

**One Country, Two Cups—  
The International Image of Brazil in 1950 and in 2014:  
A Study of the Reputation and the Identity of Brazil as  
Projected by the International Media During the  
Two FIFA World Cups in the Country**

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This article analyzes the international image of Brazil as projected in the foreign media coverage of the two World Cups held in the country through the theoretical framework of nation branding and competitive identity. Brazil hosted the 1950 and the 2014 FIFA World Cups as a strategy to improve its international image. This article uses content and discourse analysis of international media articles to show that, as a public diplomacy strategy, hosting the Cups was a big success. There was an increase in the visibility of Brazil in both years because of the Cups, but there was also a change in the frames used to describe Brazil, from the economy and culture to politics, and a change in tone, from positive to negative. The use of stereotypes about Brazil also became more frequent in 2014.

*Keywords: international image, nation branding, Brazil, identity, football, World Cup*

### Introduction

In October 2007, when Brazil was announced as the host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva spoke passionately about what was seen as an international achievement of the country. Brazil, he said, should “prove to the world that we have a growing, stable economy and that we are one of the countries that achieved stability” (Silva, 2007, p. 1). Similarly, in 2009, when Rio de Janeiro was selected to host the 2016 Olympic Games, Lula argued that some people “still consider Brazil a second class country, as if we had no importance,” but this was a great “opportunity” to show it to the world (Lopes, 2009, p. 1). The two global events, it was expected, would work as part of a long-term public diplomacy strategy to enhance the international visibility of Brazil and to improve and consolidate the image of the country abroad as an emerging nation with a great deal of soft power (Soares e Castro, 2013).

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Increasing international prestige has been in the national interest since the 19th century and seems to have achieved its momentum in the first decade of the 21st century, when Brazil became more present in international affairs (Buarque, 2013). Following an established trend, however, the international image of the country has been associated with stereotypes of fun and parties such as beaches, Carnival, football, and happy people (Niesing, 2013). According to the most respected survey of international image, Brazil has a reputation of being “decorative, but not useful” (Buarque, 2013, p. 27). The most cited study of international images shows that Brazil is the 20th best known country in the world, faring well in the soft attributes of its image, such as people and culture, but badly in more serious aspects, such as governance and investment (Anholt, 2010). With increased global visibility, the 2014 Cup was expected to serve as a chance to rebrand the country, showing that it could be taken seriously.

The 2014 tournament, however, was not the first time that Brazil hosted a World Cup and that football<sup>2</sup> fulfilled diplomatic roles (Hollanda, 2014). In 1950, the championship held in the country helped to consolidate football as a cultural symbol of nationalism. From a historical perspective, the two World Cups could be understood as pivotal moments for the Brazilian identity and for the formation and consolidation of the international image of the country.

The object of this study is to analyze and compare the image of Brazil as portrayed in the international media during the two World Cups held in the country. It is an important subject because hosting the events was part of a national public diplomacy strategy. Considering this was a unique moment—the first time a country in Latin America hosted a World Cup for the second time—this is a good opportunity to analyze how both events were portrayed internationally, allowing for a comparison of the international image of the nation in each historical moment.

The study included a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative discourse analysis of news articles published in major global publications mentioning Brazil during the two tournaments to understand what image of the country was projected. The article uses nation branding and competitive identity theories, an area of study that focus on the international image of countries.

Despite the results on the pitch—including two major defeats of the Brazilian team—both Cups were recognized as successes (Gibson, 2014; Gilardi, 2008) and boosted the international visibility of Brazil. There was also an increase in the number of times Brazil was mentioned in the international media, when comparing the coverage of the 1950 Cup with the coverage of the 2014 Cup (from 424 to 3,733).

The country, however, seems not to have rebranded itself, as the media acted as an independent observer and followed a nation-branding trend to become more attached to stereotypes, most of them either bearing a negative connotation or reinforcing the idea of Brazil as a country of parties. In fact, the use of stereotypes increased in 2014 when compared to 1950. In 1950, Brazil was associated with passion for football and the production of coffee, and in 2014 the country was associated with new stereotypes, such as social unrest, and traditional ones, such as football, corruption, Carnival, and beaches.

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<sup>2</sup> Although the sport is commonly referred to as *soccer* in the United States, this article will use the traditional English and international term *football*.

Although the international coverage of the Cup did not help in rebranding Brazil as a “serious” nation, the qualitative analysis seems to show that Brazil was successful in hosting the events and achieved its public diplomacy goals, creating a happy global party. Even without changing the image of a country, the Cup seems to have increased the visibility of and strengthened the brand—the international image—that Brazil already had.

### **Nation as Brand**

The international image of a country can be understood and analyzed through the study of competitive national identity, a recently developed area of research that refers to the reputation of countries as projected by the countries themselves and as perceived by the rest of the world. Although the terms *identity*, *image*, and *reputation* are often used interchangeably, they are different constructs that refer to mental associations generated by knowledge and experience. *Identity* is about self-perception, *image* is what is projected to others, and *reputation* is the feedback received from others (Fan, 2010). The study of international image and reputation is developed from the growing academic field of nation branding and competitive identity, which in turn draws on research areas of marketing, country of origin effect, place branding, national identity, public diplomacy, and soft power.

The idea that nations can be compared to commercial brands began developing in the 1990s. Nation branding is an attempt to build soft power that starts from the somewhat exaggerated claim that with globalization, the world has become one market and each country must compete with the other nations for “its share of the world’s consumers, tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international sporting and cultural events, and for the attention and respect of the international media, of other governments, and the people of other countries” (Anholt, 2007, p. 1).

Academic research was quick to offer a critique of connecting the concepts of nation and marketing. Drawing on constructivist analysis, scholars have argued that nation branding represents a transformation of business in the articulation of national identity with consequences for the concept of the nation and the ideals of national citizenship (Aronczyk, 2013). Nation branding is also critiqued for its reproduction and enhancement of stereotypes: “Stereotypes seem to be the enemy and the best friend of nation branders at the same time, because in practice, prevailing stereotypes are often the starting point from which a national brand is developed” (Widler, 2007, p. 148).

Despite the fact that more than 40 countries have developed projects to promote their images as brands, scholars are still far from a widespread understanding of what this means in practice (Aronczyk, 2008). A decade after creating the term *nation branding*, however, Anholt (2007) saw it as naïve and superficial to think of it as standard product promotion. He thus changed the name of the analysis of international images of countries to *competitive identity* because the concept has more to do with national identity than with commercial branding.

Competitive identity, Anholt (2007) explains, is a new model for national competitiveness in a global world, the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and trade, investment, tourism,

and export promotion. The choice to change *brand* to *identity* was made because the concept has richer and deeper cultural resources than *brand* conveys. Unlike commercial brands, nations do not belong to anyone, although their images can be interpreted as a blend of elements that differentiate the nation. National identity plays a key role in nation branding, as the international images of a nation are rooted in the reality of the nation's culture (Dinnie, 2008). The term *brand* is thus presented as a metaphor for the way places compete with each other in the global market (Anholt, 2010).

Therefore, competitive national identity can be accepted as a way to understand, measure, and analyze the international images of nations, acknowledging the criticism of the idea of a brand but recognizing that in the globalized world, it is important to understand what is thought about each country and how this reputation is connected to, or separated from, the national identity of that country (Fan, 2008).

### **The Brazil Brand**

The 2014 World Cup was part of a public diplomacy strategy to promote the international image of Brazil. It was the only time Brazil had some kind of image promotion that went beyond campaigns to attract tourists. Part of diplomatic practice long before the debate about competitive national identity, *public diplomacy* can be defined as diplomacy that targets the general public in foreign societies instead of relationships between the representatives of states. Public diplomacy is in the origins of nation branding, and although the concepts are distinct, they are not completely different responses to the increased importance of countries' identities in global relations (Melissen, 2005).

Public diplomacy is also a key instrument of soft power, which is the ability of a country to get what it wants through attraction rather than coercion. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies—which are closely related to its image and reputation (Nye, 2004).

While football and the 1950 World Cup helped to consolidate the Brazilian national identity (DaMatta, 1982; Santos, 2010), the tournament in 2014 was used as tool of public diplomacy as Brazil tried to improve its global influence and to increase its soft power. The World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games are part of a strategy of sports diplomacy to enhance the country's reputation symbolizing Brazil's rise on the international stage and its assuming the role of an influential country in world affairs (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Soares e Castro, 2013; Szondi, 2008). This is seen as important because Brazil does not have an excess of hard military power and thus needs to construct its international presence on the basis of confidence and in the construction of soft power, which helped the country to establish its interests globally through consensual solutions (Lafer, 2000).

There is already a strong debate on how the Cup and the Olympics can increase the global awareness about the hosting countries. The visibility of hosting sports mega-events signals the country's achievement of world-class status and international legitimacy (Anholt, 2009; Black, 2007). Analysis of the impact of such events in Japan, China, South Africa, and Germany has shown that international media coverage of the country is boosted during the competition (Walsh & Wiedmann, 2008). Yao (2010) found that there tends to be a decline in the negative news of host countries in the international media after the

Olympic Games, accompanied by a rise in positive stories. This article argues that this was partly the case for Brazil with the 2014 World Cup, which resulted in increased visibility but not positive coverage. Although the Olympics and the World Cup are different in their nature, this trend could be important to this article because both are similar global events with strong international impact.

There are, however, problems related to hosting a global event like the Cup, such as prejudicial attitudes of the media coverage, which risk damaging the hopes of projecting a positive image to an international audience. The opportunity of hosting global events is highly dependent on what a country does with this chance (Anholt, 2010). For Brazil, hosting the Cup could have been an opportunity to be seen not only as a decorative country but also as an emergent economic and political power (Buarque, 2009). What seems to have happened, however, is that the international media reinforced most of the common stereotypes about Brazil.

Brazilians seem to be obsessed with what foreigners think about their country, and this is often explained by what Nelson Rodrigues (1958/1993) called the "*complexo de vira-latas*," the mongrel complex: the inferiority with which Brazilians voluntarily cast themselves in face of the rest of the world. Passos (cited in Buarque, 2013) argues that Brazilians have a need for affirmation through the discourse of the "other," while Carvalho (2009) affirms that Brazilians alternate between extreme the negative and positive visions of the people and the country.

Although Brazil has long been interested in promoting its international image, when the country hosted the World Cup for the first time, it was still widely unknown and poorly interpreted (Aranha, 1949). By the 1950s, Brazil was associated with rubber and coffee. "When we thought of Brazil, we thought of savages inhabiting the Amazon Valley, where huge snakes crawl and monkeys chatter in forest jungles" (Hunnicut, 1949, p. 3). In the first half of the 20th century, Europeans and North Americans saw Brazil as an indistinguishable South American republic with hot weather, unstable politics, and disorganized finances, but one that was geographically beautiful, with unrealized possibilities (Zweig, 2008). What little knowledge people abroad had about Brazil was cast in highly negative stereotypes: "something including a dash of gigolo with large elements of laziness, illiteracy, backwardness, uncleanness" (Garza, 2013, p. 11).

Six decades later, a lot has changed, and Brazil seems to be getting more international attention in the twenty-first century, but stereotypes do not easily go away, and many of the original ones are still attached to the idea of Brazil, along with several new ones. With steady economic growth, natural resources, and a role in international politics, Brazil is among the highest ranked Latin American countries in terms of positive reputation, as shown in research of the international images of nations (Niesing, 2013).

The country is very popular and strong in the soft attributes of image, such as Carnival, beaches, football, and beautiful women (Niesing, 2013). Anholt (2007) argues that Brazilians find that their image as a party country frustrates their efforts to be taken seriously in business and in international relations—in the hard attributes of its image—no matter how great their achievements in these areas. Brazil still has an international reputation of being decorative but not useful (Anholt, cited in Buarque, 2013). Although

Brazil has been improving its global profile, this imbalance in the international opinion of the country could have negative effects for attracting investment and international respect for the country as an emergent power.

### **Nation and Identity**

When discussing the international image of a country, it is important to first understand what national identity is. According to Anderson (2006), the ideas of nation, nationality, and nationalism have proved notoriously difficult to define and analyze, driving academics to argue that it is impossible to agree on a scientific definition for national identity. From an anthropological perspective, the author proposes that a nation is an "imagined political community," (p. 6) always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.

National identity is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to a single element. It should be seen as a complex construct composed of interrelated components such as ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, and political factors that signify bonds of solidarity among members of communities united by shared memories, myths, and traditions (Smith, 1991). For Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), some of the main traces of national identity are artificial creations. Traditions that appear to be old and immutable, they argue, are often recent and invented— which may be the case in Brazil, this article will argue.

Surveys about the international image of countries suggest that people have a limited capacity to understand other societies and cannot easily develop mental images of more than 30 nations (Anholt, 2010). According to Anholt (2007), it seems that people need stereotypes to enable them to think simply about countries, and however unfair it may seem, stereotypes affect people's behavior toward other places, making it hard for a country to persuade the rest of the world to go beyond these simple images.

The term *stereotyping* was coined by Walter Lippmann in 1922 to describe "pictures in our heads" (Fan, 2008). Stereotypes are now understood as clusters of preconceived notions assuming that all the objects in some category are similar in ways other than the one used to categorize them. When the diversity within a population is reduced to a single characteristic as if it constitutes the population's essence, as happens with international stereotypes, it can be considered essentialism. It is claimed that the essence is unavoidable, and it is common to assume that these cultural categories address collections of people that really exist and that are discretely identifiable (Calhoun, 1997).

Drawing on the literature of nation image, Dinnie (2008) argues that there is a conflict between the concepts of identity and image. While *identity* refers to the essence of something, *image* refers to how it is perceived, and the two can be separated by a gap. This identity–image gap can be interpreted as a negative factor that frustrates nations that do not feel they are perceived by the rest of the world for what they truly are and that leads to stereotypes and clichés. This article will show that although there is such a gap in the case of Brazil, which frustrates the country because it is seen mostly as a place for partying, most of the stereotypes do have a connection with the reality of Brazil.

Despite the fact that Brazil has been an independent country for almost two centuries, Brazilians are still far from agreeing on a definition of what it means to be from Brazil (Ortiz, 1985). National identity is deeply connected to a reinterpretation of what is popular among social groups and to the construction of the Brazilian state, and if there is agreement, it is in arguing that Brazil is “distinct” from other countries, an important part of the formation of every identity (Hall, 1996).

The international image of a people can be of great importance for the development of the national identity. According to Novinger (2003), the Brazilian national identity could be defined, with the help of the foreign perspective, as one of a gracious people who are courteous, pleasant, and cordial in all circumstances and who prefer to avoid friction, confrontation, or hostility.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, however, Brazil was still an agrarian country that could hardly be called a nation with an identity. It was the Revolution of 1930 that began a process of restructuring the country from the economic and political point of view, unifying the nation and defining its identity through systematic state intervention in the national culture to create the sense of “*brasildade*” (Barbalho, 2007; Ortiz, 2009). Doing work that would fit the artificial creation of national identity described by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) or the actual rebranding of a nation, president and dictator Getúlio Vargas reinterpreted *brasildade* by creating traditions and encouraged nationalistic pride as a tool in nation-state consolidation (Nava, 2006).

Vargas promoted traditionally available cultural elements reworked and filled with new meanings. Samba, football, and Carnival started to be projected as symbols of Brazilianness (Ortiz, 2009). From the 1930s on, through samba, football, and other symbols of *brasildade*, Brazil would be a national community, as described by Anderson (2006), and a historical community greater than the sum of its parts and of its regional identities that continued to exist—even if residents of different regions had no knowledge of one another.

### **Measuring Nation Images**

The object of this study is to examine the international image of Brazil projected in the foreign media. Measures of perceived image consist of both qualitative and quantitative dimensions, as mixed methods may yield more insightful results (Chan & Marafa, 2013).

The Anholt-GFK Nation Brands Index is recognized as the most high-profile method to measure images (Aronczyk, 2013; Niesing, 2013). The index is calculated using six channels through which image is understood: (a) tourism, (b) exports, (c) politics, (d) investment, (e) culture, and (f) people. There is evidence that monitoring the international media can be an effective way of understanding the image of a country (Anholt, 2007, 2009). The media are some of the main conduits through which national image usually travels and some of the most popular and efficient for influencing the image of place (Anholt, 2009).

This study was conducted through a mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the international media coverage of Brazil during the two World Cups held in the country, in 1950 and

in 2014. Archives of five newspapers were analyzed: *The Guardian* and *The Economist* from the UK, *The New York Times* from the United States, *Le Monde* from France, and ABC from Spain. These international publications were selected because of their local relevance and international impact both in 1950 and in 2014. All the articles that mention Brazil from 37 days during each year of the FIFA World Cup in the country (1950 and 2014) were selected for analysis. The sample articles from 2014 were found with the use of each publication's website search engine. In total, 880 stories were studied: 424 articles with mentions published in 1950, and 456 articles with mentions published in 2014.

The first part of this study was a content analysis to determine, with a quantitative approach, the size and the frame of the international coverage of Brazil during the Cups. The study compared the visibility of news stories, as well as the frames used to portray the country in 1950 and 2014. The analysis of frames refers to the main focus of the articles mentioning Brazil, following the topics used by the Nation Brands Index to understand the image of a country (people, politics, exports, tourism, culture, and investment).

The second part of this study was a discourse analysis, using a qualitative approach. It focused on how the description of the country in the media matched the international image of Brazil presented in the Anholt-GFK Nation Brands Index and how it reproduces stereotypes. One article about Brazil from each publication published in 1950 was selected to be analyzed in comparison to one article selected from the same publication published in 2014, with a total of 10 articles analyzed. The selection of articles was subjective: I looked for similarities in approaches or subjects in order to perceive the differences in the way Brazil was treated in each timeframe.

It is important however, to consider that it is hard to objectively assess how successful the hosting of a mega-event has been. Although the evidence may support that there was a positive image of the country reflected in the international media, it does not evaluate the actual impacts of the World Cup for different areas of the nation. The economic impact for business, for example, is not measured in this study.

### **Changing Image**

The analysis of the international coverage of the two World Cups hosted by Brazil, in 1950 and 2014, shows a clear difference in the visibility of the country in the rest of the world and in the way the image of the nation was portrayed internationally. When comparing the number of articles mentioning Brazil in the periods of the two football tournaments in five foreign newspapers, it is possible to see an increase in the visibility of Brazil and a clear change in the frames used to describe of the country and in the tone (which became more negative with time). The image of Brazil projected by the international media became more attached to stereotypes in 2014 than it was in 1950, showing a stronger attempt to grasp the national identity, but one that fell into some essentialist clichés about the reality of Brazil.



**Table 1. Content Analysis of Mentions of Brazil During the Two World Cups in the Country.**

<b>CONTENT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>2014</b>
Total articles mentioning "Brazil"	424	3,733
Articles with focus on Brazil	24%	46.5%
Use of stereotypes	41.5%	80%
<b>FRAMES</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>2014</b>
Politics	17%	54%
Culture	38%	28%
Investment	10%	13%
People	10%	8%
Tourism	2%	7%
Exports	25%	0,4%
<b>TONE OF COVERAGE</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>2014</b>
Positive	56.5%	41%
Negative	20%	47%
Neutral	25%	14%
<b>STEREOTYPES</b>	<b>1950</b>	<b>2014</b>
Social Unrest/Protests	1%	32,5%
Passion for Football	21%	32%
Corruption/Cup Expenses	1%	21.5%
Carnival/Party/Samba	2%	13%

### **A Country Present**

Hosting the football World Cup has been understood as being part of a strategy of the Brazilian government to make the country appear with more prominence in global affairs. As a strategy of public diplomacy and nation branding, the tournament can be considered a success, as it is possible to see that there was an increase in the country's visibility in the international media during the mega-event.

The analysis of the international media coverage mentioning Brazil in the period that the country was hosting the World Cup shows that of all mentions of Brazil in the studied publications, 27% of them were related to the World Cup in 1950 and 80% of them were related to the Cup in 2014. This could be understood as at least a fivefold increase in the visibility of Brazil in the international media in 2014, caused by the agenda-setting power of the global sports event. In 1950, the impact was smaller, but was still there.

The ideas that Brazil's time to appear in the world has come and that people know more about Brazil nowadays is confirmed by the fact that the many more articles related to the country were published in 2014 than in 1950. The size of the coverage related to Brazil in the international press was almost 9 times bigger in 2014 than in 1950. In the period of the 1950 World Cup in Brazil, the country was mentioned in 424 articles in the 5 international publications analyzed here. Six decades later, the same newspapers published 3,733 articles mentioning Brazil during the 2014 World Cup. The five newspapers analyzed had on average 20 mentions of Brazil per day in 2014—during the 1950 Cup there were only 2.3 mentions of Brazil per day on average.

The difference in the visibility can also be seen when analyzing how many of the mentions of "Brazil" were found in articles that were actually focusing on describing the country and bringing readers news about it. In 1950, only 24% of the total mentions of "Brazil" focused on the country, while the other mentions were part of lists or stories that included only the name of the country, without giving it any attention. In the 2014 World Cup, 46.5% of the mentions were part of articles that had at least some focus on the country. The growth in the number of articles mentioning Brazil and focusing on it seems to prove that the country has become more present in the international media.

The analysis of the image of Brazil as projected in international newspapers during the World Cup in 2014 seems to confirm the study of competitive national identity conducted in the Anholt-GFK Nation Brands Index. Through that, Brazil is seen as a country that is decorative but not useful (Buarque, 2013). This means that Brazil is part of a group of countries whose images are much stronger on their soft characteristics than their hard characteristics, nations that are seen as good places for tourism and parties but not attractive destinations for investments (Anholt, 2010). This can be seen in the fact that many of the 2014 articles analyzed in this study cover Brazil through the frames of culture or people, items that normally are evaluated well by foreigners in surveys. By the same token, the portion of the coverage dedicated to politics, although not small, focuses too much on the problems of social and political unrest in the country.

The analysis indicates that this trend became stronger over time. In 1950, the coverage related to the economy was much more prevalent and more positive than it was in 2014. The data show a change in the frames used in the newspapers in the two periods analyzed.<sup>3</sup> The percentage of articles using frame of *investment* is almost the same, as is that for the articles with the frame *people*. There was also a small increase in the use of the frame *tourism*. The frame *culture*, which includes descriptions of the passion of Brazilians for football, was frequently used in both years. The two biggest differences, however, were found in the use of frames of *exports* and *politics*. *Exports* was the second most used frame in 1950. A lot of articles talked about products that are sold from Brazil to Europe and to the United States. Coffee specifically is mentioned in stories that deal with Brazil's economic foreign trade. The frame was used in 25% of the articles in 1950. This frame almost disappeared in 2014.

From 1950 to 2014 there was a change in the tone of the coverage mentioning Brazil in the international media. The tone of the articles published during the first Cup in Brazil were more positive or neutral, while the tone in 2014 was more negative. Although the analysis of tone in this article is subjective, accepting that the description of problems in the country is bad for its image can lead one to see this change from a more positive view in 1950 to a more negative and critical view six decades later.

More than 50% of the texts from 1950 were positive, and 25% were neutral, whereas only 20% of the texts from that year could be seen as negative. In 2014, the tone changed, with a substantial decrease in neutral and positive articles. The negative coverage more than doubled in percentage points.

One reason for this could be the fact that a lot of the coverage in 2014 was related to problems in the organization of the World Cup and protests against the tournament and the government. The change occurred with the strengthening of the correlation of Brazil with the idea of a country of parties, however. It could be a problem, Anholt (cited in Buarque, 2009) argued, that the country was missing an opportunity to show itself in a more serious way, but the current study argues that the country has managed to at least promote a good image of Brazil, even if reinforcing stereotypes.

### **"The Country of" Many Stereotypes**

Brazil has been called "the country of" many things in the past decades. From Zweig's (2008) idea that it was the country of the future, it has also been called the country of football, the country of Carnival, and the country of corruption, violence, beaches, parties, beautiful women, and many other clichés in a seemingly endless succession of stereotypes. In the international coverage of the 1950 Cup, 58.5% of the texts did not use any kind of stereotype when describing Brazil. This all changed in the coverage of the Cup in 2014, when 80% of the articles used some kind of stereotype, and more than 20 adjectives were used in ways that essentialize the international image of Brazil, as described by Calhoun (1997). According to Anholt (2009), however, this increase in the use of stereotypes happens because, when a country has a well-defined national stereotype, the media feel comfortable covering what happens in that country, which then reinforces the stereotypes.

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<sup>3</sup> The same article could have more than one frame and could be seen as positive and negative at the same time, and thus the sum of percentage points can be higher than 100.

Some of the most popular stereotypes about Brazil nowadays seem to have been part of the very essence of the country for a long time. This study shows, however, that a lot of them were not part of the image of the country projected by the international media six decades ago. The analysis shows that the clichés about Brazil are more recent and thus are not supposed to be too attached to the real Brazilian identity—although even the identity itself is not that old.

Apart from the growth in the use of stereotypes, essentialized descriptions of Brazil were rather different in 1950 and 2014. Besides the fact that a higher percentage of the texts published in 2014 included stereotypes than those from 1950, there was also a change in the topics that led to the stereotypes. The description of Brazil kept the idea of the importance of football for the country almost steady—although the tone changed from describing simple “passion” for the sport to calling Brazil “the country of football.” Apart from that, the stereotypical image changed a great deal in 64 years. Social and political unrest in the country, leading to protests against the Cup in 2014, were the most common description of Brazil in the international media. Considering that the coverage was repetitive and sometimes superficial, it can be seen as the most common stereotype in the press. In 1950, only 1% of the articles mentioned some kind of political unrest, with less coming from protests than from instabilities in the political scene of the country.

The second most popular stereotype in 2014 is a point of confluence between the two periods. The passion for football is used as a symbol of Brazil in 21% of the texts in 1950 and in 32% of them in 2014. The use of the idea of football as something important for Brazil not only grew but also changed in tone. In the international coverage of the 1950 Cup, it was possible to see that it was a surprise for journalists to see how passionate Brazilians were about football. Brazil had not then won any international championships and was not known as “the country of football.” In the 2014 World Cup, there was a different approach. Then, the association between the country and the sport was automatic and taken for granted. Brazil was often referred to as “the country of football,” “the nation of football,” “the country of the beautiful game,” “the most passionate about football.”

As the coverage from 2014 gave way to the use of more stereotypes than in 1950, many of the descriptions in the media in 2014 were virtually absent from the coverage of 1950. The association of Brazil and corruption; the ideas of Brazil being a country of parties, Carnival, samba, and sunny beaches and of *favelas* (slums), poverty, and inequality are completely absent from the descriptions found in the 1950 newspapers.

Dinnie (2008) explains that there may be a conflict between the identity and the reputation of a nation, the identity–image gap. Although stereotypes are superficial, they are almost always present and can play an important role in providing coherence to the image of a country (Chattalas, 2004). Considering that competitive identity uses the term *brand* as a metaphor and that a nation’s brand is closer to the idea of national identity made tangible, it would be possible to understand why so many of the images projected by Brazil abroad can be linked to what has been built for decades as the national identity. Football, Carnival, parties, cordiality, and many characteristics that are considered part of *brasilidade* are strong parts of the international image projected by the country. The analysis of the international coverage of Brazil during the two World Cups hosted by the country shows that although

there is such a gap in the case of Brazil, with oversimplification of most of its traits, most of the stereotypes about the country do have a connection to its reality and the image it tries to project or projects against its will.

The social and political instability, which became the most common stereotype in the media coverage of the 2014 World Cup, only recently became a strong cliché about Brazil, after nationally held protests in June 2013. At that point the international media started to give attention to the fact that although Brazil had been improving its politics and economy, Brazilians were dissatisfied with the national state of things. The fact that millions of people went onto the streets to demonstrate created the stereotype on which the international media based many of the articles published in 2014.

As previously discussed, the Brazilian national identity—the *brasilidade* as it is understood—was developed and spread throughout the country by the Vargas dictatorship in the years prior to the first World Cup held in the country. It was then that football, Carnival, samba, and many other characteristics associated with being Brazilian started to become associated with the country. It can be seen as natural, then, that as Brazil was still incorporating the stereotypes and understanding itself, a lot of those clichés would not yet have spread to its international image by 1950. But with more than six decades separating the first and second World Cups in the country, it makes sense that the stereotypes were much stronger in 2014.

Building on the arguments of Widler (2007) and Rezende (2008), it could be argued that stereotypes were used by Brazilians themselves in the process of elaborating their own sense of belonging associated with national identity. Thus, it is as if Vargas was already creating, along with traditions, a starting point for the development of the brand Brazil and the competitive national image that the country would project internationally, as he helped to create the stereotypes on which the nation's brand would be built.

### **Two Cups, Two Different Countries**

Brazil changed considerably in the six decades separating the two World Cups that it hosted. Through a discourse analysis of the international media coverage of the Cups, this part of the article analyzes aspects of the changes Brazil went through in this period.

There is a clear difference in the way the image of Brazil is portrayed by *The Guardian* in 1950 and in 2014. In the first Cup in Brazil, the country was not yet referred to as the "country of football," as it would appear in articles in the latest Cup. England, not Brazil, was then called "masters of football" (*The Manchester Guardian*, 1950). However, in 1950, *The Guardian* already described Brazilians as a people passionate about the sport and noted the stereotypical temper of Brazilians in how they reacted to the match on the field. The same newspaper in 2014 used at least eight stereotypes in its article summarizing the competition (Gibson, 2014). One point of coincidence between the two Cups is how foreigners worried about "unpleasant incidents" in Brazil during the tournament. In both cases, the newspaper presented a positive image of Brazil and seemed to celebrate the absence of problems but made it clear that tensions were expected.

The articles in *The Economist* describing the political scene of Brazil in 1950 and in 2014 show strong evidence of the changes in the country between the two dates. Despite being separated by 64 years, both articles presented a negative tone when discussing the country's political situation. There is a change in the criticism, however, as in 1950, the general preoccupation was about Brazil being an unstable democracy, whereas in 2014, the magazine seems to see the Brazilian democracy as consolidated. After the end of the 1950 Cup, *The Economist* discussed the election that would bring Getúlio Vargas back to the presidency. The publication portrays Brazil as a problematic democracy. In the 2014 coverage of the Cup, protests against corruption show that Brazil is still seen as unstable, although democracy is not clearly at risk. In contrast to the 1950 article, the text from 2014 goes beyond politics. It compares the political and economic situation of Brazil to the performance of the national team in the football tournament.

The two articles representing *The New York Times'* coverage of Brazil in 1950 and in 2014 bring very different approaches to the same stereotype about Brazil: racism. The image of Brazil in the United States in the 20th century was permeated with the idea of Brazil as a racial democracy, which was developed with the help of the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre and by the work of Zweig (2008). A series of academic studies have fought this stereotype in the past decades, however, and the changing clichés about race relations in Brazil are shown in *The New York Times*. While the article selected from 1950 reinforces the myth of absence of racial tensions, the newspaper published at least two articles in 2014 showing the opposite argument and exposing a social and racial divide in Brazil, giving way to a clearer understanding of the prejudice and discrimination present in Brazil.

Although the newspaper does not use the term "racial democracy" in the 1950 article, it quotes the Freyre saying that "There is no color line in Brazil," and as such, discrimination should be prohibited (*The New York Times*, 1950). In 2014, the same newspaper describes a poll showing that fans attending World Cup matches were overwhelmingly rich and white. It is more clearly critical of racism in the country, arguing that "Brazil is one of the world's most racist countries" (Romero, 2014, p. 1). It also explains that the racial divide has come into greater focus because of the Cup.

Anholt (2009) explains that when a country has a well-defined national stereotype, the media feel more comfortable repeating it, "even if the basic journalistic formula is often little more than measuring up the stereotype against the news event and seeing how closely they fit" (p. 178). The analysis of the coverage of Brazil during the 1950 and 2014 World Cups in the French newspaper *Le Monde* seems to confirm this idea, as the publication uses the clichés about the country even when the main focus of the article is trying to deny them. The French newspaper did not have extensive coverage of Brazil during the cup in 1950. In 2014, however, it published several articles describing Brazil. It employed the stereotype of Brazil being a great place for fun and festivities and argues that the sports event was a global party. *Le Monde* uses the idea of the Cup being a success to deny traditional stereotypes about the country while repeating them and reinforcing others.

Before the start of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, many of the international media published articles criticizing the country and pointing to everything that could go wrong during the tournament. Although the general tone changed during the Cup, and Brazil ended up being praised for the global

event, pessimism reigned in the days prior to the Cup. This criticism was in contrast to what happened in the 1950 Cup, according to the analysis of the articles published by the Spanish newspaper ABC, which shows a clear difference in the perspective prior to the tournament. While the coverage of the preparedness for the 1950 Cup congratulated Brazil, the news published before the 2014 Cup predicted controversy in the tournament. As the Spanish newspaper kept most of the focus of its articles about the Cup on the football rather than on the host country, this study analyzes two articles from the beginning of the tournament that present it and the preparations for it. It seems that Brazil had a more positive image in the 1950 coverage, with less stereotyping and expectation, whereas the newspaper shows a more stereotypical image filled with expectations and doubts about the ability of Brazil to host the championship in 2014.

### **Conclusion**

As the results of the analysis of the foreign media coverage of Brazil during the two World Cups hosted by the country show, there has been an increase in the international visibility of Brazil because of the global sports event. This seems to indicate that the country achieved its goal of using the tournament as part of a broader long-term strategy to enhance Brazil's soft power, prestige, and reputation even if most of the international media's had a negative approach to the country. There was an increase in the number of times Brazil was mentioned in the international media when comparing the coverage of the 1950 World Cup to the coverage of the 2014 World Cup. The qualitative analysis seems to show that Brazil was successful in hosting the events and creating a global party, which can be seen as positive outcomes regardless of the fact that most of the articles about the country had negative tone.

Although the visibility increased, Brazil did not seize the opportunity to rebrand itself in 2014 as a serious nation, and the image of the country continued to be attached to stereotypes related to parties and to social unrest and political problems. This study showed, however, that most of the stereotypes that seem to be strongly connected to the image of Brazil are recent and did not exist as part of the country's brand projected in the international media six decades ago.

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