



The 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Brazil's soft power

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Abstract

The economic growth of nations such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa started a new order into the global power balance. For Brazil, winning the rights to host sport mega events gave the country recognition and symbolic power in the international arena. The ensuing expectation is to increase these achievements while staging the events and to sustain the profits to a remarkable level of "soft power". Using the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic election as a starting point, this paper aims to reveal how sport has been used as a strategy of foreign policy to improve the country's soft power. After reviewing some key features of the Brazilian political and economic context, and the foreign policy agenda in the 2000s and the 2016 election, it is shown that sport mega events support and reflect the intention of many Brazilian political officials intention to increase the status of Brazil in the international sphere.

Keywords: Brazil; sport; foreign policy; mega-events.

Introduction

Although the FIFA men's World Cup and the Olympic and Paralympic Games were awarded to countries from different continents in past decades, their greater magnitude and importance as media events in recent years has seen a dominance of host venues from countries considered as economically developed (Horne & Manzenreiter 2006; Black 2007). The 2008 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic games marked the beginning of a period where mega sports events host cities were to be increasingly located in geographically new territories such as South Africa (FIFA 2010), Brazil (FIFA 2014, Summer Olympic/Paralympics 2016), Russia (Winter Olympics/Paralympics 2014,

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3 FIFA 2018) and Qatar (FIFA 2022). Similar diversification has been seen in those
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5 events referred to as ‘second order’ (Black 2008) or special events (Roche 2000), with
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7 India hosting the 2010 Commonwealth Games and Singapore the new Youth Olympic
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9 Games in 2010.
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12 This article focuses on the ways in which Brazil has been involved in this reality
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14 of ‘peripheral’ mega-events bids. Specifically consideration is given to how the 2016
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16 Olympic and Paralympic Games is being used for and reflects a strategy of foreign
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18 policy to improve the country’s power position internationally through what is called
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20 ‘soft power’. Before discussing this specific case, an introductory background on the
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22 recent arguments of sport governing bodies and host city/countries is presented.
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26 The official discourse of sport governing bodies suggests that the selection of
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28 these host venues is indicative of diversification, democracy or equality. After the
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30 election of Russia and Qatar to host 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cup for example, the
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32 president Joseph Blatter said that the event was reaching ‘new lands’ leading to the
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34 ‘development of football’ (FIFA 2010a). But some authors have argued that these
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36 statements or official justifications must be taken with caution. . Although there has
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38 been evidence of lack of transparency in the choice of host cities/countries, bribery and
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40 corruption scandals affecting FIFA and IOC (i.e. Simson & Jennings 1992, Jennings
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42 1996, 2006, 2011, Booth 1999, 2011, Booth & Tatz 1994), combined with questionable
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44 outcomes for the physical and social environment surrounding the facilities, analyses of
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46 their decisions regarding host venues should take into consideration the financial reports
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48 from these events. For example, the four year period that includes the 2008 Olympics
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50 and Paralympics and the 2010 FIFA World Cup events generated respectively a revenue
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52 of US\$5.4 billion and US\$4.1 billion (FIFA 2010b: 15, IOC 2012: 6) suggesting that
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54 the award of these events to these host venues resulted in relevant economic revenues
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3 for these sport governing bodies. But from this amount, the support to the local
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5 organizing committees was only US\$ 226 million (4%) and US\$ 851 million (20%)
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7 respectively (FIFA 2010b: 18, IOC 2012: 7) while the local government investment in
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9 event-related expenditure was approximately US\$ 3.1 billion (South African
10
11 Government Information 2010) and US\$ 19.68 billion (Li & Blake 2009).
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14 In addition to institutional discourses and profits, host cities and countries
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16 consider mega sports events as a possibility to improve their local and global images
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18 (Black & van der Westhuizen 2004, Horne & Manzenreiter 2006). This is not
19
20 something new or exclusive to ‘peripheral’ countries, but the opportunity to host a
21
22 major sport event enables these countries to symbolically challenge the traditional
23
24 global order and identify themselves as representatives of wider emerging territories or
25
26 cultures (Cornelissen 2004, Desai & Vahed 2010, Hiller 2000). This was the case when
27
28 Brazil presented the bid for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and was even more evident for
29
30 the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The election for 2014 had only to confirm
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32 the sole candidate, as South America was designated the host region for the 2014 event
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34 according to the principle of continent rotation adopted by FIFA (FIFA 2007). In
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36 contrast, the election to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games involved seven
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38 candidate cities in the first phase and four in the final stage. The public involvement
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40 during the bids was considerably different. When Brazil was confirmed as host to the
41
42 2014 FIFA World Cup, the former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva announced that it
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44 was an opportunity to show the world the Brazilian ‘growing and stable economy’
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46 (Folha Online 2007). However, his discourse to the IOC stated that the bid for the 2016
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48 Games was not only national but regional, ‘also of South America [...] a continent that
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50 never hosted the Olympic Games’ (Silva 2009a). The presence of this geographically
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52 wider approach demonstrates a necessary democratisation among different global
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3 regions while also reinforcing market opportunities to sport organisations and their
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5 sponsors. Nevertheless, it doesn't mean that national interest was absent. On the
6
7 contrary, the discourse included notions on how important the games would be for
8
9 Brazil and reinforced its economic and political aspects (*Idem*).
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12 Using this latter bid process for illustration, it is clear that an international
13
14 project such as bidding and hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games belongs to
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16 broader foreign policy strategies and purposes. This understanding leads us to the
17
18 following sections of this paper. First we introduce the key concepts of foreign policy to
19
20 discuss theoretically their relationship with sport and mega-events, drawing on Nye's
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22 (2004) conceptualisation of soft power. Second, we describe the Brazilian political and
23
24 economic contexts, followed by an outline of the foreign policy agenda taking place
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26 during the two government periods of President Lula (2003-2010). Third, we provide an
27
28 historical overview of past Brazilian bidding processes with an emphasis on the 2016
29
30 bid and the specific foreign policy efforts related to this action. In our closing remarks,
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32 we summarise the ways in which the Brazilian foreign policy agenda of the 2000s
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34 influenced the hosting, and ongoing preparations for, these forthcoming mega-sports
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36 events.
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42 **Research rationale**

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44 The Olympic and Paralympic Games and the FIFA World Cup are consistent with
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46 Roche's (2000: 1) conceptualisation of sports mega-events of 'large-scale cultural
47
48 (including commercial and sporting) events, which have a dramatic character, mass
49
50 popular appeal and international significance'. DeHanas & Pieri (2011) suggest that the
51
52 'large-scale' nature of such events denotes their economic, visibility and symbolic
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54 characteristics, such as budget, publicity and ambition. Roche's reference to their
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56 'dramatic character' is the broader narrative of these events that fascinates and
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3 stimulates audiences. This characteristic is one of the reasons for the 'appeal' to a 'mass
4
5 popular' 'international' consuming audience, which generates 'significant' debates in
6
7 society. Television transmission is central to the importance of mega-events as it serves
8
9 as the stimulus or the means for the international visibility, enhancing the consumption
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11 by spectators (Whannel 2009), motivating sponsorship or partnership with major
12
13 companies, and promoting cities and countries (Horne & Manzenreiter 2006).
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17 Modern sporting mega-events are immersed in the broader 'interconnected
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19 world', influencing and being influenced by politics and foreign policy (Jackson &
20
21 Haigh 2009: 1). Although sport governing bodies often claim a political distance or
22
23 non-intervention, they are political by their own constitution as an international non-
24
25 governmental organisation (Sugden & Tomlinson 1998). As an independent governing
26
27 body, the IOC has few restraints to its methods, but at the same time it has a valuable
28
29 product, the Olympic Games, to negotiate with countries interested in hosting future
30
31 events (Persson 2002). This fact is particularly important for analysing how this
32
33 independent position enables an indirect interference in nation's agendas, both in
34
35 national and foreign policies. In a general sense, foreign policy can be seen as 'the sum
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37 of official external relations conducted by an independent actor (usually a state) in
38
39 international relations' (Hill 2003: 3). Understanding that the Olympic Games event is
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41 an international product, recognised and broadcast globally, full of apparently 'common
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43 sense' symbolic positive meanings which appeal to mass consumers, its 'political
44
45 instrumentality' to foreign policy becomes evident (Cornelissen 2009: 133). By hosting
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47 or intending to host, states aim to establish and disseminate a profile to investors,
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49 tourists and other nation states, in order to mark their distinction in the global arena
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51 (Cornelissen & Swart 2006, Cornelissen 2009).
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3 In order to understand how governments attempt to host mega sports events as
4 part of a foreign policy strategy, we draw on Nye's (2004) concept of soft power. In
5 distinguishing between hard and soft power, hard power is understood as that forced
6 upon people by violent, militaristic and/or economic ends. In contrast, soft power is
7 often viewed as power achieved when people, institutions or nation states accept the
8 authority of others as normal by way of culture, politics or policies (what Bourdieu
9 referred to as symbolic power or Foucault as the consequence of panoptic surveillance)
10 (see Blommaert 2008, Nye 2004). Conceptually then, soft power 'is the ability to get
11 what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments.' (Nye 2004: x). For
12 example, after the London 2012 Games, the concept of soft power was used to describe
13 how people around the world had their views regarding the United Kingdom influenced
14 by the presentation of British culture, values, sporting institutions and the environment
15 (see Worne 2012). Indeed, the development of soft power was a direct legacy aim for
16 London 2012, with plans to build influential relationships with other countries by way
17 of a global public diplomacy campaign which included specially commissioned films,
18 events and activities (see DCMS 2010). From this campaign, the World Shakespeare
19 Festival was part of the Cultural Olympiad promoted from 2008 to London 2012, and
20 had performances of Shakespeare's plays in 37 languages and in 35 countries (Garcia
21 2013), which demonstrates further possibilities for cultural diplomacy (see Cull, 2008).
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45 Both powers are not directly proportional, which means that a country or
46 institution can concentrate on one of them but not the other and use them according to
47 the context. As a consequence, they are supposed to be managed jointly by states that
48 aim to succeed on the international stage (Nye 2004, 2008), in what can be called 'smart
49 power' (see also Wilson 2008). Soft power is not synonymous with public diplomacy,
50 as the latter refers to actions for interfering in external behaviour and the former also
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3 includes internal actions and policies (Nye 2008). Soft power is also historically
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5 constructed, dependent on the perception of policies and actions by others, and so it is
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7 rare that a solo action is capable of promoting considerable changes. Manzenreiter
8
9 (2010) extends this position to argue that there is an overrated notion of the power of
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11 sport mega-events and especially the Olympics to improve a country's image.
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14 Such concerns regarding the potential offered by hosting a mega sports event for
15
16 increasing soft power are taken in consideration by any host city, but this debate seems
17
18 to be especially problematic to rising economic powers such as Brazil, Qatar, India and
19
20 China. Quoting Nye (2008: 95): 'if the content of a country's culture, values, and
21
22 policies are not attractive, public diplomacy that "broadcasts" them cannot produce soft
23
24 power'. For example, in the preparations for the 2010 Commonwealth Games, there
25
26 were extensive images of poverty, pollution and corruption in India (Carter 2011), while
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28 prior to the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games images abounded of China's poor
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30 record on human rights issues, quality of manufacturing and environmental awareness
31
32 (Manzenreiter 2010). But, for example, worldwide opinion polls suggest that the image
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34 of China did not improve subsequent to their hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympic and
35
36 Paralympic Games (Manzenreiter 2010) Although the 'aura' (in a common sense) or the
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38 discourses lead many to believe that the Olympic Games are favorable for image
39
40 enhancement, to what extent they are favorable is still an open question. So if past
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42 image problems are not ignored or forgotten, the Olympic Games have been used to
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44 present alternative stories (Cull 2011). How to deal with this past image or how to
45
46 present culture, values and politics accepted by an international audience are further
47
48 challenges for future mega-events hosts, and also for these countries' foreign policy if
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50 they intend to be more than an economic and/or military power. The next section
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52 illustrates how Brazil is dealing with these challenges.
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Brazil, foreign policy and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Brazil is the 5th largest country in the world in area and in population (199 million people in 2012). It has borders with ten of twelve South American countries. The economy reached the 8th biggest GDP in 2011 and is based on services (67%), industry (27.5%) and agriculture (5.5%). The main trade partners are China, the USA and Argentina, followed by Germany, the Netherlands and South Korea. The country is a federative republic, having secured independence from Portugal since 1822 and the current Federal Constitution was approved in 1988. Presidential elections have been held every four years since 1985, and voting is compulsory for all citizens aged from 18 to 70 years-old. The national political headquarter is located in the capital Brasília, a city that was planned and built in the 1950s. Before this, Rio de Janeiro used to be the Brazilian capital and it is currently the second largest city, behind São Paulo (CIA 2012).

The events that we are analysing in this paper took place during the period that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was Brazil's President. He was elected in 2002, starting his first term in 2003 and then re-elected in 2006. His government finished in the year of 2010, leaving the presidency to the candidate of his party, Dilma Rousseff. As a result of these elections, there has been consistency in the political leadership and ideology regarding foreign policy during the bidding process for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Reaching the 'international citizenship'

In order to understand the specific strategies of Brazilian foreign policy, we will briefly sketch its position in the international socio-political-economic order. It is generally accepted that the current global order includes a multi-state region, the European Union (EU), and single power states not strongly articulated with their region, most notably as

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2
3 the United States. The rising role of other countries have been given attention in recent
4
5 decades as a result of globalization processes (Cervo 2010), and direct and indirect
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7 challenges to the USA and EU hegemonic position (perhaps most notably in the '9/11'
8
9 attacks on the USA followed by similar events in Europe which many regarded as a
10
11 direct challenge to the global order) (Hurrell 2008, Flemes 2010).
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14 A key strategy of the Lula government's foreign policy was to attempt to
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16 coordinate governance with these – North-South cooperation – and other countries –
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18 South-South cooperation (Lima & Hirst 2006, Hurrell 2006, 2008, Cervo 2010,
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20 Almeida 2010, Visentini & Silva 2010, Amorim 2007). Brazil doesn't confront the
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22 military power of other nations, but has strategically invested in flexible alliances with
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24 other countries in global institutions (i.e. World Trade Organization-WTO, International
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26 Monetary Fund-IMF and United Nations-UN). This soft balancing behaviour consists of
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28 having flexible relations with hegemonic powers in many areas but uses non-military
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30 instruments to limit or harm their unilateral positioning (Flemes 2010, see also Pape
31
32 2005). The relatively peaceful behaviour is mostly because Brazilian territory disputes
33
34 ended 100 years ago, since when there has been greater preoccupation with the
35
36 economy and development (Lima & Hirst 2006). Its military expenditures were 1.7% of
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38 the GDP in 2009, a smaller percentage than those invested by United States, China,
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40 Russia, India, South Korea, France and United Kingdom, for example (CIA 2012).
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45 Within these global forums, the Brazilian main agenda is to democratise the
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47 decision process through institutionalised coordination with other developing countries,
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49 such as IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa) and the G-20 (the group of 20 major
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51 economies) (Visentini & Silva 2010). Although BRIC has surged as analytical concept,
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53 currently the relationships between these four nations are only of an informal political
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55 alliance and coordination (Flemes 2010). Vigevani & Cepaluni (2007) describe this
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3 strategy as 'autonomy by diversification', in which the cooperation between South-
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5 South would balance more traditional relations with Northern countries. The perspective
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7 of multilateralism has been considered as a historical pillar since the creation of the
8
9 United Nations (Lima & Hirst 2006).
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12 According to the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Celso Amorim (2003-
13
14 2010), Brazil maintains a position of peaceful attitudes through the multilateral debate
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16 to solve conflicts, to protect human rights and to promote the sustainable development
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18 respecting states' sovereignty (Amorim 2007). From this positioning, Brazil has been
19
20 working to expand the UN Security Council and become a permanent member since
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22 2003 (Visentini & Silva 2010, Sotero 2010, Lima & Hirst 2006, Vigevani & Ramanzini
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24 Júnior 2011). According to the former Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2003-2010), Brazil's
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26 case is grounded in its historical involvement as a founding member of the UN, the
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28 continuous involvement in humanitarian expeditions and commissions, the selective
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30 representation of the current countries and a 'natural' leadership of Brazil in South
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32 America (Amorim 2007).
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37 While all these arguments are subject to criticisms from domestic and regional
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39 authors and politicians, such as in Argentina, Colombia and other smaller states
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41 (Almeida 2010), the regional leadership is particularly controversial. Some authors
42
43 understand that Brazil was not effective as a regional leader during the Lula government
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45 (Malamud 2011, Almeida 2010). Vigevani et al (2008) argue that regional integration is
46
47 still a foreign policy strategy objective but is no longer a priority. We believe that there
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49 may have been political interest in regional relations but that there is not from the
50
51 national elites, for whom the needs or profits of this integration are questionable. While
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53 regional integration and Brazil's position as regional leader was not reinforced in Lula's
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55 government, the rise of Brazil in a global sense is nonetheless generally accepted
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3 (Malamud 2011, Almeida 2010, Sotero 2010, Cervo 2010, Hurrell 2008). Accordingly,
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5 while some advocate that the country has asserted its interests in the international sphere
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7 (Malamud 2011, Cervo 2010, Sotero 2010, Hurrell 2008), others believe that Brazil's
8
9 status is not recognized internationally yet (Almeida 2010). Among the challenges and
10
11 risks to improving Brazil's status in international affairs, there are: lack of regional
12
13 support, conflicting interests with strategic partners, lower growth in GDP and decrease
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15 in the international trade participation (Malamud 2011, Almeida 2010, Sotero 2010).
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19 Despite these criticisms or the supposed inefficiency of these strategies, Brazil
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21 presented Rio de Janeiro's bid to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games
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23 displaying itself as a rising power both economically and politically in international
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25 forums. The next section details how Brazil built past bids but particularly how the
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27 country managed the 2016 bid. Moreover, it articulates how foreign affairs strategies
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29 established the main tools to conquer votes and confidence of other countries until the
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31 2009 IOC choice of Rio de Janeiro, as well as influencing the Brazilian Government to
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33 fully support of the 2016 bid.
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37 ***The pursuit of sport international events***

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39 Brazil had a representative in the 'founding' group of the Modern Olympics and has
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41 been constantly represented in the IOC (Abreu et al 2006). This close relationship with
42
43 the Olympic movement from an early stage explains why Brazil first considered hosting
44
45 the Olympic Games in 1936. However, in the latter part of the 1920s, the Brazilian
46
47 economy was mainly based on coffee exportation, and so the New York stock exchange
48
49 crisis of 1929 prevented forward movements to officially present the bid (Rubio 2010).
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52
53 The second time Brazil considered bidding to host the Games was at the end of the
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55 1980s to host the games in 2000 in Brasília, as a celebration for its 40th anniversary.
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58 However, this was a politically unstable period with the president facing an
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impeachment process in 1991. For this reason, Brazil withdrew from the bidding before the IOC meeting. The third attempt, which was the first that became a real bid, was in the 1990s to host the Olympic Games of 2004 in Rio de Janeiro (*Idem*). Carlos Arthur Nuzman was the president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee and remains in this position at the time of writing (Abreu et al 2006). However, according to the Brazilian authorities, the lack of experience of hosting big sportive events was one of the reasons why its bid wasn't accepted by the IOC (Brasil 2007). In 2002 the Brazilian Olympic Committee won the bid to host the Pan American Games of 2007. The year prior to this, Brazil submitted its second Olympic bid in 2006 to host the 2012 Games on the basis that some sport facilities would be developed for the Pan American Games which would strengthen their bid. However, once again, Brazil was eliminated before the second round of voting (Rubio 2010).

Finally, the fifth attempt and third formal bidding process was initiated in 2008, one year after the Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro. For the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the IOC received seven bids from Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Tokyo (Japan), Chicago (USA), Madrid (Spain), Prague (Czech Republic), Baku (Azerbaijan) and Doha (Qatar). For the first time, Brazil went into the second round of voting with Tokyo, Chicago and Madrid (IOC 2008). In the 121st IOC session in Copenhagen, the IOC president Jacques Rogge announced Rio as host of the 2016 Olympic Games after beating in three rounds of voting Chicago, Tokyo and Madrid, in this order. The Brazilian delegation was composed of the Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva among other political figures from federal and local government, Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

The 2016 Rio de Janeiro's bid was initiated by the Brazilian Olympic Committee and received the support of the three levels of government: the city of Rio

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3 de Janeiro, the state of Rio de Janeiro and the Brazilian federal government. This
4
5 support is not only explicit in the opening letters of the bid books, but throughout all bid
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7 documents. According to them, the Olympic and Paralympic Games would fit into the
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9 city's long term plan by boosting its transformation through the creation of a new urban
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11 structure and promoting social inclusion. In this sense, the proposed vision was "the
12
13 Games of celebration and transformation" (Comitê de Candidatura 2009: 2).

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16 By celebration, the bid committee understands that athletes would perform
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18 sporting excellence in high profile facilities in a beautiful city with a joyful atmosphere.
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20 The celebration would happen together with a transformation of Rio de Janeiro in
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22 social, urban and environmental areas and bringing international recognition and
23
24 visibility to Brazil and its resilient economy. For these purposes, the bid committee and
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26 the government set five key strategies: to promote the participation of youth; to bring
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28 social transformation and development through sport; to establish the country as a South
29
30 American sport leader; to promote the country globally; and to deliver the Games
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32 successfully (Comitê de Candidatura 2009). It is noteworthy that the third and fourth
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34 strategies are directly linked to Brazilian foreign policy. Regarding the sport regional
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36 leadership, the training sport facilities would attract South American athletes as the
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38 "main economic potency" in the region that has the "means, opportunity and vocation to
39
40 use sport as a tool to help its neighbours". The country's promotion would be the
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42 consequence of the mega-event's visibility as a touristic destination and "to reinforce its
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44 status of important economy in booming growth" (Comitê de Candidatura 2009: 20).

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47 Following the initial section outlining the motivation for hosting the Games, the
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49 documents reiterate the proposal to reach a South American audience and make
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51 reference to the economic power of Brazil. This repetition appears to extend beyond
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53 simply the Brazilian government's will. A geographical argument was raised by the
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3 Brazilian bid, as the Games have never previously been hosted by a South American
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5 country and the other three bidding countries already had hosted them. This differential
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7 was reinforced during the bid presentation at the IOC voting session (Silva 2009a; UOL
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9 Esporte 2009). The economic guarantee has been a major concern in past decades
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11 considering the IOC's demands of financial support to build the structure needed to host
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13 the event (Horne & Whannel 2012). In the bid period (2008 and 2009), this concern was
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15 stronger considering the world financial crisis and the historical instability of the Latin
16
17 American countries (see Ocampo 2009). Reference to the economic growth and
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19 inflation rates, market size and future projections were presented, but evidence of
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21 current and future investments supporting the bid and potentially the Games have
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23 permeated all the documents (Comit  de Candidatura 2009). This agenda was
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25 simultaneously an advantage and incentive for the Brazilian government to use the bid
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27 project in its foreign policy aims, or vice-versa.
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32 The final election was considered a victory for Brazilian self-esteem, as
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34 defeating other global powers in the bid process had a symbolic meaning.. In the press
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36 conference right after the election, President Lula said: 'I'm sorry for being happy and
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38 you [to President Obama and Zapatero and to the Prime Minister Hatoyama] sad, but
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40 you were happy and we were sad many times. We are allowed to be happy today and
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42 you added value to our dispute' (Silva 2009b). Then, a journalist asked President Lula
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44 what he felt about beating president Obama (of the USA and whose home city is
45
46 Chicago) in the first voting round. In his answer, President Lula said that it wasn't about
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48 him and Obama, but about two proposals organised by the cities (Silva 2009b).
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50 However, the posing of this question demonstrated that the significance for Brazil was
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52 more than just the right to host the event. Moreover, the declared meaning of this
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54 election was:
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3 ‘This victory for me is: Brazil won, definitely, its international citizenship. We
4 are not second class, we are first class, no one is better neither worst, may be
5 equal. This is how we want to be and this is what this victory means.’ (Silva
6 2009b)
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11 As this speech extract shows, in relation to the Brazilian foreign policy
12 presented above, the bid and election for 2016 are part of a wider socio-political issue.
13 Carlos Resende (2010) presents further data on how sport and foreign policy were
14 coordinated during Lula’s presidency. In 2004, President Lula asked the Brazilian
15 Football Confederation to play a friendly game in Haiti labelled as “The match of the
16 peace”. Immediately prior to this event, the Brazilian *seleção* had just won the 2002
17 FIFA World Cup and well-known football players not only played but also appeared
18 publicly in armoured vehicles of the UN. On this occasion, Brazil was investing in the
19 political situation of Haiti and intended to show a positive message through football.
20 Later in 2008, a general-coordination of sport interchange and cooperation was created
21 inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The main reasons for that were: the demand from
22 developing countries to cooperate in sport and specially football; the choice of Brazil as
23 host of the 2014 FIFA World Cup; and the bid for the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic
24 Games.
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42 Resende (2010) cites many agreements with various countries. Generally,
43 infrastructure, legacy and security knowledge were imported and football coaching
44 knowledge and material were exported (Resende 2010, Vasconcellos 2011). The
45 majority of these agreements were between 2008 and 2010. Resende (2010) explains
46 that all the Brazilian Embassies during the bid phase were informed about the Olympic
47 bid, instructed to mention it in every public event and supported any Brazilian sport
48 delegation abroad. The diplomats were expected to contact IOC voting members,
49 presidents of international federations and National Olympic Committees, government
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3 authorities and sportspeople that could influence the choice of Rio de Janeiro to host the
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5 2016 Games. Besides that, President Lula attended the opening ceremony in Beijing
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7 2008 and visited the sites of the London 2012 Games during 2009. After the IOC
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9 election, numerous agreements on planning, organisation, legacy and economic areas
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11 were signed with the United Kingdom, Germany and South Africa and others were
12
13 being developed with Australia, Canada, United States and Russia (Resende 2010).
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16 The role of the Brazilian government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in
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18 coordinating activities to enhance the image of Brazil demonstrates the significance of
19
20 mega sporting events and how they are part of a broader foreign policy agenda.
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22 According to the organizational structure of this Ministry in Brazil, it is likely that this
23
24 decision-making took place in cabinet diplomacy that includes authorities in high
25
26 hierarchical positions such as the President of Republic, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
27
28 State Secretary and others sub-secretaries (Figueira 2010). Leveraging the country's
29
30 image is not only to attract tourists or business, but to position itself as a rising
31
32 economic power and as a regional leader that intends to have a political role in a global
33
34 arena. This is certainly a key concern for Brazilian politics in order to establish not only
35
36 a provisional impact but to build a positive legacy. If legacy is not seen as a natural
37
38 positive consequence of hosting a major sporting event, it is possible to identify how
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40 'soft power' is a possible 'positive legacy' from the mega-events hosted in Brazil. Thus,
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42 as Preuss (2007) argues, there are multiple dimensions of legacies which include
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44 tangible and intangible facets of both planned and unplanned occurrences, all of which
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46 are subject to positive and negative outcomes from the events themselves and wider
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48 related activities.
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53 Resende (2010) shows that those coordinating the Brazilian government's
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55 activities were aware about the international criticism and lack of confidence of how the
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3 games were delivered in China and India. For this reason, activities and strategies are
4
5 being put in practice to increase confidence in the Brazilian capacity to host mega
6
7 sporting events. So, the foreign affairs involvement is not only related to the delivery of
8
9 the events, but also influences the decision process on what image should be presented
10
11 to the wider international audience. The main intention is to show Brazil as an
12
13 established democracy with a sustainable economic growth (Resende 2010). The
14
15 president's discourse during the IOC session that voted for Rio de Janeiro as 2016 host
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17 city reinforces this assumption:
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21 'Brazil lives an excellent momentum. We work hard in the past decades. We
22
23 have an organized and thriving economy that faced without shock the financial
24
25 crisis, which still disrupts many nations. We live an environment of freedom and
26
27 democracy. In the past 30 years, 30 million Brazilians left the poverty threshold
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29 and 21 million now integrate the new middle class. Overcoming difficulties is
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31 the mark of the recent history of Brazil and the trajectory of millions of
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33 Brazilians. I have just participated at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh, where it
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35 was drawn by consensus a new economic global map. This map recognizes the
36
37 importance of rising powers as Brazil in the global scenario and, moreover, in
38
39 overcoming the financial crisis. I am proud, as Brazilian, to be engaged in this
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41 process and to see Brazil as part of the solution.' (Silva 2009a)

42 **Final remarks**

43 Of all of the international sport events hosted by Brazil to date, the 1950 FIFA World
44
45 Cup is possibly the most important. As the first World Cup after the Second World War,
46
47 Brazil had only two years of preparation, while politicians and media saw the possibility
48
49 of showing different images of Brazil and Brazilian cities abroad (Fraga 2006; Lise et al
50
51 2010). The main idea of hosting that event was to show Brazilian modernity through
52
53 civility, organization and urban growth to the world, while simultaneously reinforcing
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55 these images and a patriotic feeling among the domestic public (Fraga 2006). Similarly,
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3 despite historical, political and cultural differences, Tokyo 1964 (Aso 2002), Mexico
4 City 1968 (Brewster & Brewster 2006) and Seoul 1988 (Seh-Jik 1991) also attempted to
5 display such images along with their national economic growth.
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9 Looking to the past, it is possible to notice some similarities on how major
10 sporting events were and are being used to deliver political messages and images in
11 Brazil. But this is not a Brazilian novelty, as we indicated in the introduction to this
12 article based on the literature of mega-events. Unique aspects of this case are the recent
13 magnitude and impact of mega-events, plus the new dynamic and challenges of an
14 'emerging power' hosting two of them in a short period of time – 2014 FIFA World
15 Cup and 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
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18 To discuss how these events are linked to a broader foreign policy agenda, a
19 conceptual background was introduced before the presentation of specific data on the
20 Brazilian foreign policy and its relation to the bidding process for 2016. It was shown
21 that the main objective of the Brazilian foreign policy agenda (2003-2010) was to
22 position the country among the global leaders and the soft power was used as one of the
23 main instruments. In summary, soft power is the historically constructed capacity of
24 conquering power (status, position, evidence, influence, distinction) in the international
25 arena through non-coercive internal and external actions and policies in culture,
26 political values and foreign policy. Brazil is promoting it through: multilateralism,
27 coordination for governance, humanitarian involvement to establish its position in the
28 UN and regional leadership.
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31 Sport in the Brazilian foreign policy agenda confirms national values and
32 interests, generates business and projects a positive image internationally (Vasconcellos
33 2011). In other words, the Brazilian 'ball diplomacy', as Resende (2010) proposes, is
34 based on three pillars:
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3 ‘[T]he Brazilian embassies increase the number of interlocutors; sport, and
4 particularly football, has social appeal; and the actions have visibility in the
5 national and international media. The ball diplomacy can be understood as a tool
6 of the Brazilian soft power.’ (Resende 2010: 41)
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10 From a central coordination, the embassies advocate on a subject of interest in
11 different countries and football is a Brazilian cultural appropriation that has possibility
12 for international exchange, frequently reaching media attention. Somehow, these
13 practices resemble the last four of the five elements of Cull’s (2008) public diplomacy
14 taxonomy: listening, advocacy, cultural diplomacy, exchange diplomacy and
15 international broadcasting. Sport and particularly football as a public diplomacy –
16 focused on foreign audiences, to influence their perceptions as Nye (2008) has
17 differentiated – works to improve soft power. Incorporated in this agenda, mega-events
18 were seen as a possibility to reinforce and establish new multilateral relations, to reflect
19 economic and political conquests in both the domestic and global level through these
20 international platforms, to promote peace through sport and to present Brazil as a
21 leading representative of South America. After all, winning the 2016 bid when the other
22 candidate cities were from more established global powers was a way to position
23 oneself for a domestic and international audience, in symbolic and discursive spheres,
24 among the international leaders. If the idea of a ‘bidding war’ (Tomlinson & Sugden
25 2002) can be applied to illustrate a mean of accumulating soft power in a hard power
26 metaphor, the recent election to host the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games by itself
27 can be considered a positive outcome in the Brazilian strategy.
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50 How this coordination will be seen or if the enhancement of image or a
51 incorporation of soft power will be ‘legacies’ of the mega-events in Brazil, only future
52 studies can say. At the same time, risks and challenges on how the international
53 audience will perceive these efforts have been identified by Brazilian officials. What
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3 this article intended to show is that the ‘political instrumentality’ of sport mega-events
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5 are being used in Brazil among a broader foreign policy strategy of accumulating soft
6
7 power. Consequently, the effects of staging them should be contextualized in future
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9 analyses of hosting sport mega-events.
10

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22

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