



Full Length Research Article

THE PORTRAYAL OF THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL TEAM IN THE 2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BY NEWSPAPER EL PAÍS/ES*

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to analyze the 2014FIFA World news coverage by newspaper *El País* regarding the performance of the Brazilian National Team during the event. The period included ranged from June 10th to July 15th, 2014, encompassing the entire duration of the event. The data was qualitatively analyzed and grouped into 6 categories: “Pre-Cup”, “Group stage”, “Round of sixteen”, “Quarter-finals”, “Semi-finals and third place play-offs”, and “Post-Cup”. Thus, the newspaper coverage analysis lead us to recognize that there was a continuous effort to report the facts, but the main strategy used associated football with the theme of national identity. In addition, the discourse used prompted divorcement, using expressions that lead to the idea that Brazil was no longer “the land of football”, thus not only losing the World Cup, but also the nation’s symbol.

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INTRODUCTION

Sports mega-events have gained space in the programming of Brazilian media outlets since the 2007 Pan-American Games in Rio for their capacity to beckon spectators not only to the event, but to the country as well. This is how Brazil begun its journey as an international competitions host such as the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games. As such, the media intensified their investment and time slot placement, but mainly exploited these events' capacity to build perspective and to undertake different angles through their agenda and discourse. Moreover, sport, in whatever modality, has taken a fundamental role in modern society to help individuals identify with the groups they have most in common with, allowing the formation and manifestation of a sentiment of collectiveness (Dunning, 2003). As such the media takes advantage of these strategies and operates as a powerful social field influencing factor.

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Even though it does not determine or condition social behaviors or actions, it attributes certain meanings to certain facts while concealing others. In other words, its discourse constructs a certain “definition of reality”, which, given the immense social diffusion of its vehicles, contributesto the maintenance of power relations within society (Gastaldo, 2009). Furthermore, these sports mega-events influence not only projections in sports, but also promote a worldview on economic and social structures. FIFA, after the World Cup period, released its official data on the number of spectators and third parties involved with the competition, emphasizing the increase of audience ratings and broadcasting channels. During the group stage the following countries stood out: Argentina, Germany, Belgium, Brazil, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom (FIFA, 2014). From this perspective, media choices indicate that the issues chosen to be investigated more thoroughly arise from situations that occur during the World Cup period and are polemized according to what they consider to be more relevant, which in turn legitimizes the possibility of different angles and discourses. Thus, based on that, we selected the newspaper *El País* for being the largest newspaper in Spain –

which at the time was the current FIFA World Cup champion, representing an independent, general information media outlet with a clear global, and especially Latin American, vocation (*El País*, 2014). Before the 2014 World Cup started, Brazil's evidenced in the *El País* coverage for hosting the mega-event and for the great expectation generated around the involvement of the Brazilian fans. However, throughout the championship's victories and defeats, the newspaper changed its discourses to suit a new reality. The host team, which at the beginning of the event was considered a favorite for the title, was considered the "dark horse" when its idol and hero Neymar was injured and was unable to play in the semi-finals. Therefore, how this phenomenon was recorded showed the media's need to alter their discourse and conform to these definitions.

In turn, according to Gastaldo (2009), and as we have seen previously, the media, even with its influence, does not determine the social processes that occur. Above all, the media is also in the midst of a struggle between different ideologies, meanings and opposing versions of reality, which compete with each other to remain predominant or to prevail. Therefore, this research looks to analyze the highest-circulation daily newspaper Spanish newspaper, *El País*, in particular the aspects related to the Brazilian National Team participation in the 2014 FIFA World Cup. The methodological procedure selected for this study's investigation is laid out as follows.

METHODS

The present research is characterized as descriptive/qualitative. Its *corpus* stems from the newspaper *El País* referring to editions from June 10 to July 15, 2014, which encompasses the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil's entire period, with the addition of two days prior and two days after the event. The fragments were selected from front pages, headlines, subheads, texts, images, editorial sections, etc., and every inference allusive to the Brazilian National Team was analyzed. Qualitative techniques enabled the execution of textual and visual analysis by supplying the discourse structures at various levels of description. Furthermore, it recognizes the contextual background and its dimensions, such as cognitive processes and representations, or sociocultural factors, which relate structural descriptions with different properties of the context (Dijk, 1990).

The data were grouped into 6 categories:

Pre-Cup: two days prior the mega-event (June 10 and 11, 2014).

Group stage: qualifiers (June 12 to 27, 2014).

Round of 16: Round of 16 (June 28 to July 3, 2014).

Quarter-finals: quarter-finals (July 4 to 7, 2014).

Semi-finals and third-place play-offs: semi-finals and World Cup's third place deciding match (July 8 to 13, 2014).

Post-Cup: two days after the mega-event (July 14 and 15, 2014).

Information was presented descriptively and analyzed qualitatively.

DATA ANALYSIS

First, it is worth remembering that the Brazilian National Team is recognized as the nation state's secular emblem and that the "team magic", as Damo (2006) describes it, is not natural, but culturally constructed. According to the author, the process of mediation for this is, above all, a responsibility of media professionals, who are responsible for provoking the interest for the World Cup in the subjects, and for granting representative power to teams and athletes. However, since the Brazilian National Team has an internationally renowned reputation, with notable titles, the media used this representation as a strategy, conferring each segment with an emotional involvement, which was done especially by investing in a discourse that highlighted the Brazilian football singularity. In this sense, it is important to mention author Gastaldo (2009), who reinforced the media's capacity to propose "definitions" of reality since meanings and representations are always being rearticulated according to social processes. Within this perspective, media outlets represent a powerful element in the constitution of a "dominant version" in the society. Therefore, aspects such as optimism, performance, presentation, results and failure were the themes used during the 2014 FIFA World Cup in relation to the Brazilian National Team, and were framed in different ways by the newspaper *El País*.

PRE-CUP

Two days before the start of the World Cup, in June 10, the *El País*' sports section stated that coach Luiz Felipe Scolari needed peace of mind to work with the demanding challenge of leading Brazil to a sixth world championship in its own country. The player Daniel Alves, in an interview, contested and denied the team's dependence on the young Brazilian star Neymar and his differential status in the team, and stated that the Brazilian team, along with Argentinian, Spanish and German National Teams, were favorites to the title (*El País*, 49, 10/06/2014). As such, it is notable in the newspaper's discourse, the relevance attributed to the initial expectation and confidence in relation to the Brazilian team before the World Cup started. Furthermore, its favoritism, which stems from its great titles, gave rise to the belief that the team would win (Gastaldo, 2009). On June 11th, however, in the sports section, one day before the start of the World Cup, *El País* brought elements that emphasized another perspective by casting possible pretexts to any defeats the Brazilian team could potentially suffer. The newspaper highlighted that the country known for its "jogo bonito"¹ expected it to be a physically demanding championship, bringing about the memory of the *Maracanazo* loss and the interview with former Brazilian football player Bebeto, World Champion in the 1994 World Cup, in which he made his fears known in his question: "¿Cuál va a ser nuestra imagen en el mundo? Me da vergüenza"² (*El País*, 44, 11/06/2014), in the same interview he also questioned issues of the country's transportation, health and education.

¹Literal translation: "beautiful game"

²"What will be our image before the world? I am ashamed."



Bebeto, a la derecha, junto a su hijo Matheus, el que dedicaba los goles en el Mundial del '94 invitando que acorche a un bebé.

BEBETO Campeón con la selección brasileña en 1994 y exjugador del Depor "¿Cuál va a ser nuestra imagen en el mundo? Me da vergüenza"

RODRIGO CRUZ VIZCARRA
Río de Janeiro

José Roberto Gama de Oliveira acaba de cumplir 50 años, pero sigue asumiendo la vara de sáculo que le dio el apodo por el que es conocido mundialmente: Bebeto. Actor principal de aquel superdeport que agrietó el fútbol español en la década de 1990, jugador de la Liga 1993, fue campeón Mundial en 1994 compartiendo delantera con Ronaldo. Tras retirarse en 2002, ejerció de representante de futbolistas y financió algunas escuelas para niños. Hoy es el pueblo español por Río de Janeiro y forma parte del Comité Organizador Local del Mundial 2014, una labor menos tranquila de lo que cabía esperar.

Pregunta. ¿Cómo es que el amor al fútbol y al fútbolismo que le impregnó a usted en la infancia se impregnó a usted en la actualidad?

Respuesta. Yo siempre he sido un huraño y opacista. Por desgracia, no pude jugar un Mundial en casa... Hoy estoy contento de estar participando en la Copa, aunque sea entre los árbitros, como voluntario del Comité Organizador. No cobro nada por

ello: renuncié a cualquier remuneración por amor a mi país. Con respecto a las manifestaciones, son legítimas si son pacíficas, sin vandalismo. El pueblo brasileño tiene que luchar por mejores condiciones en el transporte, por una salud del primer mundo y por una educación coherente. Todo eso va mal desde que yo era niño y vivía en Bahía. Soy totalmente contrario al desperdicio de dinero público y es lo que me preocupa al Gobierno.

P. Usted celebró públicamente la entrega de casi 50.000 entradas gratuitas para los trabajadores que participan en la construcción de los estadios.

R. Estoy orgulloso de que Brasil sea la sede del Mundial. Mi trabajo consiste en inspeccionar los estadios y opinar a los trabajadores sobre la importancia del uso de los equipos de seguridad en las obras. Por supuesto que celebré la entrega de las entradas, porque gracias a ellas se construyeron los estadios para el torneo. Merecen participar de esta fiesta.

P. ¿Cómo puede explicarse la muerte de ocho personas en estas obras?

R. Es lamentable que los obreros se lesionaran, pero todavía se peoraron cuando murieron. Te deja una

sensación muy triste. No hay mucho que decir a esas familias, nada va a aliviar su dolor. Es inadmisible que no ofrecieran a los operarios toda la seguridad necesaria para estar vivos, pero al mismo tiempo los obreros deben tomar conciencia de la importancia de utilizar los equipos de seguridad.

"Transporte, salud, educación. Todo eso va mal desde que era niño y vivía en Bahía"

"La mayor virtud de Brasil es que hay una 'familia Scolari'. Hay que crear"

"¿Cuáles son los principales beneficios tangibles e intangibles que traerá la Copa para Brasil?"

R. Creo en el legado, otro que dejará mejoras para el pueblo y para los deportistas: creación y ampliación de instalaciones deportivas, creación de clubes que podrán ser usados durante todo

el año, programas de desarrollo futbolístico que tragan nuevos jugadores, inserción de empresas extranjeras que generen empleo y aumenten la formación de los talentos, mejoras en la movilidad urbana... Espero que la Copa deje como legado para nuestra población transformaciones sociales y económicas con posibles consecuencias para una nación que quiere figurar entre las más importantes del mundo.

P. ¿Ha cometido la organización del Mundial algún error del que la FIFA debe aprender en futuros campeonatos?

R. Si la decisión se tomó hace siete años y Brasil sabía los requisitos que debía cumplir. Un ejemplo es el terreno de algunos estadios: escasez de plan, y los aeropuertos... ¿No van a estar llenos según lo acordado? Yo viajé por el mundo entero y vi a las mejores en los aeropuertos de fuera. ¿Cuál va a ser nuestra imagen de fuera de todo el mundo? Esto no habla bien de nosotros. Me da vergüenza, porque está en juego el nombre de mi país.

P. La temporada futbolística en Brasil se ha caracterizado por estadios servidos, ¿Cuáles son los casos de esta situación y los posibles soluciones?

R. Las entradas son caras y el

fútbol es un deporte del pueblo. No tiene sentido una entrada de 100 reales (32 euros), por ejemplo. Es incompatible con el poder adquisitivo del trabajador. Al haber varias competiciones simultáneas, el aficionado necesita priorizar cuál es la más importante para él. Creo que un equilibrio en los precios podría ser una solución.

P. ¿En qué ha cambiado principalmente el fútbol de hoy respecto al de hace 20 años?

R. Ha cambiado mucho... Los salarios están cada vez más onerosos; arruinaron a no era tan común ver a un jugador haciendo publicidad de varios productos. El césped y las catrinas de los estadios brasileños no tenían la calidad actual. La preparación física de los deportistas cuenta con más recursos ahora, al igual que se ha trasladado el tratamiento y la recuperación de las lesiones. Basta con comparar la Granja Comary (sede de la concentración brasileña durante el Mundial, recientemente renovada) de ahora con la de an-

"El fútbol es un deporte del pueblo. No tiene sentido una entrada de 32 euros"

"A España solo le faltaba la victoria mundialista para darle credibilidad"

tes. El fútbol se ha convertido en un gran negocio que mueve millones de dólares, dejando un poco de lado el romanticismo de lo pasado. Antes se jugaba por amor a la camiseta; hoy parece que está más robotizado.

P. Zico, uno de sus ídolos, destacó que la selección no depende hoy de un único jugador. ¿Cómo ve usted un equipo sin los Romário, Ronaldo, Bebeto y Rivaldo de otras épocas? ¿Cuál es la mayor virtud de la verificación actual?

R. Siempre dije que un jugador no gana un partido solo, menos aún un Mundial. Hace falta que todo el equipo esté unido, preparado y tranquilo. Y cuando hablo de equipo, hablo de todos los que están, dentro y fuera del campo. Siempre hay jugadores que destacan más, que marcan más goles, pero ningún futbolista gana un Mundial solo. La mayor virtud de la selección brasileña es que hay un familia Scolari. Siendo una familia, hay unión, ideas, ganas. No crean en la selección brasileña en la Copa de Confederaciones de 2013, y la ganamos... ¡Es eso! ¡Hay que creer!

P. ¿Cuáles son sus tres selecciones candidatas al título?

R. Brasil, por supuesto. Yo siempre denoto a las selecciones con tradición, como Italia, Alemania, Uruguay y Argentina. Pero voy a estar muy conmovido. España es una selección de peso. Solo le faltaba esa victoria mundialista para dar credibilidad a su fútbol.

P. Digame cinco jugadores jóvenes para seguir en el Mundial.

R. Neymar, Oscar, Bernardi y Daniel Luiz. Thiago Alcántara también sería una opción.

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ENCUENTRO CON EL MUNDO
Prensa
Publicada por el grupo de noticias El País

Figure 1. Page 44 of the sports section of the newspaper *El País* on June 11th, 2014

GROUP STAGE

On June 12, 2014, the sports section of the newspaper *El País* presented the headline: "*Furiabrasileña frente a samba española*", highlighting in its discourse: "*la mítica Canarinha*", "*donde El juego se hizo arte*", the land of the stars, in which, even haunted by the nightmare in Maracanã stadium, it has continued to conquer several titles and had

³"Brazilian Fury against Spanish Samba"

⁴"The mythical *Canarinha*", refers to the nickname given to the Brazilian National Team's iconic yellow uniform.

⁵"Where the game became art"

currently great players, "*Brasil parte como máxima favorita*"⁶ to win the World Championship title (*El País*, 40, 12/06/2014). It became evident, during the World Cup period, the highest manifestation of nationalism and valorization of Brazilian football, in which the players' style and their distinctive and identity characteristics were constantly explained through the media, as did *El País* (Escher et al., 2008). In addition, the newspaper appropriated, once again, the discourse concerning the National Team's defeat, on Brazilian soil, against Uruguayan National Team in the final match of the 1950

⁶"Brazil starts as the top favorite"

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El Gobierno prepara el completo blindaje legal del rey Juan Carlos

El Monarca no acudirá a la proclamación de Felipe VI en las Cortes

JOSÉ MANUEL BOWEN
Madrid

El Gobierno plantea dar al rey Juan Carlos una protección jurídica máxima y única después de que abdique y pierda su inviolabilidad. En virtud de ese alineamiento extraordinario, cualquier denuncia en su contra, tanto por la vía civil como por la penal, se tramitará en el Tribunal Supremo, sin segunda instancia. La Casa del Rey reveló ayer además que don Juan Carlos no acudirá a la proclamación de su hijo como reyes en el Congreso el 19 de junio, un día después de su abdicación, para que le dé a Felipe VI "el último protagonismo". Tampoco estará en la ceremonia la infanta Cristina y su marido, Juan Luis de Goyena, impidiendo ambas en el caso Néstor. **Página 16 y 17**

El empuje de las milicias islamistas deja a Irak al borde de la desintegración

EE UU se pesa lanzar ataques aéreos para frenar a los yihadistas

Milicias kurdas tomaron ayer el control de Kirkuk, en el norte de Irak, ante la desbandada de los soldados. El país queda así al borde de la fractura, con los kurdos en rebelión en el norte y los yihadistas en el sur. El Estado Islámico avanzó hacia Bagdad desde el oeste. El presidente de EE UU, Barack Obama, señaló que se pesa intervenir con ataques aéreos por medio de drones o aviones de guerra para ayudar al Gobierno iraquí de Nuri al Maliki. **Página 2 y 4**



Brasil se estrena en su Mundial con victoria y polémica

La gran fiesta del fútbol mundial echó ayer a andar con la victoria de Brasil en su estreno ante Croacia (3-1). El protagonista de Neymar (a la derecha de la imagen), felicitado por David Luiz, autor de dos goles, quedó ensombrecido por la actuación del árbitro, el japonés Nishimura, que señaló un penalti injusto, el que su jugador el 24 par a la selección local y la remontada tras el gol inicial de Marcelo en propia meta. Croacia, en el tramo final, firmó el tercer tanto brasileño. **Página 46 a 57**

Euskadi busca su historia oficial

El Ejecutivo vasco encarga un relato unificador de los últimos 50 años

JULIO R. AZPIRO, EA, Madrid

El Gobierno vasco le ha encargado a un grupo de investigadores de la Universidad del País Vasco la elaboración de un dictamen sobre los últimos 50 años de la vida en Euzkadi, marcado por el terrorismo y la guerra, dentro de un conjunto de iniciativas para crear el Instituto de la Memoria. "Ha habido un singular hito de ETA que ha querido imponerse a la sociedad", dice Antonio Rivera, uno de los investigadores que elaborará el informe. "Tenemos que dar una respuesta para las generaciones futuras al interrogante de por qué pudo pasar en los sesenta y ochenta lo que nos pasó". **Página 18**



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La dirección del Partido Socialista de Catalunya convocará su cúpula con un congreso rápido que incluya un cambio de líderes sin alterar las bases ideológicas. Los militantes votarán previamente a un primer secretario que suceda a Pere Navarro, quien dimitió el miércoles anterior por el saque del aeropuerto. **Página 11**

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Figure 2. Front page of the newspaper *El País* on June 13th, 2014

World Cup by 2x1. This match, known as *Maracanazo*, haunts the team and fans to this day (Brinati, 2014). It is important to note that, to the Brazilian public, the 1950 World Cup was more marked by the traumatic defeat of our National Team against the Uruguayan team in the final match, than by the fact that the Cup had been hosted in Brazil (Damo, 2012). However, the desire to avenge this trauma and to be crowned champions in the second World Cup hosted in Brazil prevailed, creating an atmosphere of confidence and favoritism around the National Team. In spite of this, Carlos Alberto, captain of the National Team in 1970 affirmed that “*Este no es el verdadero fútbol de Brasil, hay menos calidad*” (El País, 42,

12/06/2014), highlighting the lack of quality of the players in comparison to his old team. After all, although the playing style, with its disconcerting dribbles, its skillful moves and its irreverence, i. e., the typical Brazilian playing style, has always been exalted, today we do not see this characteristics in all players and matches, arousing mistrust and insecurity by the supporters (Escher et al., 2008). On the other hand, on June 13, the front page of the newspaper *El País* supported the headline: “*Brasil se estrena en su Mundial con victoria y polémica*” (El País, front page, 06/13/2014). The sports section of *El País* presented the image of the player Fred falling within the penalty area with the headline:

*“This is not the true football of Brazil, there is less quality”

*“Brazil opens the World Cup with victory and controversy”



Figure 3. Front page of the newspaper *El País* on June 29th, 2014



Figure 4. Front page of the sports section of the newspaper *El País* on July 4th, 2014

“Neymar remata *La faena arbitral*”⁹, and the subhead: “*Brasilremonta ante Croacia gracias al vigor de susjogadores y a loserrores del meta Pletikosa*”¹⁰ (El País, 46, 13/06/2014). And so, the Brazilian team’s “luck” is emphasized, highlighting the error of the referee in awarding a penalty kick, which leadthe team to win the match and generating controversy regarding the opening match of the World Cup. In addition, a goal was exalted by the newspaper and used as satire for the first goal Brazil scored at home “*El lateral zurdoes el primer brasileño em marcar em propriapuerta em uma Copa Del Mundo*”¹¹ (El País, 47, 13/06/2014).

At that point and including the issue on June 14, the newspaper stated that in its first match the Brazilian team showed vulnerability when the players lost the ball midfield and warned against the pressure cast on Neymar to be the best player. The newspaper commented that it was affecting his performance when playing with the Brazilian uniform. *El País* also pointed to the return of the National Team to the city where the fans encouraged it by singing the national anthem, with the heading “*Fortaleza para frenar a México*”¹² (El País, 48,17/06/2014). Thus, it is possible to notice a building of interest from behalf of the media discourse that acts as an amplifier to enhance the fans’ interest, provoking audience phenomena on each Brazilian match in the World Cup (Gastaldo, 2009).

On June 18, the *El País* sports section explained the tie with the Mexican team: “*El once de Scolaries um manifesto contra la tradición y la alegría del pueblo*”¹³, highlighting the performance of goalkeeper Ochoa and the poor football presented by the Brazilian team (El País, 42, 06/18/2014). At this moment, there is a detachment from what Damo (2006) called “team magic”, culturally constituted by the media, in which the team and its athletes were endowed with representative powers, being recognized as secular symbols of the State-Nation. On June 19, in the sports section, the player Fred’s disappointing performance was exalted with the headline: “*El ‘nueve’ invisible*”¹⁴, comparing his performance with that of Serginho (NT player of 1982), as the worst centre forward of Brazil in the early stages of a tournament (El País, 61, 6/19/2014).

Although the Brazilian team in the pre-Cup period was one of the favorites, and the newspaper imparted in that sentiment, after the initial events, *El País* assumed a censorship speech before one of the supposed favorites for the title. As was noted on June 21 in the criticism of the Brazilian National Team’s performance, which brought as a headline: “*Ni arteniintensidad*”¹⁵, questioning the lack of play and the pressure with which the team won the Confederations Cup. According to goalkeeper Julio César, “*El juegovolverá*”¹⁶(El País, 60, 21/06/2014). On June 23, in the headline: “*Um centenario entre debates*”¹⁷, the newspaper commented on the responsibility that Brazil had in order to qualify for the next stage in the match against Cameroon, its hundredth match in World Cups (El País, 46, 22/06/2014).

⁹“Neymar annuls the referee’s job”
¹⁰“Brazil goes back to Croatia thanks to the vigor of its players and the errors of the goalkeeper Pletikosa”
¹¹“The left-back is the first Brazilian to score at his own door in a World Cup”
¹²“Fortaleza to slow down Mexico”
¹³“The eleven of Scolari is a manifesto against the tradition and the alegría del pueblo”
¹⁴“The invisible ‘nine”
¹⁵“No art, and no intensity”
¹⁶“The game will return”
¹⁷“A centenary between debates”



Figure 5. Front page of the newspaper El País on July 9th, 2014

With these high standards, the burden was built over the years and "transformed into a fundamentally unifying instrument and identity of the nation". Football in Brazil crosses the sports field, and is considered as a cultural expression (Brinati, 2014, p. 412). After the game against Cameroon, on June 24, the front page of the *El País* stated "*Neymar impulsa a Brasil - La Canarinha y México, em octavos*"¹⁸(*El País*, front page, 06/24/2014), highlighting the team's comeback after the victory. The sports section had the image of Neymar receiving the ball in the air, followed by headline and subhead: "*Neymar para todo*"¹⁹, "*El fútbolfantasioso del delantero refresca a Brasil, que se medirá a Chile en octavos*"²⁰ (*El País*, 45, 06/24/2014). And so, the host team passed first of its group and would face Chile in the round of 16. During the game, Neymar was the joy of the people, however, this massive worship is more a symptom of dependence on the player, and it was clear the fans were rooting for the player and not for the whole team. According to Mostaro (2014), Brazilian players prefer to excel individually, deciding the game in a single move and thus becoming the fan idolized hero, without having to think about the team as a whole. In the midst of these factors, the newspaper's discourse centers around Neymar, who, on June 25, was greatly exalted in the victory piece: "*Con 35 goles en 53 partidos, el delantero del Barça ya es El sexto máximgoleador de la historia de Brasil con solo 22*

¹⁸"Neymar pushes Brazil - Canarinha and Mexico in the eighth"

¹⁹"Neymar for everything"

²⁰"The fanciful football of the striker refreshes Brazil, which will measure Chile in the eighth"

años"²¹(*El País*, 52, 25/06/2014). After all, the "competitive sport spectacle demands the hero, the sports star" (Lovisoló 2003: 242), and the media appropriated this sentimental engagement of representation that societies seek in their players.

ROUND OF 16

The front page of the *El País* brings the image of coachFelipão and Neymar with the description "Triunfoagónico de Brasil ante Chile. El primer partido de octavos se resolvió em lospenaltis por un tiro al poste de Jara (...) La anfitriona se enfrentará em cuartos a Colombia, que ganó 2-0 a Uruguay"²² (*El País*, cover, 6/29/2014), highlighting the Brazilian team'scomeback. However, now the newspaper pressed for caution from the players against Colombia, a strong opponent that was having a winning streak. On that same day, the sports section presented the image of the Brazilian NT players embraced and distressed during the penalties shootout under the headline:"*Escalofríos em todoBrasil*"²³, and the subhead:"*La Canarinhabordea el desastre ante un Chile valiente y se salva em lospênaltis*"²⁴(*El País*, 56, 06/29/2014). The team's anguish and the lack of emotional controlin the game against Chile appeared several times in the newspaper article, as in "*Silencio mortal em el Mineirão*"²⁵, "*Los seguidoresbrasileñosviven con angustia la falta de juego de suselección*"²⁶(*El País*, 58, 29/06/2014).

On June 30, the negative comments about the National Teamcontinued in the sports section "*Brasilreniega de suidentidad*"²⁷, "*La apuestapor el futbolistaatlético y losproblemas de la canteralastran a la actual Canarinha*"²⁸(*El País*, 46, 30/06/2014). It made evident that representations about the playing style, contributions and resignifications of national identities can intensify during World Cups. However, to this day these identities have always been linked to the iconic Brazilian football-art through cultural memory and cultural stereotype, which had its peak with the 1970 World Cup National Team lineup. That team embodied a supposed style, holding the future teams to follow, threatening any break in this football-art ideal to cause a rupture in the representation and identity of media narratives that dictate our national style, similar to what has occurred in the games played by the National Teamin this Cup (Mostaro, 2014). On July 1st, Tostão, a player of the National Team in 70, stated that "*Si la Copa no se jugaseaquí, Brasilyaestariaeliminada*"²⁹(*El País*, 45, 7/1/2014). The day after, the sports section presented the following headline: "*La Canarinha, em el diván*"³⁰,and subhead:

²¹"With 35 goals in 53 matches, the Barça striker is already the sixth top scorer in the history of Brazil with only 22 years"

²²"Brazil's agonizing triumph before Chile. The first game of the round of 16 was solved in the penalties by a shot to the pole of Jara (...) The host will face Colombia in the quarter-finals, whichhas gained 2-0 against Uruguay"

²³"Goosebumps throughout Brazil"

²⁴"Canarinha skirts the disaster before a brave Chile and is saved in the Penalties"

²⁵"Silencio mortal in the Mineirão"

²⁶"The Brazilian followers live with anguish the lack of game of their selection"

²⁷"Brazil denies its identity"

²⁸"The bet by the athletic player and the problems of the quarry cripple the current Canarinha"

²⁹"If the Cup were not played here, Brazil would be eliminated"

³⁰"TheCanarinha, on the divan"

“Scolari llama a un psicólogo para combatir la fragilidad emocional de sus jugadores”³¹ (El País, 48, 7/2/2014). According to the newspaper, the desperation and the cry of captain Thiago Silva and Neymar against Chile had rang all of Brazilian NT’s alarms. The emotional unbalance perceived in the players aroused from the pressures suffered by the team “condenada a ganarse o sí porque el Mundial se juega en casa, porque Brasil es Brasil y su historia, porque el momento político del Brasil es delicado y porque cómo no vamos a ganarnos nosotros que somos los mejores”³² (El País, 48, 7/2/2014). The ideal of the football-art gains strength as highlighted by Mostaro (2014), after all, “we are the greatest champion in the world, trophy holders and our talent is recognized worldwide, making the romantic and mythological construction of our playing style an important Element of national identity” (Mostaro, 2014, 365), which supposedly “surpasses” any team.

QUARTER-FINALS

The image of tense Brazilian fans illustrated the headline: “Suspense total”³³, and the subhead: “Tras unos octavos arribatadores, los cuartos arrancan hoy con Brasil en vena, Colombia en ebullición y Alemania y Francia con cuentas pendientes entre sí”³⁴ (El País, 48, 07/07/2014). Relating the great battles that would happen between the teams quoted above without any expectation of what was to come. Brazil was called the team that could not sleep, and Colombia was gaining prominence in its ascension during the World Cup, meanwhile Germany and France had scores to settle with each other. On the other hand, the sports section provided information about the NT’s next game: “Neymar contra James, las dos caras del gol”³⁵, both with 22 years and wearing the no. 10 jersey are the stars of their respective teams (El País, 50, 4/07/2014). As also emphasized on the game against Chile, the image of Julio César crying illustrated the headline: “Los vómitos y las lágrimas liberan”³⁶, and the subhead: “Psicólogos asocian las reacciones de los futbolistas a la autoexigencia y el estrés competitivo”³⁷, reminding the audience that a player’s mental health is as important as their physical and technical profile (El País, 51, 4/07/2014). On July 5, on the front page of the newspaper, there was a photo of player David Luiz celebrating and vibrating next to a headline that announced: “La semifinal Brasil-Alemania, primer acto del duelo entre Europa y América. El anfitrión vence a Colombia (2-1)”³⁸, highlighting the victory of the Brazilian team that eliminated Colombia with goals from Thiago Silva and David Luiz (El País, front page, 07/07/2014). On the other hand, “Neymar, fuera del Mundial”³⁹, “La estrella de La Canarinha sufre una fractura en la tercera vértebra lumbar y estará de baja unas seis

semanas”⁴⁰ (El País, 53, 5/07/2014), denounced a team without its idol. On July 6, the image of Neymar inside the helicopter depicted the temporary loss of one of the World Cup stars, while former player Ronaldo accused Zúñiga of intentionally causing the player’s injuries. However, it is worth bringing attention to the discourse used by the newspaper about the tragedy and the possibilities of new stars arising in the Brazilian National Team, such as “David Luiz conquista Brasil”⁴¹, “El central de La Canarinha, que suma dos goles, es hoy el mejor jugador del torneo según la FIFA”⁴², (El País, 62, 6/7/2014). It then ratified the Brazilian players need for the team’s psychological help in order to overcome the inestimable loss of Neymar. Presenting the anguish in different forms and phrases, such as: “Terapia contra el vacío”⁴³, “La Canarinha se conjura para superar psicológicamente la ausencia de su estrella”⁴⁴ (El País, 53, 7/7/2014) showing the helpless state of the team.

SEMI-FINALS AND THIRD-PLACE MATCH

The front page of El País, on July 8, included the headline: “Brasil tiene afición, Alemania más juego”⁴⁵, and as a subhead: “Dos clásicos de los Mundiales se enfrentan en semifinales”⁴⁶ (El País, front page, 07/08/2014), in which it highlighted the 2014 FIFA World Cup teams power and stimulating the expectation of a large audience in order to create engagement with the game.

The front page of the sports section announced the entry of the National Team with the phrase: “Fútbol del revés”⁴⁷, “Ante la primera semifinal, Brasil apela al fervor y al estado febril de su hinchada pese a la baja de Neymar, mientras Alemania se fija en la pelota”⁴⁸ (El País, 56, 8/8/2014), luring more fans in, even with the absence of Neymar. Moreover, the newspaper still reinforced that of the four semifinalist teams, the Brazilian National Team was the one that had made the least number of ball passes. “Alemania aniquila a Brasil”⁴⁹ is the headline of the front page of El País on July 9, followed by the subhead: “La Canarinha recibe la mayor goleada de su historia (1-7) en su Mundial”⁵⁰ (El País, front page, 9/07/2014). On the front page of the sports section the image of the German team celebrating one of their goals, while the Brazilian players show expressions of desolation, illustrated well the situation, headlined as: “El ‘Maracanazo’ fue un abroma”⁵¹, which translates as a joke. “La devastadora paliza de Alemania a Brasil deja en quillada la afrenta de 1950”⁵² (El País, 45, 9/07/2014). In this conception, it is again worth noting that the newspaper used what occurred in 1950 to expose the great defeat of the Brazilian NT, not only in making a connection

⁴⁰ “The Canarinha star suffers a fracture in the third lumbar vertebra and will be down for about six weeks”

⁴¹ “David Luiz conquers Brazil”

⁴² “Canarinha had the best player of the tournament according to FIFA”

⁴³ “Therapy against the void”

⁴⁴ “Canarinha conjures up to psychologically overcome the absence of its star”

⁴⁵ “Brazil has a hobby, Germany more game”

⁴⁶ “Two classics of the Worlds face in the semi-finals”

⁴⁷ “Soccer of the reverse”

⁴⁸ “Before the first semi-final match, Brazil appeals to the fervor and to the feverish state of its fans despite the loss of Neymar, while Germany focus on the ball”

⁴⁹ “Germany annihilates Brazil”

⁵⁰ “Canarinha receives the biggest thrashing of its history (1-7) in its World Cup”

⁵¹ “The ‘Maracanazo’ was a joke”

⁵² “The devastating beating of Germany against Brazil leaves in shreds the affront of 1950”

³¹ “Scolari calls a psychologist to combat the emotional fragility of its players”

³² “Doomed to win yes or yes because the World Cup is played at home, because Brazil is Brazil and its history, because the political moment of Brazil is delicate, and because we are not going to win - we who are the best”

³³ “Total suspense”

³⁴ “After a few devastating round of 16, the quarter-finals start with Brazil today, Colombia boiling and Germany and France with outstanding bills”

³⁵ “Neymar against James, the two faces of the goal”

³⁶ “The vomits and the tears liberate”

³⁷ “Psychologists associate the reactions of the soccer players to the self-demand and the competitive stress”

³⁸ “The Brazil-Germany semi-finals, the first act of the duel between Europe and America. The host wins against Colombia (2-1)”

³⁹ “Neymar, out of the World Cup”

with the current loss— as if it were not enough—but to both. That is, the Maracanazo, the main defeat of the National Team before 2014, was easily overcome by the German victory in the semifinal against Brazil, surpassing all of the NT's negative records in their second World Cup hosted in their own territory. Newspapers around the world reported the German NT's massive win of 7 to 1 (Brinati, 2014). Thus, the media discourse of the "greatest national tragedy" applied to the 1950 World Cup was reallocated for the 2014 World Cup (Mostaro, 2014). Also on the same day, the newspaper explored coach Scolari's speech who assumed responsibility for the defeat and praised the effectiveness of the German team, "Soy el responsable de la catástrofe"⁵³ (El País, 47, 9/07/2014). The newspaper *El País* also reported Brazilian fans' dissatisfaction with the headline: "Río, ciudad fantasma"⁵⁴, and the subhead: "Hubo más estupor que indignación, como si la impotencia hubiese secado el orgullo patriótico"⁵⁵ (El País, 48, 9/07/2014). Highlighting the absence of patriotic pride— something that had always been a mark of the Brazilian people in regards of football—, and the astonishment with the impotence of the Brazilian National Team. In view of this, the Brazilian team was represented by the newspaper with the stereotype of a failed team, which had lost and frustrated its fans, while players, coaching staff and CBF's coordination committee were questioned about the defeat. In turn, the *El País* used a "representation with semantic choices that tended to alienate the team supporters" (Brinati, 2014, p. 413), reinforcing the need to obtain answers about the players' lack of commitment, their safety, or any other reasons that could have led the team to lose the match.

With the image of Scolari crying, the sports section on July 10 stated that: "La Canarinha inició un proceso autodestructivo tras caer en el 82 con una selección fascinante"⁵⁶ (EL PAÍS, 47, 10/07/2014). "De la decepción a la revolución"⁵⁷, "Brasil debe revisar todas sus estructuras futbolísticas tras pasar del purgatorio al infierno con la humillación de la derrota ante Alemania"⁵⁸ (El País, 48, 10/07/2014). After these statements, it was evident that the newspaper had once again found the discourse that involved the reader's sentimental, remembering the 1982 World Cup, in which Brazil was eliminated by Italy in Spain and to this day still marks the brilliant team that had been assembled, filled with good players, who unfortunately had not advanced past the quarter-finals. In this perspective, the newspaper's discourse resumed the various failures of the Brazilian NT in various ways and at different times. However, it emphasized the disappointment of the Brazilian people with the football art that once represented us, motivating and leading the reader to review the structures and the methods of creating a team. The front page of the sports section on July 11th, portrays the NT's humiliation, especially against their rival Argentina, "La pesadilla del Río de la Plata"⁵⁹, "La histórica rivalidad con Argentina lleva a la afición brasileña a aceptar la humillación de apoyaren la final a su verdugo, Alemania, para no padecer

la coronación biciclista"⁶⁰ (El País, 48, 11/07/2014). The image of Neymar crying illustrated the headline: "Funeral en la granja"⁶¹, "Brasil aguarda el último partido deprimido y pendiente del lesionado Neymar, que visitó al grupo"⁶² (El País, 49, 11/07/2014). The headline on the front page of the sports section on the 12th, illustrates the situation: "Brasil y Holanda se despiden con el partido que nadie quiere jugar"⁶³, comparing their depressions, teams look for the third place in the World Cup (El País, 58, 12 / 2014).

After the third place match, "Brasiles el equipo pesadilla"⁶⁴, "La Canarinha se depide recibiendo otra goleada y Holanda acabó tercera e invicta"⁶⁵ (El País, 62, 13/07/2014), it is evident that, after these two games, the defeat could not be simply explained because one team played better than the other, using explanations that transcended the field, after all, Brazil is the country of football, holder of several trophies and home of the best players in the world. That is a fact that makes the nation proud and elevates the National Team to being a symbol of our fears and desires, so the constructions of our team's victories and defeats "reveal deeper feelings, which are not exhausted in technical analysis of games of Football" (Helal 2001, p. 153). Therefore, we consume this sport in our life in different spheres, sometimes in our daily life, but in other moments it is the representation of who we are, and in the face of this defeat, because of the magnitude of it, many denied even being Brazilian.

POST-CUP

One day after the end of the World Cup, on July 14, the sports section presented the headline: "Primero cayó Brasil, luego Maracanã"⁶⁶ (El País, 47, 14/07/2014) alluding to the great championship final. Then, still in this same section, it stated: "Victima e verdugo se alian"⁶⁷, showing that the Brazilians had gotten together in Rio de Janeiro to cheer for Germany and against the Argentines (El País, 53, 14/07/2014). The loss of the semi-final match against Germany surpassed the defeat against Uruguay in 1950, and the discourse built by the newspapers brought back the team's biggest defeat in a hundred years. Several elements in the texts approached the game as a humiliation, a trauma for the Brazilians. In spite of the failure and the end of the dream of becoming six-time champions, it could be noticed that the discourse employed by the newspaper *El País* stood out in the sense of Brazilian identity distancing in relation to the NT, and could be seen as the cause of an occasional loss of identification between the public and team (Brinati, 2014). When we perceive the National Team as a symbol of the nation, we are also able to notice this dissociation in expressions used to demonstrate how Brazil could no longer be the "land of football" (Brinati, 2014, 413) and will need to reformulate its sports-related identity.

⁶⁰"The historic rivalry with Argentina leads the Brazilian fans to accept the Humiliation of supporting in the end his executioner, Germany, in order not to suffer the blue and white coronation "

⁶¹"Funeral in the farm"

⁶²"Brazil awaits the last depressed and pending party of the injured Neymar, who visited the group"

⁶³"Brazil and the Netherlands say goodbye to the party that nobody wants to play"

⁶⁴"Brazil is the nightmare team"

⁶⁵"Canarinha is deposed receiving another thrashing and Holland finishes third and unbeaten"

⁶⁶"First, Brazil fell, then, Maracanã."

⁶⁷"Victim and executioner united."

⁵³"I am responsible for the catastrophe"

⁵⁴"Rio, ghost town"

⁵⁵"There was more stupor than indignation, as if impotence had dried up patriotic pride"

⁵⁶"Canarinha started a self-destructive process after falling in 82 with a fascinating selection"

⁵⁷"From disappointment to revolution"

⁵⁸"Brazil must review all its football structures after passing from purgatory to hell with the humiliating defeat before Germany"

⁵⁹"The nightmare of the Rio de la Plata"

Regarding aspects that could connect Brazilian fans feelings, media outlets changed their discourse from a victorious country with a tradition in football-art, to a loser nation, abandoned and responsible for the greatest humiliation ever seen

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Regarding the coverage of the newspaper *El País*, we can infer that the latter performed different reports during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, mainly because of the change in discourse that had been noticed from the beginning of the event towards the end of it. In the pre-Cup period, the prevailed discourse in the newspaper underlined the privilege of being the host, surrounded by a sentiment of expectation and confidence, the Brazilian team's favoritism even surpassing the certainty of sixth championship. However, on some dates, there is evidence of conflicting ideas, such as when the Maracanazo quote was published, which recaptured the Brazilian defeat against Uruguay in the 1950 World Cup final in order to shake the Brazilian confidence and possibly planning scheduling line in the event of Brazil losing the cup. Soon, with slow victories and dissatisfaction with the Brazilian national team, the *El País* made use of censorship coverage against one of the supposed favorites for the title in the first phase of the World Cup. Even setting out warning against the massive Neymar worship, emphasizing the team's dependence on the attacker. Already in the round of 16, even though the newspaper exalted the Brazilian players comeback, the newspaper positioned itself with several negative comments against the team's performance during that period.

In the quarter-finals, the focus was on Neymar's injury, making the most of this possibility by appropriating the tragedy and reinforcing the need for new stars in the Brazilian National Team, scheduling the helplessness of Brazil. It is thus perceived a business build up by the media discourse that acts as an amplifier to enhance the fan's interest, provoking audience phenomena with each Brazilian match in the World Cup. In the semi-finals and final match the media speech of the "greatest national tragedy" applied in the 1950 World Cup was reallocated for the 2014 World Cup. Although coach Scolari assumed the fault for the defeat and praised the effectiveness of the German team, the Brazilian team was portrayed by the newspaper as the stereotype of a failed group, one that had lost and frustrated its country, with many fans choosing to abandon the team. After the end of the World Cup, the discourse constructed by the newspaper presented several elements that approached the game as a humiliation, a trauma for Brazil, possibly leading to dissociation between Brazilian identity and its National Football Team, which can cause an occasional loss of identification between fans and team. Finally, the analysis of the newspaper coverage lead us to recognize that there was a continuous effort to report the facts, but it mainly used a strategy that associated football with the theme of national identity, the pride of being Brazilian.

Throughout the World Cup period, we find that *El País* appropriated different elements to transpose into its coverage the feeling shared among Brazilian society, of victories and defeats. In addition, the discourse of dissociation was demonstrated in expressions used to point out that Brazil would no longer be the "land of football", losing not only the World Cup, but the nation's symbol.

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