



THE TAINTED SPOTLIGHT – HOW CRISIS OVERSHADOWED BRAZIL'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY BET IN HOSTING SPORTS EVENTS AND LED TO A DOWNGRADE OF THE COUNTRY'S REPUTATION

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Abstract: While Brazil was experiencing a rise in its international political and economic profile, with increased visibility and recognition, the country acquired the right to host two of the most prominent global events in the international agenda: the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. This was part of a long-term public diplomacy strategy to attract the international spotlight, to hold the world's attention, and to showcase a developing modern country, a means to increase its Soft Power (BUARQUE, 2015; CASTRO, 2013). It was also part of a nation's historical ambition to become a great power of the world through the development of its Soft Power (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016). However, a series of internal crisis took over the country and instability ensued, so bad news overshadowed the successful organisation of the events, and instead of improving Brazil's reputation, its image only worsened. Although there is no consensus even on the definition of "nation image" and on a methodology to measure its multidimensional character, this article analyses different indexes that propose to do that, through surveys, interviews, and analysis of public data. According to these various studies, the global perception of Brazil changed for the worse in the four years between 2013, before the World Cup, and 2017, after the Olympic Games. This fact means that the plan did not go as the country had hoped, and the strategy of using visibility to further develop the country's Soft Power backfired, which seems to repeat a pattern in the history of Brazil, a country where political and economic instabilities take over from time to time, affecting its international ambition (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016).

Keywords: Brazil. Image. Reputation. World Cup. Olympics.

The 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil were part of a long-term strategy to promote and improve Brazil's international image, increase its Soft Power and build on the nation's ambition to become a valuable global player in international relations (BUARQUE, 2015; MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016; CASTRO, 2013). The World Cup and Olympics

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were part of a strategy of public diplomacy to enhance the country's reputation, symbolising Brazil's rise on the international stage and the assumption of the role of an influential country in world affairs (SIGNITZER; COOMBS, 1992; CASTRO, 2013; SZONDI, 2008). The events were as a chance to show the world that Brazil was a modern, emerging country on its way to becoming a global power (BUARQUE, 2015).

Surprisingly, hosting the events themselves turned out to have been a successful experience in the arenas and the hosting cities. Even though there was a high amount of skepticism among analysts in the international media, both the Cup and the Olympics were praised as great parties, with just minor setbacks and problems (BUARQUE, 2015). One year after the end of that marathon of hosting global events, however, a series of political and economic crises that hit the country since 2013 has overshadowed the success of both events and tainted Brazil's attempt to be recognised as more than a country of parties. After almost a decade of preparations and efforts to be in the international spotlight, internal problems made Brazil lose its chance to shine on the global stage, and its international reputation came out of that significant effort worse than it was before.

This article analyses seven different measures of international reputation surveys and academic studies and argues that instead of promoting the image of Brazil in the rest of the world, the investment of the country in global sports events did not pay off. Because of internal problems, the global spotlight showed a negative image, and the reputation of Brazil in the rest of the world was very poor, leading to a decrease of Brazil in almost all measures of its foreign status.

SOFT POWER AND GLOBAL EVENTS

The advance of Brazil's Soft Power through the promotion of its reputation and increase in international status, of the kind aimed for with hosting the two sports events, is seen as part of the country's historic ambition of being recognised as a great power in global affairs (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016; STOLTE, 2015). This fact is even more important because Brazil does not have an excess of hard military power and thus needs to construct its international presence based on confidence and in the construction of Soft Power, which have been used by the country to establish its interests globally through consensual solutions (LAFER, 2000; MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016).

While the definition of public diplomacy can be diplomacy that targets the general public in foreign societies instead of relationships between the representatives of states (MELISSEN, 2005), it is also a key instrument of Soft Power, which is the ability of a country to get what it wants through attraction rather than coercion. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies – which are closely related to its image and

reputation (NYE JR, 2004). Even before Joseph Nye's formulation of the concept of Soft Power, however, Brazil was already an exponent of the practice, although achieving great power status through Soft Power is not easy (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016).

According to David Mares and Harold Trinkunas (2016), the idea of the greatness (*grandeza*) of the nation and the use of this Soft Power in pursuit of becoming a global power is one of the bases for Brazil's foreign policy. Besides the two sports events, Brazil's quest for greater visibility in the international realm led to the launch of candidacies for leading posts at international organisations, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Food Organization (FAO), as well as hosting international meetings, such as the Rio+20 and the World Youth Day (STOLTE, 2015).

The country has long used Soft Power to try to break through and be recognised as an important influential nation, but this plan has always fallen through reflecting a historical pattern of rise and fall in the international arena. According to Mares and Trinkunas (2016) however, this result is not a novelty in the history of Brazil, and political and economic instabilities that take over Brazil from time to time affects its international ambition. The authors explain the failure to launch Brazil as a global power and argue that this was again the case with the latest effort of Brazil, including hosting the two events, when it became much more visible internationally and tried to put itself as the leader of the global south. It never really took off but lost even more strength after the crisis hit the country.

Governments often misunderstand Soft Power as just diplomacy, but its base is the attraction of a state's domestic model, which means that Brazil can be considered a prisoner to the ebb and flow of its internal situation until it achieves a stable, rather than episodically attractive, model for its domestic political, economic, and social order (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016). Another relevant issue is that these policies require costly investments and do not necessarily yield great material benefit (STOLTE, 2015). Researchers have been debating how the World Cup and the Olympics can increase global awareness about the hosting countries. On the one hand, there are arguments that the visibility of hosting sports mega-events signals the country's achievement of world-class status and international legitimacy, and the analysis of the impact of such events in many countries shows a boost in global media coverage of the country during the competition (ANHOLT, 2009; BLACK, 2007; WALSH; WIEDMANN, 2008; YAO, 2010).

There are, however, problems related to hosting a global event like the World Cup and the Olympics, such as biased media coverage, which risks damaging the hopes of projecting a positive image to an international audience. The opportunity of hosting global events is highly dependent on what a country does with this chance (ANHOLT, 2010).

According to Wadim Schreiner and Frank Go (2011), major events do little to improve a country's reputation if there is a limited or non-existent focus on post-event awareness

management and reputation management strategies, which has been the case of Brazil while immersed in crises. It is true that significant events create media awareness, but these do not necessarily lead to an increase in coverage for non-event related issues, which makes it difficult to change the image of a country. With that, the danger lies in that the increased attention around the events may generate a "bad news syndrome" (SCHREINER; GO, 2011, p. 144).

This was partly the case for Brazil with the World Cup and the Olympics. Although they resulted in increased visibility, the events did not generate positive coverage in the rest of the world and focused on stereotypes related to the countries (such as being a great place for parties) and on the social, economic and political problems, the nations faced in the period (BUARQUE, 2015). As both Simon Anholt (2007) and Rosana Bignami (2002) argue, though with different theoretical approaches, there is no point in having a good communication of a product (or a place, a country in the case of Brazil), if the reality does not match the image it tries to offer. While Brazil faced hardship, its problems and crises were part of the reality exposed to the world in the global spotlight, and that exposure developed a worse image of the country.

THE IMAGE OF A NATION

The idea of the promotion of Soft Power is closely related to foreign perception and the image of a country, a subject that has been growing in the academic field, driven especially by researchers on place branding, and it is possible to teach the idea that nation images are brands in the minds of the rest of the world (ANHOLT, 2007). The approach of the subject through theories of business and marketing is not consensual, however, and there are several critiques point to the need for a more broad evaluation of those international reputations. Many studies have been trying to define the image and learn how to measure it (ARONCZYK, 2013; MARIUTTI; TENCH, 2015; ROTH; DIAMANTOPOULOS, 2009).

Although it is hard to have a precise definition of what exactly the image of a country is, and the fact that each person might have a different answer to that, Bignami (2002) argues that we should understand as the majority of representations of the nation in the mind of individuals. According to Bignami, social and historical factors, geographical position, weather and the media contribute to the definition of this average image. Frank Go and Robert Govers (2011), however, argue that image and reputation are a matter of perception, and, in fact, are not synonyms for reality. Thinking of places as brands, they argue that the overall reputation of a nation is a function of its reputation among various stakeholders and multiple categories.

Katharina Roth and Adamantios Diamantopoulos (2009) provide a state-of-the-art review of existing conceptualisations regarding nation image – which they call country-of-origin

image, due to their affiliation with research related to marketing and products. According to them, after almost fifty years of country-of-origin research, there still seem to be important conceptual and operational problems associated with its central construct, and literature has reached no consensus on how to conceptualise and operationalise a nation's image.

According to Roth and Diamantopoulos (2009), the literature on national stereotypes and perception of nations can be traced back to the 1930s and was transformed into this marketing approach of country-of-origin (CoO) in the 1960s. Since then, more than 1,000 publications have analysed the concept. The authors divide the research into groups depending on their primary focus, and argue that the group which thinks regarding the general image of a nation views country image as a generic construct consisting of generalised images and, like Bignami (2002), by economics, politics, history, culture, traditions, technological development, and industrialisation. Their study explains that many researchers define the image of nations as "perceptions," "impressions," "associations," "stereotypes," "schemas," and "beliefs", but they argue that the word "image" is more comprehensive than the other definitions (ROTH; DIAMANTOPOULOS, 2009).

Ingrid Martin and Sevgin Eroglu (1993) undertook one of the first efforts to develop a model to measure nation images. Although their focus is very close to marketing and the concept of country of origin, it is still interesting because it presents one of the first models of measuring national images, from the perspective of understanding how that can affect marketing. For them, the image of a country is a multidimensional concept and can be "the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country" (MARTIN; EROGLU, 1993, p. 193). Although it is an interesting early approach to the research of national images, it does not take into consideration matters regarding international relations and politics, considering the matter of images only from the perspective of consumption. More than two decades later, however, there are already many different approaches to measuring the image of countries with assorted methodology and going beyond marketing and consumption.

Ralph Tench and Fabiana Maritutti (2014) developed an interesting summary of the main research that attempts to analyse the international image of countries around the world. According to them, although there are increasingly more studies on the image, there is inconsistency among the existing country brand models. Their focus, however, is closely related to the marketing and communication side of the subject of the image – dealing mostly with the idea of the brand. They do argue, however, that other researchers are treating the subject of nation branding as more political, economic and diplomatic than just business, and the government's entire involvement is a requirement when promoting a country. The image, they say should also be thought as being related to international relations and public diplomacy.

Go and Govers (2011) argue that the indexing of nation images is a vital tool for measuring external and internal perceptions. An index, they argue, can be seen as a useful and impartial guide for stakeholders. David Reibstein (2016), on the other hand, justifies the use of surveys

as important to understanding perception. According to him, survey research can provide valuable feedback to nations about how they are perceived globally because the rankings reflect how a large sample of residents and stakeholders worldwide subjectively perceive a given country, regardless of whether or not perceptions are accurate. Still, according to Reibstein, perception is everything for a country, and this perception is built on the reality of a country (apud BUARQUE, 2017b).

These measures of nation image are criticised, however, for considering national character as if it mattered primarily concerning its fitness for market exchange (ARONCZYK, 2008). According to Melissa Aronczyk (2013), by conflating public opinion research with marketing research, the index seeks to elide differences between citizens and consumers.

Mariutti and Tench (2016) developed a qualitative approach to analyse how the measurement of the image of a country occurs. They compared each of the methodologies and approaches of the most reputable of the studies of the image and the evaluation they made of Brazil and argued that these indexes mutually support and complement each other – even though they use different approaches, methodologies, samples, and data. This fact can mean that the measure has some basis in what the image of a country really is.

A REPUTATION IN FREEFALL

Every measure of Soft Power, reputation, and the perception of Brazil to the rest of the world seems to show that the image of the country has worsened in the very same period in which it was trying to promote itself globally. This article analyses secondary data from seven of those measures, each with a different methodology, but all confirming the same trend: Brazil lost its lure exactly when it was supposed to achieve improved international status.

In 2017, Brazil occupied the worst position in over ten years in the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index, the most cited and respected survey of the reputation of nations (MARIUTTI; GIRALDI, 2012; NIESING, 2013). From an average of the 20th place held until before the World Cup, it became the 25th one year after the Olympic Games. In a matter of four years, between 2013 and 2017, the country also lost ten positions in the Country RepTrak, falling from the 21st to the 31st. It missed the first place as the nation with the best reputation in Latin America to Argentina, in the FutureBrand Country Brand Report. In a measure more directly related to Soft Power, Brazil went from 23rd in 2015 to second to last (29th) in the list of the Soft Power 30 in 2017. Even a new ranking of international reputation, the Best Countries, first developed after the country had already hosted the World Cup, showed Brazil fall from the 20th place in 2016 to 28th in 2017.

While all these aforementioned surveys are based mostly on the opinions of citizens in different nations around the world, two other measures of the international image, with different approaches, also describe a worsening in the global positioning of Brazil, which may help explain the drop in quality registered in the surveys.

On the one hand, the recently developed Good Country Index showed Brazil fall from the 49th place among countries with the greatest contribution to humanity in 2015 to the 80th place in the ranking. Although the academics who developed the ranking argued that it is not right to directly compare the two indexes, since it accounts for a change in methodology, it does show that, according to the analysis, Brazil seems to be doing less to help the world in 2017 than it was in 2015, which is considered strongly correlated to the foreign perception of a nation.

On the other hand, a study of the portrait of Brazil in the international media shows that, in less than a decade, the tone used by the international press to refer to the country went from 80% positive to 80% negative. According to the *I See Brazil* analysis, between the year before the World Cup and the year after the Olympic Games, the proportion of negative stories in the foreign press went from 3.6 in every 10 mentions in 2013 to Brazil to 8 in 10 in 2017. For many authors, the media coverage relates to the development of the image of a country, although it would be correct to assess that the negative perspective of the media about a country show real problems the nation faces.

The table below summarises the drop in international perception of Brazil according to all those different studies, showing in three different points in time the position of Brazil in those international rankings. The studies have been chosen due to their global relevance and the analysis of recent data, from one year after the Olympic Games, which are used as temporal points of analysis. Although there is no model of measure of image universally accepted, Mariutti and Tench (2016) argue that these indexes with different methodologies normally support and complement each other, which means that the measure has some basis in what the image of the country is.

Table 1 – Downfall of the reputation of Brazil source

Measure	1	2	3
Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index	20th (2013)	23rd (2016)	25th (2017)
Reprtrak	21st (2013)	24th (2016)	31st (2017)
FutureBrand Country Brand Report (Latam)	1st (2015-2016)	-	2nd (2017-2018)
Soft Power 30	23rd (2015)	24th (2016)	29th (2017)
Best Countries	-	20th (2016)	28th (2017)
Good Country Index	49th (2015)	43rd (2016)	80th (2017)
I See Brazil*	36% (2013)	72% (2015)	80% (2017)

* Measure of the percentage of news reports with a negative approach in the foreign media.

Source: Elaborated by the author.

The following sessions analyse the different methodologies and what each measure means to Brazil's reputation and present some of the explanation to why the country has seen a decrease in its Soft Power.

HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE – NATION BRANDS INDEX

The Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index (NBI) is the measure of the international image of Brazil that most help understanding how the 2014 World Cup, and especially the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio, did not improve the reputation of the host country. One year after the last of the mega sports event in the country, Brazil reached its worst position in over ten years of the NBI rankings: the 25th (BUARQUE, 2017c).

NBI was developed a decade prior to the post-Olympic results, and Brazil had never appeared below the 20th position until the World Cup. The country ranked 13th in the first ranking, in 2008, and fell to the 20th position in 2009 and 2010. It reached the 16th position in 2011 and dropped to the 20th in 2012 and 2013. In the year of the World Cup, Brazil fell to 21st place in the ranking but managed to gain one place in 2015. The real problems concerning Brazil's image started appearing in 2016, when the country fell to 23rd place, its worst classification in the ranking, while it fell again to 25th in 2017 (BUARQUE, 2017c).

NBI is a way of measuring the image of nations and tracking their profiles. It is conducted annually and estimates the images of 50 countries according to a sample of 20.000 interviewees (FEINBERG; ZHAO, 2011). It was "the first analytical study of ordinary people's perceptions of the brand images of countries" (ANHOLT, 2007, p. 43). The aim was to measure instantaneous, emotional, deep-rooted feelings that people around the world have about places. As a calculation method, it uses six channels through which image is understood: tourism, brands, policy, investment, culture, and people.

There is not a public distribution of the detailed results of the NBI, so it is not possible to precise what changed in the reputation of Brazil after the Olympic Games. However, Anholt has already discussed that the country traditionally appears as well regarded in terms of its soft attributes (tourism, culture, and people), but has a bad image regarding "hard" aspects, such as politics and economics. This fact led Anholt to describe the international image of Brazil as of a country that is decorative, but not really useful, meaning that it is a good destination for tourism and parties, but does not have a lot of credibility in terms of trade and foreign policy (BUARQUE, 2013).

According to Mariutti and Giraldi (2012), NBI serves as an important tool for assessing Brazil's brand in the world. Mariutti and Tench (2016) argue that the NBI helped shape the knowledge of nation branding and is recognised both in the corporate and academic arenas worldwide, taking into account the three dimensions of the critical studies: economic, social,

and cultural. They say, however, that it is subject to criticism because it is a commercial product. Therefore, its methods and surveys are not transparent.

There is also criticism of the index's scope being too limited since it only includes 50 countries whose perceptions are measured in only 20 different countries (NIESING, 2013). Feinberg and Zhao (2011) argue that NBI is a relatively stable index score and a reliable measurement of a nation's overall reputation. They explain that the index has monitored the changes in the image caused by major international sports events, and argue that, in the past, China and Germany have seen some aspects of their reputation improve due to the successful hosting of the Olympic Games and the World Cup.

The changes in foreign perception about Brazil in the NBI are even more relevant because Anholt (2007) argues that nation images do not change easily. The public, he argues, are so attached to their beliefs that they carry on believing the same things and only change their views slowly and reluctantly. When testing the national image of countries, he claims, the results should be extremely stable, with only minor changes in periods of one year. According to the creator of the NBI, only when places and their institutions actually change, people in the rest of the world change their minds about them. The argument is supposed to present the means for countries to improve their international perception, but it can also explain how Brazil's reputation has worsened. With the worst recession in history, a deep political crisis, corruption scandals, impeachment of the president and the increase in poverty and violence, the country has changed for the worse, and the rest of the world has changed its perception accordingly.

COUNTRY REPTRAK

In the four years separating what Brazil was like before and after hosting the World Cup and the Olympic Games, the country has slipped 10 places in the ranking of the best country reputations in the world according to the Reputation Institute Country RepTrak. After ranking in 22nd place in the first edition of the RepTrak, in 2011, the country appeared in 21st place in 2013, one year before the football competition, and its reputation fell to 31st place in 2017, one year after the Olympics.

With roots in corporate reputation research, The Country RepTrak collects more than 39.000 interviews with consumers in the G8 countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States of America). The index evaluates the image of a country according to five dimensions: Effective Government, Advanced Economy, Appealing Environment, Supportive Behaviour Dimensions, and Self-Image (MARIUTTI; TENCH, 2016). All attributes were rated on a 7-point scale, which was then converted to a 0-100 scale to facilitate interpretation.

The historical trend captured by the RepTrak shows the external reputation of Brazil started to drop even before the global events. While Brazil received an average score of around 65 points from 2009 until 2013 (when it reached 67.2), it dropped to 54.6 in 2014, to 49.4 in 2015, 47.5 in 2016 and 47.6 in 2017. The index mentions the institutional crises in the country as one of the explanations for the changes in its foreign perception, which resonates with other analysis of the same period. Apart from that, it is also clear that while Brazil did not improve its image, other countries did, which made Brazil lag behind. Although the reputation did not fall any further after the impeachment and the continuation of the economic recession, we can argue that the increase in visibility brought by the global events and the social unrest of the country contributed to the worsening of the image of Brazil. Even with the decrease in quality, the analysis considers Brazil's reputation moderate, average.

According to Guido Berens et al. (2011), the development of RepTrak started in 2004, building on the increased interest in country reputation, which magnified the need to measure public perceptions of countries systematically. Its methodology is built around a multivariate model with two sets of dimensions: a measure of the overall appeal of a country, and a measure of the dimensions that drive this overall evaluation.

The Reputation Institute index ranking history shows that there might be more volatility the in foreign perception of countries, especially when the image changes for the worse. While it argues that it can take a long time for a nation to build its international reputation, the fast pace of communication and exposure of problems of a country can affect its position in the ranking. This fact is clearly the case of Brazil with mega-events. Although there was more attention paid to the country, the exposure of crises led to its fall in the ranking.

FUTUREBRAND COUNTRY BRAND REPORT (LATIN AMERICA)

In an evaluation of the most well-regarded countries in Latin America, Brazil lost the leadership to Argentina when the reputation of the two countries is compared before and after the mega sports events hosted by Brazil; this is according to the FutureBrand Country Brand Report 2017-2018, comparing to the previous analysis, from 2015-2016. FutureBrand uses the term "brand" to refer to the sum of reputation, perceptions, and associations sustained by multiple stakeholders about each country. The Country Brand Report Latin America is a specific and detailed report of perceptions about Latin America. It includes data from quantitative research collected until 2017 (FUTUREBRAND, 2017).

The Country Brand Report uses a Hierarchical Decision Model (HDM) to compile quantitative and qualitative data from 2.500 opinion leaders and frequent international business or leisure travelers across 15 countries (Germany, Australia, China, South Korea, UAE, Spain, United States, France, India, Italy, Japan, UK, Russia, South Africa, and Turkey).

The methodology aims at determining how key audiences relate to a country's image. It has as basis seven variables: Awareness, familiarity, associations, preference, consideration, visit, recommendation (ADAMS, 2011).

According to Tom Adams (2011), the Country Brand Index is designed to measure perceptions of a country brand strength across multiple dimensions, from progressive politics to openness, freedom of speech, movement, and a positive outlook on the world. The index started in 2005 but has further developed in scope since then. Its most comprehensive study was the 2010 Country Brand Index, which surveyed 3,400 international business and leisure travelers from 13 countries on all five continents (ADAMS, 2011).

The study of images of Latin American countries in the world is straightforward when analysing how Brazil lost the most valuable "brand" in the continent to Argentina. According to the report, massive events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games have put to the test the performance of the country, with meaningful and adverse effects. Brazil's fall is due to the political context of the country, with impeachment and corruption scandals, which disfavored the country's image. The detailed analysis, however, shows that of the six dimensions analysed, Brazil ranked first in Tourism and Made In, second in Heritage and Culture and Good for Business and third in Value System. The most relevant drop of the country was in the ranking for Quality of Life, falling eight places, coming out in tenth (FUTUREBRAND, 2017).

SOFT POWER 30

Considering that hosting two mega-events was a means to improve the Soft Power of Brazil, the analysis of the evolution of an index that has Soft Power in its name is a good indicator that the result was not as planned by the country. According to the evaluation of the Soft Power 30, in three years Brazil dropped from 23rd place to 29th, second to last, in the full list of 30 countries with more Soft Power in the world (MCCLORY, 2017).

The index was published for the first time in 2015 but it still allows us to understand how Brazil has lost Soft Power since then. The only Latin American representative in the index dropped one place after the first year and another five places from the second ranking to the measure taken one year after the Olympic Games.

According to Jonathan McClory (2017), political problems, impeachment, instability, economic turmoil, and corruption scandals overshadowed the success of the Olympics. "Brazil's decline in The Soft Power 30 is due to weaker performances in Engagement, Enterprise, Digital, and perhaps most tellingly, Government where it has fallen to the bottom" (MCCLORY, 2017, p. 50). The soft aspects of the image of the country, however, continue to have a positive evaluation in the world with the appeal of Carnival, soccer, and beach lifestyle.

The Soft Power 30 index is proposed as the world's most comprehensive comparative assessment of global Soft Power, combining objective data and international polling of 10,000 interviewees in 25 different nations to gauge the appeal of countries' Soft Power assets. Its surveys ask respondents to rate countries based on seven different categories – including culture, cuisine, and foreign policy, and six sub-indices: Government, Culture, Global Engagement, Education, Digital, and Enterprise (MCCLORY, 2017).

The index recognises the limitations of measuring subjective information. As with other measures of international reputation, the Soft Power 30 also observes stability within the general results of the index, with rare changes like the one experienced by Brazil. Global Soft Power, it argues, appears to be relatively stable, with only a few significant movements in the table (MCCLORY, 2017).

BEST COUNTRIES

The reputation of Brazil also suffered losses in the measure of the Best Countries ranking. Although there was no such measure before the World Cup, it showed Brazil fell 8 positions in the ranking from before the Olympic Games in Rio and after it – from 20th place in early 2016, it went to 28th in late 2017. According to Reibstein (apud BUARQUE, 2017b), the problems Brazil has gone through in the same period as it was about to host the Olympic Games is a fundamental part of why the foreign perception of the country changed so much in such a short interval. "People are getting to know more about the problems of Brazil, such as poverty. To a certain extent, the Olympic Games, which should have been an excellent opportunity to promote Brazil in the ranking, ended up highlighting the internal problems of the country" (REIBSTEIN apud BUARQUE, 2017b).

This Best Countries Report ranks nations on public perceptions of their inherent characteristics. (GERZEMA; REIBSTEIN, 2016). The rankings analysed the perceptions about 80 countries from the perspective of 21,000 survey respondents in 36 countries. Brazil appeared as number 28 in the ranking. It was the best in Adventure, and among the worst in entrepreneurship, citizenship, being open for business and quality of life.

The Best Countries study is a collaboration between the Wharton School, U.S. News & World Report, and WPP's BAV Consulting. It purports to help the world understand the value of nation brands and the perception of different nations around the world (REIBSTEIN, 2017). After being created in 2015 and after releasing its first results in 2016, the Best Countries further developed its methodology, seeking in 2017 to understand a nation's worth beyond hard metrics and considering the perceptions through a number of qualitative characteristics. It aim to understand the impressions that have the potential to drive trade, travel, and investment and directly affect national economies (MCPHILLIPS, 2017).

In total, 80 nations were measured in 2017 – more than the 60 of the first report. Each country was scored through a set of 65 country attributes. Those attributes were then presented in a survey of more than 21,000 people in different parts of the world. Participants were invited to assess how closely they associated an attribute with a nation. The more a country was perceived to exemplify a particular characteristic concerning the average, the higher that country's attribute score and vice versa. The attributes were also grouped into nine subrankings that rolled into the Best Countries ranking: Adventure, Citizenship, Cultural Influence, Entrepreneurship, Heritage, Movers, Open for Business, Power and Quality of Life. According to Reibstein (2017), survey research can provide valuable feedback to nations about how they are actually perceived globally.

According to the perceptions described in the Best Countries study, Brazil is well regarded as a country for tourism and adventure, but does not fare well in terms of business and citizenship, and does not have real power, which the study consider as an average of scores from attributes such as international leadership, economic and political influence, strong international alliances and strong military alliances. Brazil also appears as the 29th in a ranking of the most powerful nations in the world. This shows that although the country has a lot of Soft Power, the lack of hard military power makes it not being considered powerful at all. The profile of the country in the index gives this idea, full of stereotypes, that Brazil is a "giant" a "melting pot" of cultures, where people love soccer (and volleyball), but is in constant political and economic turmoil, in part because of corruption. It also mentions the Amazon and Carnival and argues that Brazil ranked 1st as a fun and sexy place (US NEWS & WORLD REPORT, 2017).

GOOD COUNTRY INDEX

Apart from the measures of foreign perception of a country, another methodology to evaluate the international standing of the nation that shows that Brazil lost the opportunity to improve its global importance and Soft Power argues that the country lost almost 40 places in the Good Country Index (GCI), a study that ranks 163 nations based on the "good" they do for the world (MARIUTTI; TENCH, 2016; SUBRAMANIAN, 2017). It is a different approach to image and Soft Power, that evaluates what each country contributes to the common good of humanity (THE GOOD COUNTRY, 2017).

The first GCI ranking was calculated in 2015. Brazil first appeared in 49th place. In the year of the Olympics, Brazil even rose in the ranking, reaching the 43rd place among 163 countries. A little over a year since the Olympics, however, the country experienced a huge drop, to 80th place in 2017.

The idea of the GCI is to measure what each country on earth contributes to the planet and what it takes away, relative to its size. The study uses a wide range of data from the U.N.

and other international organisations and indicates whether each country can be seen as a net creditor to mankind, a burden on the planet, or something in between. GCI tries to distance itself from the idea that using the term "good country" is a way to make a moral judgment. What it sets out to do is to find out if a country contributes to the greater good of humanity. "A country that serves the interests of its own people, but without harming – and preferably by advancing – the interests of people in other countries too." (THE GOOD COUNTRY, 2017). Although the GCI is not officially a measure of international perception, Govers argues that there is nearly an 80% correlation between the analysis of what a country does for the planet and its international reputation, meaning that the more a country contributes, the better its image (GOVERS apud BUARQUE, 2017a).

When analysing different measures of the Brazilian image, Mariutti and Tench (2016) describe the GCI as resourceful, critical and insightful, but they argue that it cannot be directly compared to other analyses due to its ethical and liable features.

In an interview, Govers, who was responsible for the analysis of the data used to construct the GCI, argued that it is not entirely correct to think of the three years as an evolution of the performance of each country. According to him, the three indexes are called GCI, GCI 1.1 and GCI 1.2 because they all passed through methodological changes and revision of sources of data, so there is not clear continuity among them. Not only that, but the data was not collected in the same interval. The first index used data from 2010; the second was based on information from 2011 and the third used data from 2014 (BUARQUE, 2017a). Govers explained, however, that the drop of Brazil in the rankings was significant and was probably related to the intensive media coverage of both the World Cup and the Olympics in the context of the political and economic crises in the country. According to Govers, what happens with this kind of mega-event is that it attracts quite the international attention, but not only to positive aspects of the country. With increased media attention, Brazil had really negative stories broadcasted globally. "All these things combined lead to a negative perception in people's minds" (apud BUARQUE, 2017a).

SEEING BRAZIL

The worsening of foreign perception of Brazil is often linked to the international media coverage of the country. In fact, one study of the general tone of that coverage seems to confirm that there is a correlation between the portrayal of the country in the foreign press and the changes in perception about it in the rest of the world. According to the *I See Brazil* analysis, the tone of the international coverage about Brazil changed completely from positive to negative in less than a decade. While 80% of the articles mentioning Brazil in the foreign media were positive about the country in 2009, 81% of all the stories mentioning Brazil in the rest of the world in 2016 had a negative approach (I SEE BRAZIL, 2017).

Table 2 – Changing tone of the foreign media coverage of Brazil source.

I See Brazil	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*
Positive news coverage	80%	81%	73%	76%	65%	44%	28%	19%	19,5%
Negative news coverage	20%	19%	27%	24%	35%	56%	72%	81%	80,5%

* Partial results.

Source: I SEE BRAZIL, 2017.

The Brazilian communication agency Imagem Corporativa produces the *I See Brazil* with the purpose of revealing how the image of Brazil in other countries, gathering and analyzing references to politics, economics and socio-environmental issues and different aspects related to these three pillars. Its methodology takes into account the evaluation of the main publications of the international press and a team of international experts. It analyses reports about Brazil by 13 international press publications: *Corriere Della Sera* (Italy); *Der Spiegel* (Germany); *Economic Times of India* (India); *El Pais* (Spain); *Financial Times* (UK); *La Nacion* (Argentina); *Le Monde* (France); *South China Morning Post* (China); *The Economist* (UK); *The Japan Times Online* (Japan); *The New York Times* (USA); *The Toronto Star* (Canada); and *The Wall Street Journal* (USA). In addition, the bulletin brings the results of a survey conducted with international experts who opine about the country's image (I SEE BRAZIL, 2017).

According to the analysis of Imagem Corporativa, the external perception of Brazil had its most expressive movements – positively and negatively – in the ten years between 2007 and 2017 – this trend followed the development of real facts from the country, which generated the media coverage and ended up in general perception of the country in the world.

The year 2007 can be emblematic, the study *I See Brazil* argues. It was then that Fifa chose Brazil to host the 2014 World Cup and Petrobras announced to the world the discovery of vast oil reserves in the pre-salt layer in Santos. The following year, Brazil would become investment grade, being officially considered by the world market as a country that was safe for investments. Even the global financial crisis at the end of 2008 did not substantially affect the country: it was seen as an example of resilience in a challenging time. The following year, more points for the international image of Brazil: Rio de Janeiro was chosen to host the 2016 Olympic Games and the British magazine *The Economist* released its emblematic cover with the Christ statue taking off (IMAGEM CORPORATIVA, 2016).

Just as it became the consensus in a short timespan, the positive image of Brazil was also quickly undone. The street protests of 2013 and the beginning of economic deterioration the following year undermined the external enthusiasm – making *The Economist* reverse its iconic 2009 cover, now showing the Christ, the Redeemer free falling. It is ironic, it says, to note that at the moment Brazil exhibited one of the high points it acquired the decade before – hosting the Football World Cup in June 2014, the country was already being

regarded with mistrust. This process would only increase the following year, fed by the conjunction of crises – political and economic – with the revelations around the existence of a graft scheme and payment of bribes at Petrobras, involving politicians and government officials. From that moment, the foreign image of the country would become increasingly negative. Even hosting the Olympic Games brought apprehension about the ability of the country to promote the event. Concern with crime in Rio and the proliferation of the Zika virus dominated the news in the rest of the world (IMAGEM CORPORATIVA, 2016).

The study even argues that the unfavorable perception of Brazil in the rest of the world was interrupted during the Olympic Games, when articles in the foreign media went against the pessimistic expectations that circulated in the rest of the world since the start of the year. However, the impeachment process in the Senate and the definitive ousting of President Dilma Rousseff opened space for negative analysis about the dispute of power in Brazilian politics (IMAGEM CORPORATIVA, 2016).

DEALING WITH REALITY X SHOOTING THE MESSENGER

Although the *I See Brazil* analysis points to the foreign media as responsible for broadcasting a bad image of Brazil in the exact period in which the reputation of the country as measured by surveys went in downfall, it also seems to confirm one line of academic analysis about how the media coverage affects the international perceptions of a country. Although the foreign press really does expose problems of the country amid its crises, it only reflects the reality of Brazil, without creating an artificial image that could affect its reputation.

This article's author research has found that the 2014 World Cup increased the attention of the international media about Brazil, but the country was not able to rebrand itself. The international media acted as an independent observer of what was happening in the country and used stereotypes with a negative connotation, reinforcing the idea of Brazil as a country of parties. The descriptions of the country were associated with social unrest, soccer, corruption, Carnival, and beaches. The analysis of the image of Brazil as projected in international newspapers during the World Cup in 2014 seemed to confirm the study of competitive national identity conducted in the Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index. Through that, Brazil was seen as a country that is decorative but not useful (BUARQUE, 2013). Similarly, the international coverage of the Olympic Games focused on the party aspect, arguing that the event was a fun moment, with lots of celebrations, and, fortunately, with no major problem in Brazil. As in the World Cup two years before, the pessimism created in the press prior to the event itself served as preparation for the worst that never happened, so the general reaction was of relief and rejoice over the huge party. Yet again, however, Brazil did not change its image of being the country of mega-parties.

In her study of the international image of Brazil, Bignami (2002) argues against what she calls an attempt to put the responsibility solely onto the press for the problems of Brazil's reputation. For the author, if the country goes through real problems and the media lets the world learn about it, it is not its responsibility. The country should focus on solving its problems, not in complaining about the press, Bignami (2002) argues. This fact echoes the evaluation of Anholt (2007) who argues that no communication can create an image too far apart from what the country is.

The general opinion in Brazil, according to Bignami (2002), is that the image of Brazil is negative because of the discourse of the international press, but this foreign press only exposes the facts and cannot be considered the cause of the social problems of the country. The press certainly creates an image of Brazil, but it cannot be said that as an institution, the foreign media acts against Brazil.

The analysis of Antonio Brasil (2012) has a similar approach and supports the idea that the media helps shaping the international image of Brazil, but does so by reflecting the reality of the country and repeating a lot of the images the Brazilians themselves have of Brazil. Foreign journalists have a key role in constructing and projecting Brazilian image abroad, it says, but "their news production reflects a communication process of self-referentiality that uses the Brazilian press as a primary source for news correspondents who work in the country" (BRASIL, 2012, p. 775).

Anholt (2009) reiterates that although important, the media is not the only means by which national reputations are forged – there are also direct experience, word-of-mouth, products and services, diplomacy, trade negotiations, international development assistance and the other official channels, famous people, acts of war, acts of charity, education, history, films, books, works of art, pictures, sporting, and cultural events. He also argues that there is an interesting circular relationship between the media and the images of countries. While those images are amplified by the media, they also create the media, by the use of stereotypes and redeploying clichés (ANHOLT, 2009).

CONCLUSION

Although the intention of Brazil when hosting two of the largest mega-events on the planet (The World Cup and the Summer Olympics) was to promote its Soft Power and improve its international reputation in an attempt to gain status in its ambition to become a global power, the bet did not pay off. Instead of an improvement, the country saw its global "brand" devalued according to the most recognised measures of international status and image developed by international companies.

Winning the right to host both sporting mega-events was celebrated by the government as an achievement for the country, and the plan was to "rebrand" the nation and show the

world a modern Brazil that was more than just beaches, soccer and parties (BUARQUE, 2015). The results, however, fell short on what Brazil was betting. Instead of improving foreign perception about Brazil, the global exposition of political, economic and social problems the country has been going through since 2013 led to the development of a worse image than Brazil had before. According to several different analyses, the reputation of Brazil has become weaker after the two global mega-events than it was before them.

The series of internal political and economic crises, such as the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff and the worst recession in the country's history, took hold of the spotlight the country attracted due to global events. These problems took over the country, decreased the real quality of life for Brazilians and overshadowed the international coverage of the country at a crucial moment. All of this seems to have contributed to the worsening of the foreign perception of the country in the same period it was trying to promote its reputation in the world. According to Mares and Trinkunas (2016), this repeats a regular trend, as political and economic instabilities that take over Brazil from time to time affect its international ambition of becoming recognised as a global power. The failure to promote an improvement in Brazil's status confirms that Brazil has not achieved a stable model for its domestic political, economic, and social order, so it continues to be a prisoner to the ebb and flow of its internal situation (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016).

O holofote manchado – Como as crises ofuscaram a aposta brasileira em diplomacia pública ao sediar eventos esportivos e levaram a um rebaixamento da reputação do país

Resumo: Ao conquistar um aumento do seu reconhecimento, da sua visibilidade internacional e a melhora da sua reputação política e econômica em termos globais, o Brasil adquiriu o direito de sediar dois dos maiores eventos globais na agenda internacional, a Copa do Mundo de 2014 e os Jogos Olímpicos de 2016. Isso fazia parte de uma estratégia de diplomacia pública de longo prazo para atrair os holofotes globais, a fim de chamar a atenção do mundo e exibir um país moderno em desenvolvimento e aumentar o *Soft Power* do Brasil (BUARQUE, 2015; CASTRO, 2013). Também fazia parte de uma ambição histórica do país para se tornar uma grande potência do mundo através do desenvolvimento de seu *Soft Power* (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016). No entanto, uma série de crises internas tomou conta do país no período em questão, gerando instabilidade. Notícias negativas acabaram ofuscando a organização bem-sucedida dos eventos e, em vez de melhorar a reputação do Brasil, a imagem internacional do país só piorou. Embora não haja consenso sobre a definição de "imagem da nação" e sobre uma metodologia para medir seu caráter multidimensional, este artigo analisa índices diferentes que se propõem a fazer isso, através de pesquisas, entrevistas e análises de dados públicos. De acordo com esses diferentes estudos, a percepção global do Brasil mudou para pior nos quatro anos entre 2013, antes da Copa do Mundo, e 2017, após os Jogos Olímpicos. Isso significa que o resultado não seguiu o plano esperado pelo país, e a estratégia de usar a

visibilidade para desenvolver ainda mais o *Soft Power* do Brasil aparenta ter repetido um padrão na história do país, onde as instabilidades políticas e econômicas assumem o controle de tempos em tempos, afetando sua ambição internacional (MARES; TRINKUNAS, 2016).

Palavras-chave: Brasil. Imagem. Reputação. Copa do Mundo. Olimpíadas.

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Recebido, em fevereiro de 2018.

Aprovado em março de 2018.