammates had a clear idea of what to do and where to take our topic, I did not contradict them. It was also beneficial that we had at least one member of our group who is proficient in video production.

What I found difficult was the fact that we had to do it via social media platforms. A project like this needs live meetings, brainstorming sessions and sharing of notes on a weekly basis. If we were able to produce such a result long distance, I can only imagine what we could have achieved, if we would have more time and opportunity to meet in person.

At this point I would like to thank our supervisors Benjamin and Terry, who kept us on track and made sure we did not lose our focus. I am proud of what we have achieved and to have been able to work together with the people in my group. The end result of our work - a Youtube video is an excellent way to introduce academic disciplines to people through popular culture. In addition to being a helpful learning device, the video will serve as a reminder of our work and time together.