

## PRE-COVERAGE OF THE CONFEDERATIONS CUP IN FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO NEWSPAPER - MEDIA PROJECTING A PROFITABLE SUCCESS

### PRÉ-COBERTURA DA COPA DAS CONFEDERAÇÕES DO JORNAL FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO – MÍDIAS PROJETANDO UM SUCESSO LUCRATIVO

Gustavo Roesse Sanfelice<sup>1</sup>

Alessandra Fernandes Feltes<sup>2</sup>

Lafaiete Luiz de Oliveira Junior<sup>3</sup>

Norberto Kuhn Junior<sup>4</sup>

Joaquín Marín Montín<sup>5</sup>

#### RESUMO

The present descriptive, quali-quantitative study analyzed a corpus comprising issues from the Brazilian newspaper Folha de São Paulo published from March 1 to June 15, 2013, which were read in full. The aim of this paper was to identify and interpret the production of meaning established by Folha de São Paulo in the pre-coverage of Brazil 2013 Confederations Cup. A total of 107 issues of the newspaper were analyzed to assess and interpret the agenda and the bias adopted by the newspaper, considering texts, images, editorials, reports, panels, other online channels, and advertisements. The inferences obtained from this analysis were related to the following categories, which were formulated based on units of meaning: Sport result; Sport economy; Infrastructure; Political and social issues, and Publicity. We concluded that the newspaper Folha de São Paulo has the right to choose what, in its point of view, is more relevant for the society: attracting powerful sponsors or focusing its reports on discussing how to stimulate the development of the country and providing constructive information to a non-critical society.

**Keywords:** Media. Soccer. Confederations Cup.

#### RESUMO

A presente pesquisa caracteriza-se como descritiva/quali-quantitativa, tendo como *corpus* o jornal *Folha de São Paulo*/Brasil, analisado durante os dias 1º de março ao dia 15 de junho de 2013, em todo o seu exemplar. O objetivo deste trabalho foi identificar e interpretar a produção de sentido estabelecida pela *Folha de São Paulo* sobre a pré-cobertura da Copa das Confederações/Brasil/2013. Foram analisadas 107 edições do jornal, com o objetivo de analisar e interpretar o agendamento e o viés adotados pelo jornal, considerando textos, imagens, editoriais, matérias, painéis, outros canais e

<sup>1</sup> sanfeliceg@feevale.br

<sup>2</sup> alessandrafeltes@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup> lafaiete\_junior@hotmail.com

<sup>4</sup> nkjunior@feevale.br

<sup>5</sup> jmontin@us.es

publicidades. As inferências obtidas através dessa análise foram relacionadas às seguintes categorias, formuladas a partir das unidades de significados: Esporte resultado; Esporte economia; Infraestrutura; Questões políticas e sociais e Publicidade. Concluimos que o jornal *Folha de São Paulo* tem o direito de escolher aquilo que é mais relevante para ele no contexto da sociedade: atrair poderosos patrocinadores ou centralizar seus cadernos na discussão de como alavancar o desenvolvimento do país e dispor informações construtivas para uma sociedade não crítica.

**Palavras-chave:** Mídia. Futebol. Copa das Confederações.

## RESUMEN

La presente investigación, caracterizada como descriptiva/cuali-cuantitativa, tiene como corpus las ediciones del periódico brasileño *Folha de São Paulo* publicadas del 1 de marzo a 15 de junio de 2013, que fueron leídas integralmente. El objetivo de este trabajo fue identificar e interpretar la producción de sentido establecida por *Folha de São Paulo* en la cobertura previa a la Copa de las Confederaciones de Brasil en 2013. Se analizaron 107 ediciones del periódico, con el objetivo de evaluar e interpretar la agenda y el sesgo adoptados por el periódico, considerando textos, imágenes, editoriales, materiales, paneles, otros canales en línea, y publicidades. Se relacionaron las inferencias obtenidas de ese análisis con las siguientes categorías, formuladas a partir de las unidades de significado: Deporte resultado; Deporte economía; Infraestructura; Cuestiones políticas y sociales, y Publicidad. Concluimos que el periódico *Folha de São Paulo* tiene el derecho de elegir lo que considera más relevante para la sociedad: atraer poderosos patrocinadores o enfocar en sus reportajes la discusión de cómo fomentar el desarrollo del país y proveer informaciones constructivas a una sociedad no crítica.

**Palabras-claves:** Media. Fútbol. Copa de las Confederaciones.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, sporting mega-events have become an important source of scientific studies based on the amount of media inferences related to contemporary society. Media coverage provides the population with new senses and meanings that become integrated into the core of every culture, encouraging people to live, feel, and discuss certain specific subjects (MEZZAROBBA; PIRES, 2011).

Since Brazil is hosting these major events, the country has been promoting the sport decade, which began in 2007 with the Pan American Games, continued with FIFA World Cup Brazil 2014, and will be finished with the Olympic Games in 2016. In this context, it is possible to understand the interest of the scientific community in offering a profound reflection, criticism, and perspectivation on the so-called sporting mega-events (TAVARES, 2011).

Thus, the present descriptive, quali-quantitative study analyzed a *corpus* comprising issues of the Brazilian newspaper *Folha de São Paulo* published from March 1 to June 15, which were read in full, to categorize the pre-coverage of the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup in this newspaper.

“Although the Confederations Cup does not meet the parameters of a mega-event, according to the definition of some authors, it is a previous event also used by the media field to set the agenda for the FIFA World Cup” (MÜLLER *et al.*, 2013, p. 87). In a way, this event, which is held one year before the World Cup, has also served for FIFA to exert a relative “pressure,” particularly on undeveloped countries, for the compliance with its requests on the final details for the mega-event.

A total of 107 issues of the newspaper were analyzed in order to assess and interpret the agenda and the bias adopted by the newspaper, considering texts, images, editorials, reports, panels, advertisements, and other channels whose content was systematically related to the 2014 World Cup and/or the 2013 Confederations Cup. The inferences obtained from this analysis were related to the categories described below, which were formulated based on units of meaning:

1. **Sport Result:** corresponds to characteristics related to the sport competition itself, considering technical, tactical and physical aspects.
2. **Sport Economy:** represents the sport as a business, discussing investments, sponsors, public bids, and expenses related to soccer/World Cup and Confederations Cup.
3. **Infrastructure:** presents aspects of the creation, restoration and expansion of airports, stadiums, roads, hotels, such as demand for funds, financing, renovation or construction projects, etc., for the Confederations Cup and World Cup.
4. **Political and Social Issues:** discusses aspects related to politics and to the social demonstrations in Brazil linked to the Confederations Cup and World Cup.
5. **Publicity:** covers advertisements addressing the Confederations Cup or the World Cup published in the newspaper, disclosing the funders of the sporting event and also the supporters of Folha de São Paulo.

The next topic will analyze which is the agenda and the bias of the newspaper regarding the abovementioned events, based on the analytical categories established for this research.

## DATA ANALYSIS:

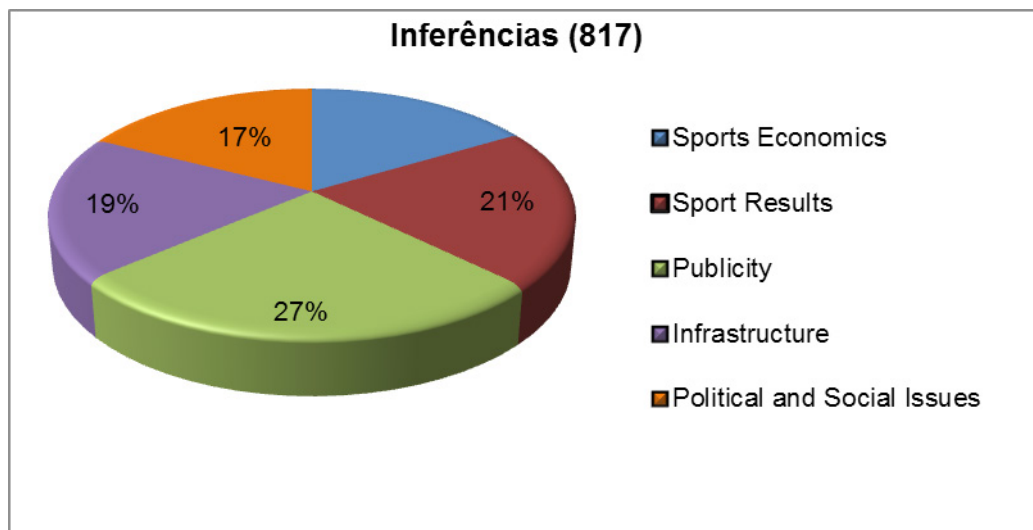
Sporting mega-events involve a large portion of the public, a target market, the construction of facilities, political effects, financial involvement of the public sector in different domain, and an impact on the economic and social system in the place that will host these events (HALL, *apud* TAVARES, 2011).

For this reason, the Brazilian government uses the argument of putting the country under the spotlight to justify the choice of Brazil as the host country of the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Thus, the country strives to show its best features, since it is being watched worldwide. In other words, due to this exposure, the image reinforced by Brazil will be the one that will remain for the rest of the world (OLIVER, 2012).

According to Damo (2011), currently the World Cup has also another nature, being seen as a commodity offered to soccer enthusiasts who fund this worldwide spectacle. Considering the game as a product, more emphasis is put on its economic value than on its sportive value. Because of that, according to Mezzaroba, Messa and Pires (2011, p. 27): "A sporting mega-event is actually a social and economic fact that impacts different areas of the society of the host country rather than a sporting event." Complementing these authors, Gastaldo (2009) considers the World Cup as a social fact of paramount importance to Brazilians, which results mainly from the great media dissemination of this mega-event. Moreover, Damo (2011) adds that this event tends to raise the interest of more fans than soccer normally does.

Consequently, the media gets control of the communication with its receivers/consumers through identity processes (ways of framing) established by the society/culture into which they are inserted, i.e., “the media becomes accessible to its audience due to the similarity of its form and its content, which is given by the very audience” (SANFELICE, 2007, p.15). Hence, the media shape the sport, as well as it makes the media. The World Cup and the Olympics are benchmarks of penetration of sports into social fields as a spectacle.

Thus, during our study period (March, April, May and June), we identified 817 inferences that portrayed and set the agenda for the 2013 Confederations Cup and/or the 2014 World Cup.



**GRAPH1 - Percentage of inferences by categories during the study period**

The graph above shows the total number of units of meaning (texts, images, advertisements, editorials, panels, reports, titles, and other on-line support channels) retrieved from Folha de São Paulo, totaling 817 inferences. Following the logic of the news construction, in which the dominant fact in the period under analysis is the agenda of the 2013 Confederations Cup directly related to the concept of sport as a commodity, the **Publicity** category accounted for 27% of the total, followed by **Sport Results**, with 21%, **Infrastructure**, with 19%, **Political and Social Issues**, with 17%, and finally **Sports Economics**, with 16%.

However, whereas hosting the World Cup is a commitment made by the country and a strategy to leverage and attract international investments, other demands lose space, e.g., health and education (PORTO; CERON; ARAÚJO, 2012). According to Ribeiro (2008, p. 115), the legacy of a sporting mega-event should ideally contemplate sportive, economic, social and environmental aspects. Consequently, following the author’s line of thought, Folha de São Paulo should use information in a balanced way and the provide society with a wide range of knowledge from all sectors.

The World Cup held in Brazil is a mega-event in which different areas achieve fluctuating importance. According Mezzaroba and Pires (2011), the media discourse, composed of three dimensions – information, entertainment, and publicity –, tends to have increasingly more subtle and mixed boundaries between these elements.

For example, it is worth highlighting, in **Sport Economy** and **Infrastructure** categories, the investments made for the construction of stadiums and urban mobility. However, we know that the money for these investments comes from public, state and federal levels, as well as from the Brazilian Development Bank (Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social, BNDES). As for the **Political and Social Issues** category, it should be considered that Brazil is still a developing country and that the sum invested in the World Cup is taken from other areas essential to national development, such as health and education (DOMINGUES; BATERELLI JUNIOR; MAGALHÃES, 2011).

Prior to the 2013 Confederations Cup, there were demonstrations that aimed, “in short, to claim for a political reform, ethics, social justice, and also to attack entities linked to global financial elites.[...] thus, FIFA itself and the Confederations Cup were also criticized” (MÜLLER *et al.*, 2013).

Thus, as noted above, Brazil had significant lags in the preparation for hosting the World Cup, which resulted from difficulties in raising private money without appealing to tax exemptions and the possibility of building white elephants. This topic is also related to the categories **Infrastructure** and **Sports Result**, since it addresses the number of host cities and the lack of teams with national prominence in cities such as Cuiabá, Brasília and Manaus. It is necessary to rethink the purpose to which some facilities were built, because they will probably be rented for a variety of events with little relevance, thus creating an economic deficit (BRUGGEMANN *et al.*, 2011).

Finally, we noticed that all categories are interconnected, since they include several matters for discussion and covers a wide range of topics, even though some categories gained prominence due to the number of inferences. However, it is worth noting the relevance obtained by the **Publicity** category, making it possible to state that the World Cup is not only a mega event that involves soccer, cheering, nationalism, urban mobility, investments, demonstrations, but more than that, it is a commodity that has an influence on the market as a product of high quality and value.

According to Mezzaroba e Pires (2011), sport has become a major financial investment, due to its ability to attract viewers and to be an endless source of news, audience and profit, providing an opportunity for sponsors to gain more space in the market. It is in this context that Folha de São Paulo sets its agenda, since it becomes evident, from the data presented in the previous graph, that the newspaper, similarly to FIFA, also knows how advantageous it is to sell the World Cup as more than a sporting event.

Tavares (2011, p.19) also mentions that “[...] FIFA’s speech says little about soccer as a way of promoting values of sport. It seems to us that this entity believes that the World Cup is only about competitive sport and business.” Thus, we notice that the logic adopted by FIFA is also followed by other companies that need to expand their profits through an event of such magnitude as the World Cup. Porto, Ceron and Araújo (2013) identified the main media slogan of the event, i.e., the World Cup will end, but the development will remain in the nation. However, which development is this? (continua)

In some cases, sporting mega-events have become excellent instruments to leverage structural, financial and professional investments, bringing prosperity and opportunities for their host cities, as it was the case of Barcelona (SILVA *et al.*, 2011). Nonetheless, one cannot reduce the discussion with which we are dealing today to sport, the loyalty of sponsors, and the pursuit of profit (OLIVEIRA, 2011).

When hosting a sporting mega event, “there is undoubtedly pressure from companies doing business in Brazil, especially those that produce something that identifies the country [...], because the marketshare will become even greater, and many others companies that have not yet been discovered by the world” (OLIVER, 2012, p. 11). Therefore, the 27% found in the **Publicity** category reveals the fact that there is always a commodity to be sold, whether this commodity is the event, i.e., the World Cup, an institution, i.e., FIFA, a company, and maybe even a national passion, which is demonstrated through incessant repetition, with the image below reporting a constant scene in the newspaper:

FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO DOMINGO, 2 DE JUNHO DE 2013 poder A5

**COMPRAR CERTA 2013 CAR-DRIVER**

**FAÇA A COMPRA CERTA.**  
 HYUNDAI i30. VENCEDOR DO PRÊMIO COMPRA CERTA DA REVISTA CAR AND DRIVER.  
 O NOVO i30 SUPEROU TODOS OS OUTROS CARROS DA CATEGORIA. FORAM AVALIADOS CRITÉRIOS COMO PREÇO, EQUIPAMENTOS, GARANTIA, REDE DE CONCESSIONÁRIAS ENTRE OUTROS.

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GPS, BLUETOOTH E CÂMERA DE RÉ  
 FREIO DE ESTACIONAMENTO ELETRÔNICO  
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 RODAS ARO 17"  
 GARANTIA HYUNDAI 5 ANOS SEM LIMITE DE QUILÔMETRAGEM. CONSULTE CONDIÇÕES NO SITE.

**i30** HYUNDAI | NEW THINKING. NEW POSSIBILITIES.

LOJAS DA CAPITAL ABERTAS AOS DOMINGOS ATÉ AS 19 H. INCLUSIVE HOJE.

Alguns equipamentos descritos nos textos e nos textos são opcionais e podem ou não estar disponíveis na versão apresentada neste anúncio. Consulte o distribuidor. Fonte: Revista Car And Driver - Edição 16 - Ano VI.

www.hyundai-motor.com.br DISTRIBUIDORES EM TODO O PAÍS: 0800 55 95 45

Respeite os limites de velocidade.

Figure 1 – Image from Folha de São Paulo newspaper, Political Section, June 02 2013.

In the 107 issues, the above image of the sponsor appears 98 times in the political section of the newspaper, always in the same way: the product is centralized and there is the Brazil 2014 World Cup logo. Advertisements from the same company also appear on other pages of the journal (Vehicle section) with the same layout.

In view of the above, it is possible to notice how subtle this fixation may be, to the point of not even realizing how strong it is, by performing an association with what really should matter on a sporting mega-event. Beyond the issues of sport performance, there are issues related to infrastructure, economic development, and social/political bias. Only the Hyundai brand obtained 222 inferences during the study period, while all inferences on infrastructure issues were limited to 152 mentions, which were far from being honorable. Thus, this research found that the media and sponsors used several strategies to articulate different fields and interests that converged in the sports field.

Finally, considering the study period, the trend would be for infrastructure issues to stand out against the others, after all it was a period of completing constructions, stadiums, and airports in order to promote the urban development of the host country. But, even so, Folha de São Paulo chose to leave these issues aside and rather create identification between fans and sponsors.

## **FINAL REMARKS**

In summary, social representations are produced in everyday life, whether in the processes of social interaction, communication, work, culture, etc., and constitute ways of interpreting, understanding, categorizing, feeling and reading the world. If the world thinks and sets its agenda based on sporting mega-events, specifically the World Cup and its test event, the Confederations Cup, these can be considered a social representation because they have become expressions of a group on a historical moment.

Thus, the media seek only to establish relations with society discussing what they believe to be more significant to the reader, incorporating and reflecting the shared values in order to achieve profitable success. Traquina (2004) mentioned that journalists have an important influence on what is news. Both the selection of events and/or issues that will form the agenda and of the frameworks for interpreting these events and/or issues are important powers of the professionals of the journalistic field.

Based on the objective of identifying and interpreting the production of meaning established by Folha de São Paulo on the pre-coverage of the 2013 Brazil Confederations Cup, it was possible to understand that the newspaper chooses to constantly and broadly disclose their supporters, which, by coincidence or not, are also sponsors of the 2014 Brazil FIFA World Cup and sometimes are even sponsors of the Brazilian national soccer team.

Thus, the newspaper ends up selling the image of the national team, the sporting mega-event, and its sponsors, thus obtaining a logic of news construction that values the economic bias, even surpassing urban and sporting factors. Hence, if people develop their knowledge about the world from what the media includes or excludes from its own content, why would not it be beneficial to the media or companies that want to profit? Unfortunately, Folha de São Paulo has the right to choose what, is more relevant for the society: attracting powerful sponsors or focusing its reports on discussing how to stimulate the development of the country and providing constructive information to a non-critical society.

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