

2014 World Cup in Brazil - FIFA's Mega Event as Portrayed in the Folha De S. Paulo's Coverage¹

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper's coverage of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil in relation to the organization and execution of this massive sporting event. Seven categories emerged during analysis of the units of meaning. During the World Cup inferences relating to social politics changed and demonstrations and arguments about public infrastructure gave way to a sense of public involvement.

Key Words: Media; soccer; 2014 FIFA World Cup.

1. Introduction

The 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil drew more than 3,429,873 spectators into the stadiums to watch the 64 matches. This is the largest number recorded in any World Cup since 1994. The average attendance of 53,592 supporters was also the largest for twenty years. "During the competition an average of 127,674 food and drink sales transactions were processed in the stadiums per match". Additionally, 16,746 press passes were distributed during the World Cup. The total number of visitors to FIFA.com's on-line and mobile social media center, the Global Stadium, exceeded 1 billion during Brazil 2014. This figure is the equivalent of 13,380 Maracana stadiums full to capacity (Source: www.fifa.com). While this was not the "Cup of Cups" promised by Brazil's president at the time, it did break records.

During the World Cup in Brazil, 5,154,386 people attended the Fan Fests organized by FIFA. In Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, which had the largest attendance of all the host cities, we had 937,330 supporters. The 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil became part of the daily agenda in the media and in Brazilian society, which set its schedule according to the Mega-event.

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This major event increased the visibility of Brazil considerably in the media, as is demonstrated by the world media's creation of new correspondent posts that had not hitherto existed (Sanfelice *et al.*, 2014). The economic and social costs of what came to be known as the "FIFA standard" with relation to Brazil 2014 was the subject of a great deal of discussion within the academic community, provoking profound reflection and criticism and attempts to achieve a perspective on "sporting mega-events", as they have become known (Tavares, 2011), and arousing interest in investigating the *public policies established to adapt to the structural requirements of organizing such events in Brazil* (Dalonso; Lourenço, 2011, p. 519).²

For example, Mezzaroba, Messa and Pires (2011, p. 27) have claimed that *a sporting mega-event is much more a social and economic phenomenon, with impacts on many different elements of the society that hosts it, than it is a sporting event.*³ Complementing their view, Gastaldo (2009) sees the World Cup as a social fact of great importance to Brazilians, to a great extent because of the media ties of the Mega-event.

In this text we will focus on the coverage of the 2014 FIFA football world cup published in the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo*, while the competition was being held in Brazil, i.e. from June 12 to July 13 of 2014. The missed deadlines in construction of urban mobility projects and even some of the stadiums scheduled to host the 2014 World Cup led to tension between FIFA and the local organizing committee, and the official discourse of the highest authority in world football, represented by Jérôme Valcke its general secretary, constantly expressed its concern over missed deadlines. Expectations with relation to the "FIFA standard" were less than optimistic, but in fact the event took place with certain naturalness. The themes analyzed in this article include urban mobility, host stadiums, air transport and the FIFA events (Fan Fests) – in other words those elements that characterized the 2014 FIFA world cup as an event. As such, the objective is to analyze the *Folha de S. Paulo's* coverage of the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil related to organization and running of this sporting mega-event.

2. Method

This study is descriptive, quantitative and qualitative research based on a corpus comprising the editions of the *Folha de S. Paulo* published from June 12 to July 13 of 2014, which is the entire period during which the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil took place. The method employed for this research is Bardin's (2011) content analysis technique. The procedure consists of quantifying appropriate elements that appear in the text under analysis in order to distinguish the dominant occurrence in relation to others. These data lead to a series of interpretations and conclusions related to the object of study. Krippendorff (1997, p. 28) has stated that content analysis enables valid and reproducible inferences to be made that are applicable to the content.

The following categories were used to classify the content of units of meaning in the corpus, including texts, images, editorials, panels, covers, articles, titles, subtitles and other channels (these categories were selected in response to the empirical material analyzed and were not defined a priori):

1. Stadiums: this category covers all aspects of accessibility to stadiums, constructions or works in their environs and problems (accidents, system failures, safety and security and pitch invasions) related to the stadiums in the host cities and also issues related to eating areas, shops selling team kits/uniforms and/or other merchandising, bathrooms and numbered seats.
2. Private Infrastructure: covering all subjects related to investment of non-governmental funds with the objective of making profit, focusing on expansion or devaluation of hotels, tourism in the host cities, restaurants, bars, shops, broadcasters, etc.
3. Public Infrastructure: describes all investment using governmental funds, projects linked to the 2014 FIFA world cup, construction, works and repairs carried out in the host cities, including aspects such as urban mobility and other transport (including federal, state and municipal roads, the rail network and bus routes), airports, policing, and others.
4. General Organization: covers the obligations that FIFA imposes on the host country in terms of organizing the event, with repercussions for visibility abroad and approval among the Brazilian population.
5. Social Politics: covers all of the social and political movements that were active during the World Cup period, anti-World Cup manifestos, reader's opinions, satisfaction of volunteers and/or the public, etc.

² Authors' translation of "...políticas públicas estabelecidas à adequação das necessidades estruturais para organização de tais eventos no território brasileiro ..."

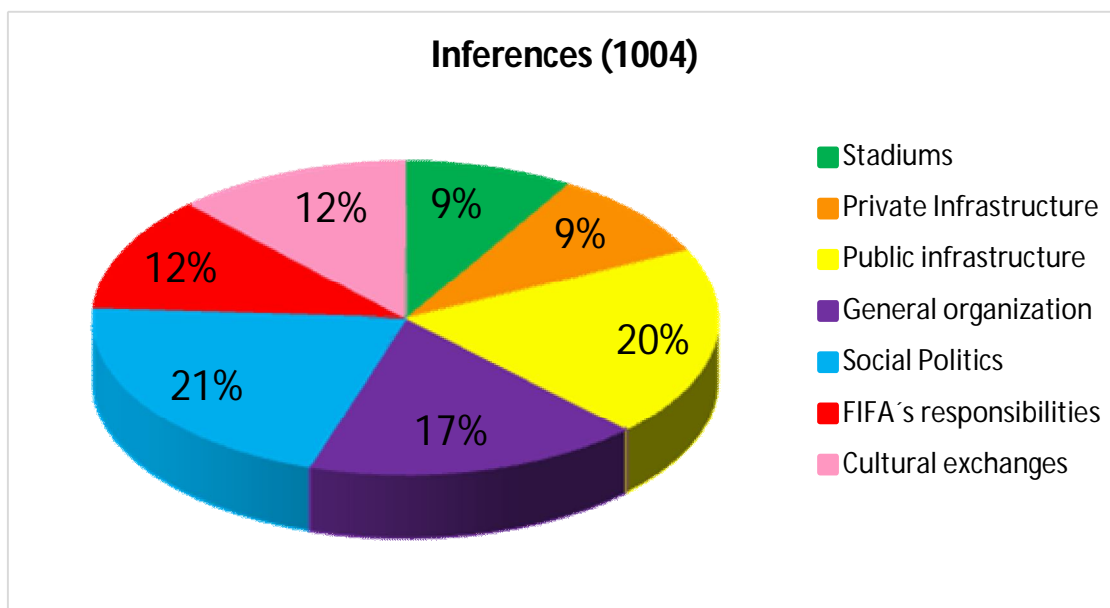
³ Authors' translation of "...um megaevento esportivo é muito mais um fato social e econômico, que impacta diferentes âmbitos da sociedade que o acolhe, do que um evento esportivo."

6. FIFA's Responsibilities: the roles reserved for FIFA or the Local Organizing Committee, such as checking and selling tickets, Fan Fests and other responsibilities.
7. Cultural Exchanges: covers the cultural exchanges between countries attending the World Cup and between foreign tourists who came for the event, including their experiences in Brazil and the interaction of customs between host states.

Qualitative research techniques enable textual and visual analyses to be conducted, filling the structures of discourse at several different levels of description. However, they also recognize the contextual background and its dimensions, such as cognitive processes and representations, or socio cultural factors, which are related to these structural descriptions with properties other than the context (Dijk, 1990). Data are expressed as descriptive statistics, in the form of percentages, and are also analyzed qualitatively. The categories used to analyze the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper are illustrated in a graph and each unit of meaning was defined as an inference after it had been classified using the analytical categories.

3. Presentation and analysis of the data

The graph below illustrates the total number of units of meaning (1004) extracted from the Folha de S. Paulo for the period studied. Following the logic of news construction, in which the most important fact during the analysis period is the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil and in which this is seen as an event, the category Social Politics accounts for 21% of the total (210 inferences), followed by Public Infrastructure, with 20% (198 inferences), General Organization with 17% (175 inferences), FIFA's Responsibilities with 12% (121 inferences), Cultural Exchanges with 12% (121 inferences) and, finally, both with 9%, but differing by 5 inferences, Private Infrastructure (92 inferences) and Stadiums (87 inferences).



Source: The authors

By hosting the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the Brazilian government drew the attention of those in the world who wanted to watch the competition, but who would most importantly also get to know a country that wished to showcase its best qualities, its infrastructure, hospitality and urban growth. In other words, the image that Brazil would create during that period in time and place in space was intended to be the image that would remain for the rest of the world (Oliver, 2012). All of these actions replicate a single objective: a culture that knows it is under observation and feels itself observed by a huge international audience, via the communication media that will cover the spectacle of a unique event (Moragas, 1992).

The media communicate with their public through identity processes instituted by the socio cultural contexts in which they are inserted, in multiple settings. Furthermore, while sport is essentially an everyday, banal and transitory exercise, it also manifests, in a public manner, some of the reporting and the stories on which groups and identities are founded and which give a society meaning, both locally and globally (Boyle, 2006).

With relation to these ideas, the newspaper analyzed here openly declares itself to be a “product”, subject to the laws of the market, and one that values modernization and professionalism, while the World Cup and sport stand out as media phenomena *because of their capacity to construct significance and meanings within each culture* (Mezzaroba; Pires, 2011, p. 338).⁴ As such, the Folha engages in a modern form of journalism, giving priority to analytical and unbiased criticism, and, as the newspaper’s style guide states, its criteria of choice are that items should be hitherto unpublished, improbable, interesting, attractive and capable of eliciting empathy (Manual da Redação, 2011).

Fausto Neto (2002) mentions that when Brazilian society discusses sport it is operating its agendas (the list of topics offered to readers) capitalizing the social fields. According to this reasoning, media coverage is shaped by agendas that are a *peculiarity of the way of dealing with reality that each newspaper uses to connect with its readership and also the way in which other social fields attribute reliability to what the newspaper prints* (p.16).⁵ As the units of meaning extracted from the Folha were analyzed, it was perceived that the analysis should not be limited to its discourse as a media phenomenon, since the content also expresses social elements of each country that are truly exceptional. From this perspective each category emphasizes a discussion that became important during the World Cup.

Public Infrastructure is a good example. Throughout the entire period that the World Cup was taking place, the paper commented on issues of urban mobility and traffic (including federal, state and municipal roads), affected by jams and, very often, flooding; and also paid particular attention to issues relating to the changes residents of São Paulo had to make to their daily routines to adapt and adjust to the heavier traffic. On the last day of the World Cup, July 13, the newspaper reviewed how the public infrastructure in the host cities had fared, describing the successes and the elements that failed to deliver. Unfinished projects were covered on the front page on June 12, where the paper stated that just 53% of 167 projects had been finished, and local and interurban road systems, airport corridors and metro stations were all mentioned. The most noteworthy Folha de S. Paulo inferences allocated to the General Organization category described and commented on discussions in the foreign media praising or criticizing the event as a whole. For example, in the “Economist” magazine, the British reporter Michael Reid stated that the World Cup had exposed to the world Brazil’s inability to manage large infrastructure projects. In contrast, at a press conference while visiting Brazil, the president of Colombia praised the host country’s organization of the event and its hospitality; stating that the World Cup was marvelous and everybody was pleased.

When the 32 national sides that competed in the World Cup sent feedback on the organization, a common complaint among the teams related to the long distances they had to travel from their training centers and between match locations, while delegations praised the installations where they were staying, especially the hotels and training centers. On June 25, the American newspaper, the New York Times reported that despite all the worries about protests and unfinished stadiums, Brazil was fulfilling its potential with a “marvelous” World Cup and that the Americans, in common with the rest of the world, were “crazy” about the World Cup. Along the same lines, even some Brazilian politicians who had made negative comments about the World Cup beforehand began to make positive statements. This process of reappraisal was constant, and the discourse illustrated both sides of the mega-event, sometimes painting a picture of the overall function and other times making criticisms.

The FIFA’s Responsibilities category basically covers the Fan Fests and how they went, sometimes covering successes in specific host locations (such as the success at Copacabana that has already been mentioned) and sometimes describing, even if to a lesser extent, disturbances (for example, a party held in the Vale do Anhangabaú in the center of São Paulo on the day of the match between Brazil and Mexico became overcrowded, a group of people tried to force their way in and were controlled by the police and fighting broke out) or changes to scheduled parties (in Belo Horizonte the city council and FIFA jointly decided to cancel a Fan Fest after a flyover had collapsed, to signal mourning for victims of the accident). However, from July 2 onwards, 101 inferences assigned to this category reported and discussed issues related to illicit ticket sales schemes, going so far as to claim that an international network had been engaging in unauthorized ticket sales since 2002, which it described as a ticket gang. On many occasions FIFA stated that it was against any form of violation of the ticketing procedures.

⁴ Authors’ translation of “... por sua capacidade de construir sentidos e significados no interior de cada cultura ...”

⁵ Authors’ translation of “... peculiaridade do modo de tratar a realidade com que cada jornal cria vínculos com seu leitorado, e também a maneira pela qual outros campos sociais atribuem confiabilidade ao dito do jornal ...”

In addition to other subjects, the Cultural Exchanges category covered the international sexual liaisons that take place during the World Cup. An item on the first day of the event stated that the World Cup would bring supporters from all over the world. The newspaper emphasized the number of foreigners, particularly South-Americans, who came to our mega-event looking for fun, football and women. In this manner the Folha polarized the demand for sexual tourism, describing the growth in profits and demand in this area. The owners of nightclubs stated that they had never had so many customers and as some prostitutes drew parallels between their services and the price of the World Cup tickets and there were reports of assignations in hotels that cost as much as R\$2,000.00, this level of demand led São Paulo to “import” sex workers.

The Private Infrastructure category included inferences covering commercial transactions during the World Cup; highlighting projects and programs set up to attract the public involved in the World Cup (matches shown in cinemas, bars running involving promotions, trips to tourist attractions, etc). There was also emphasis on the reduction in the number of Brazilian departures at the airports and complaints from the private sector about the negative effect of the inflated airfares. After Brazil lost to Germany, products that referenced the Brazilian national team (t-shirts, whistles, caps and flags) suffered a drastic fall in value and there were articles stating that “everything’s back to normal”, relating to some broadcasters that changed their plans and altered their scheduling. In the Stadiums category, whereas before the World Cup there had been discussion centered on whether the physical infrastructure would be ready or not, during the event there were primarily reports of problems with security and accessibility. Such as, for example, not checking tickets, failures in searches, prohibited items getting into stadiums and long queues inside and outside the stadiums, primarily during the four first days of the tournament, and similar reports of systems that did not function as well as planned, national anthems cut short, etc. There were also reports of failures to secure the perimeters set up around the stadium and of hawkers, ticket touts and bystanders gaining access without tickets. During the half-time break in some of the matches there were queues in the bars and water overflowing in the bathrooms.

Notwithstanding, discussions allocated to the Social Politics and Public Infrastructure categories were the most noteworthy. Both of these categories continued discussions that had already emerged before the World Cup began. There were two major themes: FIFA’s concerns with regard to delays with the preparations and the dissatisfaction of Brazilian citizens with the extremely large sums that were spent in a concentrated, and in the opinion of many, unnecessary manner. In view of its prominence among the inferences, our paper will highlight the Social Politics category ahead of all the empirical material analyzed.

On the first day of the World Cup, June 12, 2014, the front page of the Folha de S. Paulo (Figure 1) dedicated a large amount of space to an aerial photograph of the Itaquerao stadium with the title “#vaitercopa” (#there going to breakup). Analysis of the text on the front page shows that the has htag placed on the football field by the newspaper portrays the national team as on a high after its run of games since the Confederations Cup of 2013, encouraging the fans to remain confident and believe in the possibility of becoming champions. In other words, on the football field we were going to be successful. However, as the article continues it moves on to the subject of the public infrastructure in Brazil, stating that only 53% of the 167 commitments made in 2010 had been delivered, listing important urban mobility projects that had not been completed in time for the eagerly awaited mega-event.

Figure 1 – Front page of the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper on June 12, 2014



Additionally, the article also discusses the social situation with regard to the World Cup, which is starting in a climate of public mistrust, since the population celebrates the national teams, but complains about the magnitude of the spending, summing billions. Debord (1992) states that these spectacles are intrinsically included in a maximal expression of society and that within the capitalist system they are always directed at producing and creating profits. From Martin Curi's perspective (2013), the large-scale investments obey international norms and impact on the everyday lives of Brazilians, sparking a widespread discussion within society about use and abuse and the international significance of these mega-events.

In material published over the first 3 days of the World Cup (June 12, 13 and 14) there were 115 inferences, 47 of which were about Social Politics. The majority emphasized the opening of the mega-event when the president Dilma Rousseff (Figure 2) and FIFA were booed and whistled at the first match of the World Cup. These public insults began in the VIP section of the stadium and spread to all of the other sectors, causing a major furor and becoming a prime issue in the Folha during this period. Even though there have historically been hierarchical divisions between different areas for football supporters (ranging from most expensive to cheapest and with special areas to which access is by invitation only), in this World Cup the seating allocations were reconfigured, prioritizing the upper-middle class and elites (Damo; Oliven, 2013).

It appears that football matches are rituals that reinforce the existing social hierarchy rather than challenging it, but the dissatisfaction manifest at the opening of the World Cup reached all strata, creating a polemic. As Curi puts it, *this tournament of value does not only value the athletes taking part, but also the population, and even changes the status of the place hosting it, whether city or country* (Curi, 2013, p. 72).⁶ Therefore, this mega-event does not only affect local or national interests, its value is globalized. While the host location showcases itself to the world, international tendencies will also be reflected in it.

Figure 2 – Front page of the Folha de S. Paulo on June 13, 2014



The World Cup changed the country. Social movements complained about the sums spent on a sporting event and concluded that money and politics had become mixed up with sport (Damo; Oliven, 2013), while the event provoked an expansion of the (socially constructed) individuals' observation of their own lifestyles and ways of living and, particularly, of the precarious living conditions to which they are very often exposed. Our personal practices reflect individual habits and cultural load (lifestyle) under the direct influence of socioeconomic determinants (living conditions and ways of life) (Bourdieu, 1993). In turn, Gonçalves (2004) defines living conditions as the political and organizational determinants of society as a whole that direct the relationships between groups of individuals and as the variations in sanitation, transport, training, education and health care, among other elements. When the public questions "spending/investments" in the 2014 World Cup it questions the priorities of public spending on the mega-event, in the realization that its living conditions are not up to the "FIFA standard".

⁶ Authors' translation of "... esse torneio de valor não só valoriza os atletas participantes, mas muito mais pessoas e inclusive muda o status da localidade-sede, seja cidade, seja país ..."

Therefore, this scenario of large-scale investments reinforced dissatisfaction with inequalities related to the World Cup. Whereas Mascarenhas (2008) emphasizes the unquestionable power that mega-events have to transform the spaces on which they have an impact and to provide a chance for adoption of a new model for planning and managing cities, founded on the logic of the market, it was the complaints and protest movements emerging in society that were emphasized in the media.

The newspaper printed ever more intriguing images and headlines, many of which covered the Brazilian president's fall in popularity. On the second day of the event, her rating reached its lowest point, just 33% approval among Brazilians, and among higher earners the figure was even lower. Since similar phenomena had been seen during the Confederations Cup the previous year, these attitudes had been expected. As Müller et al. put it "more than anything else, the crowd demanded political reform, ethics and social justice, but organizations linked to global financial elites were not forgotten either. Multinationals were targeted and banks, especially foreign ones, were also often part of the backdrop to the attacks, while FIFA itself and the Confederations Cup entered the list of those being criticized (Müller et al; 2013, p. 87).⁷

In this regard, Sanfelice (2010) states that the symbolic constructions of the media provide individuals with a means of getting to know the world and its ever-changing meanings. It is clear that the public is very often seen positioned in the camp of "naive optimism" (believing in the simple idea that such events will be positive for the country), but at other times takes a position of "critical pessimism" (opposing holding both the World Cup and the Olympic Games, because of graft, corruption and the cost to the public purse (Mezzaroba; Messa; Pires, 2011, p. 21).⁸

Working from the last statement, in the same way that the public changes its position and opinions depending on the context that provokes them and the influence of the environment, the inferences found in the Folha also make use of these variations to adapt to the most plausible arguments of the day. As the World Cup progressed, the high quality football helped to mask certain problems in the country, the atmosphere of festivity and victories in good quality matches took over and the World Cup was becoming unforgettable.

Figure 3 – "Power" section of the Folha de S. Paulo, 22 June, 2014



⁷ Authors' translation of "... a massa humana [...] clamou em suma por uma reforma política, por ética, justiça social, mas também não deixou destacar entidades ligadas as elites financeiras mundiais. Multinacionais foram alvejadas, bancos especialmente estrangeiros, também frequentemente fizeram parte do cenário dos ataques, e dessa forma, a própria FIFA e a Copa das Confederações entraram no alvo das críticas."

⁸ Authors' translation of "... a população que muitas vezes se mostra posicionada no campo do "otimismo ingênuo" (acreditando na simples idéia de que tais eventos serão positivos ao país), e em outros momentos no "pessimismo crítico" (colocando-se contrária à realização, tanto da Copa do Mundo quanto dos Jogos Olímpicos, pelos desvios, corrupção e gastos públicos) ..."

The figure above (Figure 3) deals with the changes in significance and meaning that took place in Brazil in response to the ever higher quality football and the sense of involvement that society allowed itself to feel for the great World Cup that its country was hosting. The subheading states that *The start of the World Cup in Brazil has disproved the international media's expectations that the event would be a disaster for the country*, providing details in the text of plausible explanations for the Brazilian public's change in behavior in just 3 days. The mixture of goals and infrastructure overshadowed what remained of the demonstrations and little was seen about them in the media.

The predominant focus is on the connections between football and national identity, marked by the emotion of the Brazilian team's victories up to this point, minimizing the discussions surrounding public spending and, as a consequence, the size and number of demonstrations (Sanfelice *et al.*, 2014). On June 30, on the front page of the *Folha de S. Paulo*, one of the paper's columnists, Valdo Cruz, wrote, *In the absence of a disaster the errors of the World Cup will be forgotten*. In his column, showing how the *Cup of Chaos* had become the *Cup of Cups*; he cites the public's involvement and satisfaction with the event.⁹

On the next day there were 22 inferences in different subsections of the newspaper covering discussions about the public and the loveable nature of the host country's population. The media's focus had been displaced to visual and discursive compositions emphasizing the connections between sport (football) and national identity. This connection is made more positive by the festive sentiment provoked by the Brazilian national team's victories. At this point, comments about the public money spent on the World Cup, originally brought onto the agenda by the demonstrations held by social movements, had significantly reduced, almost to the point of non-existence (Sanfelice *et al.*, 2014).

However, in the semifinal, held on July 8, 2014, the Brazilian team made serious errors in its match against Germany. The faithful public who had blindly joined the cause of supporting their country during the victories no longer had an objective until the end of the World Cup. The team's 7-1 loss reignited society's dissatisfaction that had until then been covered up. If, before the start, Brazilians had been discussing the cost of the World Cup and the unfinished public infrastructure projects, once the dream had been shattered, they started to complain once more. With no further distractions or celebrations, the number of items in the Social Politics category increased once more. Curi considers the difference in discourse between the host country's politicians and its population. For example, *the central concern is whether a mega-event justifies the magnitude of public resources invested. While politicians and leaders defend it, the social movements are against this spending. The truth is that it is impossible to add up the costs and benefits and to account for the effects over the long term of the marketing, the infrastructure and the other investments* (Curi, 2013, p. 83).¹⁰

However, complementing the idea above, the same author also states that these events increase residents' pride and self-esteem, provoking positive effects in other areas of their lives. During the remaining 5 days of the World Cup (July 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) there were 61 inferences in the Social Politics category (accounting for almost a third of the total), covering new and important discussions in which the Brazilian population was engaging. While it had been permeated by a sense of discontent with the World Cup at the start, since this category included all manifestations of anti-World Cup sentiment, the dissatisfaction with endless spending of the Brazilian public and the social movements, it began to reflect a new prospect for reformulating the country, rethinking the need to invest in employment, efficiency, planning and meritocracy, and in new foundations for sport.

Among the plausible discussions about Brazil's growth during the World Cup, in its status as a country in growth and development, there were many inferences reporting the results of surveys conducted by the paper's *DATAFOLHA* unit that illustrated the population's satisfaction with the World Cup as an event and traced the improvement in polling figures for President Dilma's reelection campaign.

⁹ Authors' translations of "Sem o desastre, erros do Mundial serão esquecidos"; "Copa do Caos" and "Copa das Copas".

¹⁰ Authors' translation of "... a preocupação central para todos os envolvidos é: será que um megaevento justifica o investimento pesado de recursos públicos? Enquanto os políticos e dirigentes defendem, os movimentos sociais são contrários ao gasto. A verdade é que é impossível contabilizar gastos e ganhos e perceber os efeitos em longo prazo do marketing, da infraestrutura e de outros investimentos ..."

Figure 4 – Front page of the Folha de S.Paulo on July 3, 2014



The front page of the Folha de S. Paulo for July 3 (Figure 4) reports on the country's improved humor and on increases in the polling figures for the upcoming elections. Notwithstanding, there is also a photograph and a subtitle referring to rioting that took place in the Vila Madalena neighborhood during the World Cup, reflecting opposing discourses. However, the most striking contradiction is the photograph of workers' party politician José Dirceu, who was jailed for his role in a corruption scandal that involved buying the votes of members of Brazil's federal parliament, the Congresso Nacional. Since he is a member of the same party as Brazil's president, the newspaper is playing with meanings, contrasting the image of the "godfather" of the cash-for-votes "mensalão" scandal with the relative popularity that Dilma Rousseff achieved during the World Cup. According to Esteves (1998), different elements of society resort to the media to further their objectives and interests. As such, the media, and also the government and the private sector are interested in valuing actions related to the election candidates and to the claims of legacies to be left in Brazil.

In its Power subsection, on July 12, the Folha reported that the number of demonstrations fell by 38% during the World Cup, because the space in the media needed to activate the demonstrations was not there, because of the increase in police repression and, primarily, because they had to compete with the football matches. Therefore, one day before the World Cup hosted by Brazil ended, our president had already acquired the popularity she had been seeking. Inferences on July 13, the last day of the mega-event, pointed out that Brazil had been better than the Brazilian football team and that the eagerly anticipated FIFA 2014 World Cup had been a great success (Folha, July 13, 2014, Front page). Thus, if for the president of Brazil the World Cup signified *the opportunity to increase her influence, gain international recognition and guarantee her electoral base* (Curi, 2013, p. 80),¹¹ her objectives had been achieved, since the population became involved and the demonstrators' discourse relating to public infrastructure was forgotten and overshadowed at that point.

4. Final comments

With regard to the Folha de S. Paulo's coverage, it was observed that it changed its agendas, constantly positioning itself in subjects that were current and of public interest. At some points it discussed Brazilians' dissatisfaction and reported on anti-World Cup demonstrations and arguments for improvements, exposing the revolt of society against the current president and FIFA as an entity. At other points it portrayed a proud population (directly involved with and related to the Brazilian national team's victories). In this sense, the attempt to interpret the popular demonstrations and the Brazilian government's objective in hosting the World Cup was assimilated by the newspaper using the same logic, i.e. the need to establish and consolidate a national identity– expressed by the need to hold a "Cup of Cups". In discussing a situation that is very often absent and is lost in corruption, there is a need for dedication to studies, for public and private infrastructure, and a need to encourage and take advantage of this valuation that comes hand-in-hand with the mega-event. In contrast with the view taken by the cynical with relation to its capacity to organize and execute a sporting mega-event, Brazil proved capable, the foreign visitors enjoyed themselves, the emotion took over and the most complex issues of infrastructure, investment and spending were postponed.

¹¹ Authors' translation of "... a oportunidade de aumentar sua influência, se projetar internacionalmente e garantir a sua base eleitoral ..."

For how long will they last? This World Cup enabled elements of identity to be strengthened and reinforced feelings of preservation, order, solidarity and pride, centered on the sentiment of a mature Brazil, (with the exception of the Germany 7-1 Brazil), capable of hosting and organizing a mega-event such as the World Cup, even if society will have to cover the high costs of that mega-event.

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