A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE WESTERN PERCEPTION OF THE 2016 RIO OLYMPIC CAMPAIGN

How can we understand the contradiction between Brazil’s Olympic campaign, and how it was perceived in the West?

Universiteit Leiden

A thesis submitted to the program of
Master of Arts in International Relations

Luca van Doremalen
s2181886

July 2019

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. K. Smith

Word Count: 15,294
Table of Contents

Chapter 1 .......................................................................................................................... 2
1.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................ 2
1.2 Case study .................................................................................................................. 4
1.3 Research aims ............................................................................................................ 8
1.4 Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Limitations ............................................. 8
   1.4.1 Constructivist approach ....................................................................................... 9
   1.4.2 Media in social construction ............................................................................ 9
   1.4.3 Western hegemony ............................................................................................ 10
   1.4.4 Methodology ...................................................................................................... 10
   1.4.5 Limitations ......................................................................................................... 14
1.5 Research outline: ....................................................................................................... 14

Chapter 2: Literature Review .......................................................................................... 16
2.1 Emerging states and sport mega events .................................................................... 17
   2.1.1 Sport mega events as public diplomacy instruments ........................................ 18
   2.1.2 Problematizing sport mega events’ contribution to shifts in the global system .... 20

Chapter 3: Analysis ......................................................................................................... 23
3.1 Brazil’s Olympic Narrative ....................................................................................... 24
3.2 Identifying Themes .................................................................................................... 25
3.3 Content Analysis ....................................................................................................... 27

Chapter 4: Analysis of the results & Discussion ............................................................ 34
4.1 The global explanatory framework: ........................................................................... 34
4.2 The Antagonisms as Instruments of Political Exclusion .......................................... 35
   4.2.1 General prosperity ............................................................................................. 35
   4.2.2 Social Inclusion ................................................................................................. 37
   4.2.3 Good Governance and Internal Organization ................................................... 38
   4.2.4 Peace and Security ........................................................................................... 39
   4.2.5 Environmentalism ............................................................................................ 42

Chapter 5: Conclusion .................................................................................................... 44

Chapter 6: Bibliography .................................................................................................. 47
Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

“Brazil gained its international citizenship ... [i] he world has finally recognized it is Brazil’s time.”

These were the former Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s words when he celebrated Brazil’s successful bid for hosting the 2016 Summer Olympic Games at the IOC’s 121st Session in Copenhagen on 2nd October, 2009. The decision was seen as historic because Brazil was going to be the first South-American state to host the Olympics and because it defeated Northern cities in “traditionally superior political and economic positions”, especially the United States that enjoyed the then president Barack Obama’s endorsement.

Due to their rapidly increasing economic power and their potential of changing the global political and economic landscape, emerging states like Brazil have become increasingly relevant topics in global politics in the past two decades. The global political discourse on these states reflects a great deal of anxiety as their aim is to challenge traditional global power relations – such as the Global South’s subordination to the Global North – and assert their power alongside the dominant states of the global political economy. Therefore, it is essential to study the role of the discourse produced by Global North on these emerging states in order to understand the current state of affairs of the international political arena.

Sport mega events have become emerging states’ common means of increasing their soft power in the global international arena. This is because as government sport policy has

---

4 Dauvergne & Farias (2012) describe emerging states based on Keohane’s (1969) definition of middle powers as: A peculiar subgroup of middle powers, with the acronym BRIC or BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China plus South Africa) that are characterized by rapid economic growth but cannot act on their own effectively. However, they can have an impact on the international system in a small group or through an institution.
5 The terms ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ as well as the dividing line between the two entities are somewhat problematic. The South characterized by poverty and underdevelopment by the countries of the North or the prosperous ‘West’ is not culturally, socially or politically homogenous. Nor is the dividing line between the developing and developed world is an accurate geographical demarcation. (See Obijiofor 2005: 30)
6 Therefore, throughout this thesis, the expressions ‘Global South’ and ‘developing world’ referring to the poorer parts of the world and the terms ‘Global North’ the ‘West’ and the ‘developed world’ are used to represent the general division between countries and population based on economic prosperity.
evolved in the spread of neoliberal ideology, the importance of these events has increasingly been recognized in the era of economic and cultural globalization.\textsuperscript{7,8} With the emergence of global television and media, they prove to be effective ways of practicing public diplomacy\textsuperscript{9} – of reframing their hosts through a constructed identity that consists of “signals and narratives of distinctive qualities and/or key trends and departures”.\textsuperscript{10} Winning the right to host for sport mega event usually sends out a number of positive messages about the host country – such as acceptance and inclusion in the international system and trust in the host country’s ability to smoothly manage an event of global scale.\textsuperscript{11}

Therefore, this trend of mega events that were previously hosted by countries of the Global North moving to the Global South – Brazil hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup, the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, China hosting the 2008 Beijing Games, South Africa the 2012 FIFA World Cup and India the 2010 Commonwealth Games – is also believed to indicate a shift in global power relations. According to Grix and Lee, “BRICS” countries hosting mega events for instance are “demonstrating not only structural power-shifts but also normative shifts in global affairs and is thought to be illustrative of the growing agenda and norm setting authority of large developing countries in the international system”.\textsuperscript{12} In their view sport mega events are evidence of emerging states’ increased “discursive and material based agency in the international system”.\textsuperscript{13}

However, it is important to note that this acceptance happens through the host having to live up to certain global standards previously set by the Global North, which is not only problematic regarding sport events’ ability to resolve unequal power relations in the global arena, but also pressures emerging states to create discourses that are not completely aligned with their reality. Combined with the developed world’s anxiety about emerging states, the

\textsuperscript{7} Tomlinson, Alan, and Christopher Young. \textit{National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup} (Ithaca: State University of New York Press, 2005), 1
\textsuperscript{8} Nye defines soft power as the ability to get others to want the outcomes that you want – as the ability to shape others preferences through co-optation rather than coercion in Nye, Joseph. “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power.” \textit{Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science} 616 (2008), 94.
\textsuperscript{9} Public diplomacy practice is identified as a means of demonstrating and enhancing states’ existing soft power (see: Lee and Grix, “\textit{Soft Power, Sports Mega-Events and Emerging States: The Lure of the Politics of Attraction}”, 521.)
\textsuperscript{12} Lee and Grix, “\textit{Soft Power, Sports Mega-Events and Emerging States: The Lure of the Politics of Attraction}”, 527.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 524.
discrepancy between emerging states’ discourses used for soft power practice and the perception of that discourse by the global public can result in great tensions.

1.2 Case study

Brazil’s case of hosting the 2016 Summer Olympic Games is a unique case within the discourse of emerging states contributing to the establishment of a new world order by hosting sport mega events. Brazil’s aim with hosting the 2016 Rio Olympics was to project soft power in the global political arena. It wanted to present itself as a progressive global competitor by showcasing its economic and political achievements (like any other emerging state hosting sport mega events)\(^{14}\), and thereby challenge the international political and economic landscape.

Since Brazil has become one of the world’s largest economy – by 2011 it became the sixth after overtaking the UK\(^{15}\) – the attention of the international society has increasingly been focusing on its rise as a phenomenon. Brazil has been labelled as an “emerging power”, or part of the BRICS grouping (that contains Brazil, Russia, India, China and South-Africa) that is understood as a group of “middle-powers” in the global system, with their characteristics of: growing economies, extensive area, status as regional leaders, aspiration of being global leaders, high GDP but low GDP per capita, significant domestic inequalities and high absolute poverty rates being emphasized.\(^{16}\)

Importantly, most of Brazil’s social and development challenges are rooted in its early history – the most obvious examples of this being its unequal income distribution and its current position as a middle power in the global system which stems from the early colonial economic and power structures.\(^{17}\) Although in the 1930s Brazil adopted a “national developmentalist paradigm” through the Economic Commission for Latin America that contained such key concepts like centre-periphery relations, industry, deteriorating trade terms and internal markets, its economy has been volatile throughout the years and Brazil has taken a wide range of measures to stabilize it.\(^{18}\) Including the adoption of an industrialization model based on import substitution and active state intervention in its economy. Many of these ideas were

---


transposed into its foreign policy as well – the development paradigm for instance through the introduction of Política Externa Independente (‘Independent Foreign Policy’). During the 1960s and 1970s Brazil’s priority was the economic aspect of development – especially foreign trade.\textsuperscript{19}

The following decade brought economic and political unrest, before Brazil transferred from a military government to a democracy. The introduction of neoliberal economic policies (that promote free trade and free markets) in the 1990s successfully stabilized the economy, and allowed for foreign competition. It did not solve the issue of social inequality however, as the socially disadvantaged were not protected by the government anymore.\textsuperscript{20}

When Lula took presidency in 2003, he took a different approach to improve Brazil’s situation by highlighting the asymmetries of the global structures that impeded Brazil’s development. He made strong efforts to position Brazil firmly as an emerging economy – of which the establishment of a market economy, democracy and social progress were good instruments.\textsuperscript{21} In his commencement speech he said in his government “Brazil’s diplomatic action will be oriented by a humanistic perspective, and will be above all, an instrument of national development”. The idea was to unify social and economic aspects of public policies under one governmental development agenda.\textsuperscript{22} So, although the existing patterns of the modern world – globalization, less tolerated use of force and the financial crises that set back both the US and Europe – allowed Brazil to become a modern economic giant Brazil wanted to reform the current world order.\textsuperscript{23}

Brazil set in motion its peaceful rise through different soft power policies that would shape the political agenda in a way that alters the preferences of others by utilizing its intangible assets.\textsuperscript{24} Following this strategy, besides incorporating development into both its domestic and foreign policy, Brazil also mobilized its national identity – including its culture, sporting habits and way of life that was highly attractive for outsiders.\textsuperscript{25} Lula’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim pointed out that “Brazil’s great skill is to be friends with everyone”.\textsuperscript{26} His aim was to increase Brazil’s significance in global affairs and soft balance against structures that he

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 907.
\textsuperscript{20} Darnell, ”Olympism in Action, Olympic Hosting and the Politics of ‘Sport for Development and Peace’”, 871.
\textsuperscript{22} Dauvergne and Farias, “The Rise of Brazil as a Global Development Power”, 908.
\textsuperscript{26} Dauvergne and Farias, “The Rise of Brazil as a Global Development Power”, 906.
found detrimental. The fundamental goal of Brazil’s grand strategy was to precipitate the transition from the Western world’s dominance to a multipolar world order in which the global power balances and international institutions are more supportive in communicating Brazil’s interests.  

The Olympic Games, being broadcasted globally, did not only provide a perfect platform for Brazil to narrate distinction in a world that has become a “contest of competitive credibility” and in which the most important is whose story wins instead of whose military or economy. Winning the right to host as well as to showcase its change of direction – both in terms of politics and economics – provided Brazil with a chance to prove that it had become a successful competitor on the global stage. It incorporated Western standards of development and the ideology that the Olympic Games carry – principles of fairness, unity, solidarity and hospitality that obeys peaceful placemaking for guests – into its Olympic narrative. Thereby it wished to mask its domestic issues stemming mostly from social inequality, and live up to the model of the progressive Western competition state. The values and norms of the Games were good metaphors to the standards of such a model. Therefore, the 2016 Olympic Games seemed to be the perfectly fitting instrument to contribute to Brazil’s broader foreign policy goals of challenging the unequal global arena by increasing its discursive agency in it. Brazil’s acceptance to the first world by becoming a desirable host for an event of such volume and which has previously exclusively been hosted by developed countries, would have indicated the structural power shift in global affairs Brazil had long been aiming for.

However, the huge discrepancy between Rio’s Olympic plan and reality shortly became clear. According to Marsh, Lula’s aim was to create “a truly democratic, plural and tolerant Brazil” by celebrating fundamental ideas about it as a nation (such as racial, ethnic and geographic diversity, its people’s inherently peaceful and creative nature and its syncretism). The Olympic plan – the set of new policies played out through sport – targeted international relations (IR), urban change, economic and social development, and was aimed at achieving high-level result in the global competition. However, Rio did not keep its promises and violated the rights of disadvantaged groups. Due to the massive corruption and Brazil’s worst

economic recession in 2015, by the seventh year of Olympic preparation Rio had ran out of money to finish the infrastructural work, pay public workers or maintain security service on the streets. People were displaced from their homes because of the urban works and the development works the Olympics brought about.\(^{32}\) Within a model of a sporting event such as the Olympic Games that carries the values of protecting citizenship and human rights, local populations should not be displaced and forced into living conditions that are worse than the ones they already live in.\(^ {33}\) The disruption of services, the disclosure of the corruption that kept Rio from realizing its plans, and the series of human rights violations resulted in militant political protests.\(^ {34}\)

The failure of Brazil’s Olympic plans – the persisting issues of inequality and security, human rights violations and the corruption around the preparation – was strongly reflected on in Western media. With The Guardian headline describing Rio’s Olympic preparation as “Welcome to Hell”\(^ {35}\) and one of its favelas, Babilônia as “Olympic exclusion zone”\(^ {36}\) and raising concerns about the unequal distribution of benefits: “Rio Olympics: Who are the real winners and losers?”\(^ {37}\) This portrayal resulted in great tensions because before its “Olympic failure” Brazil was characterized as an “atypical global power”, the leader of the emerging powers discourse, and as the state “that will most shape the 21st century” by the US council of Foreign Relations in 2011.\(^ {38}\) However, as Brazil seemed to fail to realize its Olympic plans in the close lead up to the game, Western media portrayed it as a country struggling to keep its promises.

Although this renders the success of Brazil’s public diplomacy effort played out through the 2016 Rio Olympic Games questionable, and thereby also Brazil’s status as a global competitor, scholarly literature mostly focuses on the Rio Olympics as merely an economic failure. On the economic legacy of the games analyzing the costs and benefits, or on the social implications for Brazil’s own society. Not much attention has been given to the fact that its


\(^{33}\) Filho, Damiani and Fontana, “Sports Mega-events in Brazil: An Account of the Brazilian Government’s Actions” 35.


image of being a global competitor was not well received Western media. Therefore, it is important to understand how the Western perception of the Olympic campaign has contributed to the outcome of Brazil’s effort and thereby to its status in the global political arena.

1.3 Research aims

As discussed in the previous section, Brazil utilized the 2016 Rio Olympic Games as a public diplomacy effort to showcase its economic and political achievements, and thereby challenge the international political and economic landscape. Therefore, it created a narrative through its Olympic campaign that contained certain ideological elements which would present Brazil as a progressive global competitor and allow her to assert its power along the dominant states of the global political arena. However, this image of Brazil as a global competitor was not well received in Western media. Based on a constructivist approach that considers discourses not only representative of political ideologies, but also constitutive of the social and political reality, this thesis is going to focus on the Western perception of Brazil’s Olympic campaign as a discourse that emerged in response to Brazil’s Olympic campaign. The aim is to deconstruct the Western discourse on the Olympic campaign in order to discover how power can be maintained and exercised through political discourses, with the research question: *How can we understand the contradiction between Brazil’s Olympic campaign, and how it was perceived in the West?*

The case study will contribute to the broader debate on the impact of dominant political discourse on the status of emerging states in the global political arena and on the reinforcement of the current social and political reality.

1.4 Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Limitations

To get a more profound understanding of the power relations ingrained in the Western perception of Brazil’s public diplomacy effort played out through the 2016 Rio Olympic campaign, this thesis is going to take an interdisciplinary approach. It is going to build on the developments of Neo-Gramscianism, Linguistics and Political Science in order to discover how power can be exercised and maintained through different political discourses and how is this constitutive of social relations and political reality. But most importantly, in order to take account of the social and political reality of international affairs through deconstructing the counter-discourse of Brazil’s Olympic campaign presented in Western media, this research is
going to be framed in a Constructivist IR theoretical framework that focuses on the interplaying role of political action and language in the construction of reality.

1.4.1 Constructivist approach

Scholars of constructivism focus on the primary importance of intersubjective structures in giving the material world meaning. They claim politics is all about social meanings – about politicians, interest groups and individuals that hold multiple social meanings about political actions and events that arise in the world they operate in. Drawing on Onuf’s idea of people and society constantly constructing each other, one can say social meaning comes from interactions between social actors. Language and discourse are central to this process as they portray political events and enable us to make sense of the events that we experience. However, it is important to note that meanings of events are always considered by one’s own perspective and ideology – either by controlling communicative encounters or by the influence of an own “inner speech”. This allows the existence of multiple realities and suggests that the social meanings on which political discourses build, derive from ideological and moral assumptions that create and govern competing views of what a good society is. These are, then, can be expressed in different, coexisting discourses which can shape a whole global reality.

1.4.2 Media in social construction

As stated in the previous section, social reality is claimed by constructivists to be mostly shaped by communication processes and exchanges of information between social and political actors. Lippman and Kessel point out that in modern society the main source of information exchange is mass media. They argue what one knows is mostly shaped by the individuals contact with mass media. Mass media is the primary source of information and therefore its role in meaning creation or shaping public opinion and knowledge is of paramount importance. Political knowledge is no exception. Media provides us “with the mosaics we build our own personal reality” from. Therefore, as described and explained in detail in section 2.1.1 mass

---

43 Ibid., 56
media is often the primary platform on which public diplomacy practices are played out, as well as on which counter discourses to such practices emerge. Thus, pieces of Western media seem to be effective sources for studying the knowledge and perception that Western society holds about Brazil and that as a form of discourse is constitutive of global reality.

1.4.3 Western hegemony

The creation of meaning is also central for “political manoeuvre for advantage”. Beliefs about events, policies leaders and problems can naturalize or challenge existing inequalities or immobilize political opposition.

Acharya argues that this variation of social construction has allowed Western states to superimpose their self-serving liberal Western values of democracy, industrial development, perception of peace and capitalism on less-powerful non-Western states. However, the formal consent to the norms previously set by the Western world disrupts existing value structures and allows the powerful Western states to take advantage of the less powerful ones.

Therefore, the fact that Brazil tried to challenge the current global order by living up to the standards of the Western competition state carries a great deal of controversy in itself. This neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony Acharya builds his argument on – and that is defined as a social, political, economic and ideological structure which is expressed in universal norms and institutions – interweaves the methodology used for this research. It will be further elaborated both in the methodology section, and discussion chapter when situating the results of the content analysis into the broader cultural context in order to critically analyze the Western discourse on the Rio Olympics.

1.4.4 Methodology

Drawing on such a constructivist approach, acknowledging mass media’s role in the construction of social and political reality and keeping in mind the circumstances of the current global political arena (such as the Western dominance within), this thesis is going to critically analyse the Western media portrayal of the 2016 Rio Olympic campaign as a discourse that

---

47 Ibid., 55.
emerged in response to that of Brazil, and that reflects the Western perception of Brazil’s Olympic campaign. A combination of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and a content analysis is going to provide the tools for the analysis.

The CDA will take a neo-Gramscian hegemony approach outlined in David Howart’s critical discourse concept, that speaks for the construction and deconstruction of political coalitions and the naturalization of political practices through certain political ideologies.\textsuperscript{51} Therefore, with the 2016 Rio Olympics conceptualized as a public diplomacy instrument that was aimed at challenging global power relations, it is important to link the notions of power and discourse in order to better understand how the discrepancies between Brazil’s Olympic campaign and the Western perception thereof reflects the power relations between the two actors.

Howart claims that power “consists of radical acts of institution” which involves “the elaboration of political frontiers and the drawing of lines of inclusion and exclusion”. Drawing on Focauldian post-strucuralist theory, he argues that exercising power does not only constitute practices and social relations. But, via the mobilization of political management through ideologies and fantasies which are to naturalize relations of domination, it is also involved in the sedimentation and reproduction of social relations.\textsuperscript{52} Central to the development of Howart’s argument is the neo-Gramscian concept of hegemony. He sees social formations as relational historical blocks or regimes. The identity of these consists of the political inclusion and exclusion of certain elements and are constructed through hegemonic practices. The latter is based on the division of social spaces through the creation of political frontiers – “construction of antagonistic relations between differently positioned actors through the logic of equivalence and difference”.\textsuperscript{53}

Put this way, hegemony is a political practice that captures the establishment and disruption of political coalitions and discourse projects, but also a form of rule or governance that maintains regimes, practices and policies created by such forces.\textsuperscript{54} The emphasis is on the use of rhetoric. The construction of new discourses that are aimed at winning over a subject to a certain project, while disorganizing the opposition, involves the “rhetorical redescription” of the existing discourse.\textsuperscript{55} Metaphors play an essential role in hegemonizing the demands of a

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 313.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 318.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 319.
certain subject. It creates resemblance between the demand and the representational form that can “condense such demands into a more universal unity”.56

In Howart’s concept, discourse becomes something more than a system of signifiers and allows us the critical explanation of social formations. Based on his idea about power’s relation to discourse, it is not only Brazil’s Olympic campaign that can be identified as a political management aimed at challenging social relations in the global arena by including certain ideological elements to its narrative – an attempt for the rhetorical redescription of the global order. But, the discourse produced by the West, presented in the media can be seen as a counter discourse to that of Brazil, aimed at disorganizing the opposition’s discourse by highlighting how in reality it failed to include those ideological elements in its identity that are universalized by the West as absolute goods. Thereby creating antagonistic relations between the two actors through the logic of difference, reinforcing the line between the two political frontiers. In other words, disrupting Brazil’s political discourse in order to maintain the current global political order. Brazil’s inclusion of ideological elements are represented by key themes in its Olympic narrative.

Drawing on Howart’s discourse concept, the analysis is aimed at deconstructing the Western discourse – the Western media portrayal of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games in order to discover the hypothesized hegemonic rhetoric ingrained in it – the narrative of othering – that results in the (re)articulation of political boundaries between the two actors. The focus is on the construction of difference embedded in the Western discourse. Therefore, to explore how the West highlighted on Brazil’s failure to incorporate the ideological elements that were necessary for its campaign’s success into its identity, antagonistic themes will be searched for in the Western discourse.

Because of its ability to describe a large amount of data, a content analysis – a systematic quantitative study – will be carried out based on Gillian Rose social philosopher’s concept.57 The aim of the content analysis is to map the themes that are antagonistic to those in Brazil’s discourse within the Western discourse, to draw a quantitative account of their presence in order to be able to situate them within the broader global cultural context which speaks for their meaning.

Due to the scope of this paper and language barriers, the study of the Western media portrayal of the games and so of the Western perception of the games will be limited to British

56 Ibid., 320.
online media as representative thereof. British media was considered to be representative of the Western perception of the Games for two reasons. Because British newspapers are widely read and inform people globally. And because the United Kingdom belongs to the club of the Western governing elites that collectively impose hegemony on the rest of the world and that is seen as a homogenous cluster in terms of economics, politics and ideology – capitalist democracies and the centre of liberalism and liberal internationalism.\(^{58}\) The UK provides with a wide range of online newspapers that has covered the 2016 Olympic Games. In order to avoid media bias, the online newspaper articles that will be used as primary sources for the analysis, will be selected from four different online news websites with different political orientations and audiences. Three broadsheets that report in traditional ways, with different political orientations – *The Guardian* that is considered to have a leftist political stance, *The Daily Telegraph* that is considered to be conservative and *The Independent* that is considered to be politically independent – as well as *The Sun*, one tabloid that tends to contain popular content.\(^{59}\)

The news articles studied in this thesis will be sampled from *Lexis-Nexis*, the world’s largest centralized database of full text news – including the four British online news sites that are representative of the Western perception of the Games.\(^{60}\) The timeframe for the search will be set to between 1 January 2015 to 5 August 2016 as most news articles about the Olympics appeared in that time period. The articles are going to be selected in a way that they would be relevant and significant to the topic – the keywords ‘Rio Olympic’ will be searched for in the newspaper headlines and/or in the full text of the articles in order to find the articles that are relevant to the topic. The themes that are going to be searched for, will be coded – equipped with a descriptive label/categorized – drawn on theoretical literature about power struggles (outlined in Howart’s concept) and the issues surrounding the research topic (as outlined in chapter 2).\(^{61}\) These categories will be unambiguous and objective, therefore describing what “really is there in the text” and help avoiding bias.\(^{62}\) The coding of the themes will follow Rose’s method\(^{63}\) and the process of both coding and the content analysis will described in detail in section 3.3. The result of the content analysis will indicate to what extent are the themes that would be indicative of hegemonic practices of the Western world present in the Western media

---


\(^{62}\) Ibid., 87.

\(^{63}\) Rose, “Visual Methodologies”
portrayal of the Rio Olympic Games. Finally, situating the themes found in content analysis into the broader cultural context will help in attributing meaning to the themes and critically analyse the Western discourse on the Rio Olympic Games.

1.4.5 Limitations

The limitations of this thesis mostly stem from the scope of this paper, the limited timeframe for writing and from language barriers. The analysis of the visual construction of difference – of photographs featuring the newspaper articles that were the subject of the textual analysis carried out in this thesis – would add important value to the deconstruction of the Western media portrayal of the Rio Olympic campaign as the photographs would reflect how Rio and its society was seen through the “lens” of Westerners during the campaign.

South Africa is an emerging state characterized by similar domestic social issues as Brazil – unequal wealth distribution and a racially polarized society – and similarly utilized a sport mega event in the hope of improving and masking these issues like Brazil. Therefore, a comparative study of the Western perception of the Rio Olympic campaign and the campaign of the 2010 South African FIFA World Cup would allow for a clearer picture of how dominant political discourses impact the global status of emerging states.

However, both the combination of a textual and a visual analysis, and a comparative study of the two aforementioned cases would be beyond the scope of this paper as the space for in depth analysis of the findings is limited.

Due to the scope of the paper, and language barriers, the study of the Western perception of the games is limited to four British online newspapers.

In order to avoid bias, the “inner speech” and the writer’s own perspective on the topic as well as her ideology is excluded during the research to the most possible extent. However, these might impact the identification of stereotypical associations about Brazil or the Western world, which is a limitation to this analysis.

1.5 Research outline:

The Second Chapter will provide the basis of the analysis with a literature review: describing the general trend of emerging states hosting sport mega events; conceptualizing the Rio Olympic Games as a public diplomacy instrument and describing how public opinion and the perception of a public diplomacy effort plays an important role in the outcome of such an

---

64 Fischer, “Reframing Public Policy Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practices”, 56.
effort; problematizing the trend of emerging states hosting sport mega events and mapping the political issues surrounding this trend.

The Third and Fourth Chapter provide the platform for the deconstruction of the Western discourse on the Rio Olympic Campaign carried out by a combined method of a CDA and content analysis. Throughout the analysis key themes will be mapped in Brazil’s Olympic discourse based on primary sources (governmental documents) and on secondary academic literature. Based on Howarts CDA concept and hegemony approach, a content analysis will be utilized to identify antagonistic themes in the Western media portrayal to those themes identified in Brazil’s discourse. These themes identified through the content analysis then, will be situated in the broader cultural context – the Western dominance of the global arena – in the Fourth Chapter in order to better understand the political practice behind the Western discourse on the Olympic campaign, and thereby the power relations embedded within.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Despite the highly political nature of sport mega events and the fact that they are increasingly being utilized as government strategies, multiple scholars argue how with a handful of exception the fields of IR and political economy have neglected the study of such events. Although views differ on the conceptualization of sport mega events – with some considering them branding strategies, others soft power instruments – scholars in the topic agree states host them in the hope they would bring major economic, social and political benefits to host states.

Black & Van der Westhuizen view hosting sport mega events as a “strategic response to the exigencies of globalization” a salient and complex strategy that help countries “shine abroad” by creating a strong emotional resonance in a world where countries rely increasingly heavily on their cultural endeavours and identity. But more relevantly, they consider such events as phenomena that contribute to the celebration and legitimisation of conceptions of national identity and political orders. In their work they focus on “semi-peripheral polities” that are seeking heightened visibility and status driven by the fear of marginalization in the context of globalization. They argue that semi peripheral polities are distinguished by feelings of vulnerability stemming from divisions such as developed world versus developing world or Global North versus Global South. In this way Black & Van der Westhuizen they also claim that the key themes of IR – identity, global inequality and power – essentially intersect with international sport and sport mega events, and are best understood by studying mechanisms and processes of event hosting – identity building and signalling, development and political liberalization and democracy.

With the trend of emerging states hosting sport mega events, there is a growing body of literature focusing on how such events are of strategic relevance to emerging states and on how they are utilized by such states. Some scholars (Grix and Lee) argue that this trend of sport mega events moving to the global is not only an indicator, but also a contributor to shifts in global power relations. Others (Scarlett Cornelissen, Dowsea & Fletcher) express their concerns about the economic, social and political utility of sport mega events hosted in emerging states, highlighting how the history and the diffusion of the Olympic Games reflect global power

66 Ibid., 1195.
67 Ibid., 1195.
68 Ibid., 1195.
struggles. The key themes and mechanisms of IR and event hosting highlighted by Black & Van der Westhuizen – identity, global inequality, power, development and economic liberalization – are being discussed in further literature on the topic.

2.1 Emerging states and sport mega events

It is widely agreed on that emerging states use sport mega events in a different way than developed states or countries of the Global North. Academic literature suggests that this is due to the fact that emerging states face certain conditions – such as an unequal global arena or unattractive domestic politics that stem from unique sets of factors like a colonial past or societal complexities – that do not extend to developed states.\(^{69,70}\) Therefore, they often seek to host mega events with certain foreign policy goals. Cornelissen suggests that they exploit their hosting of sport mega events through a common agenda: to demonstrate their economic achievements, to signal diplomatic stature and to project soft power due to the lack of their other means of influence in the international arena.\(^{71}\) The aim is mainly to place their own country more centrally in the global arena by highlighting the country’s distinctions. In this way sport mega events are regarded to constitute a key part of “political imagineering” or “political construct” of emerging powers as Cornelissen frames it, and which is of key importance both in terms of the society they want to create and of the position they want to acquire in the international order.\(^{72}\) Because emerging countries have their own visions about the “rerealignment of international order, the narrative used by their state elites for projecting soft power often embodies myth elements about their nations with this vision and about the ways a state can contribute to that”.\(^{73}\)

Cornelissen stresses out that behind the purposefully created discourse there is often an ambivalent internal identity that is the result of an uncertain understanding of the state’s and its evolving society’s constitutive nature.\(^{74}\) Brazil is pointed out as a clear example of this duality and of an ambivalent identity behind it. According to Cornelissen, president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s statement regarding the 2016 Rio Olympics and the 2014 FIFA World Cup is a great indicator of this:


\(^{71}\) Cornelissen, "The Geopolitics of Global Aspiration: Sport Mega-events and Emerging Powers", 3009.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 3008.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., 3022.

\(^{74}\) Ibid., 3019.
“For the US an Olympics is just one more Olympic Games. For Europe an Olympics is just one more Olympic Games. But for us it is something that really will be the reassurance of a continent, a country and its people. Because, here in Latin America, we always feel we have to prove how to do things.”

Grix and Lee study the trend of emerging states hosting sport mega events in terms of political significance. They argue these states do not only contribute to shifts in global political economy but also to shifts in international politics of sport mega events – with “the latter reinforcing trends in the former”. They frame hosting sport mega events as soft power practice – namely as public diplomacy instruments – and study emerging states’ agency in the global arena through the discursive basis of that agency and the diversity of the sources of power they deploy besides their economic power.

2.1.1 Sport mega events as public diplomacy instruments

Sport mega events are collective events that are culturally understood and socially played out through carrying universally shared and celebrated values. According to Grix and Lee it is this ideational dimension of international sport and states’ ability to communicate them in order to please other states’ public that lie at the heart of practicing soft power through sport mega events. However, showing the world that these host countries are “guardians” of these universal norms happens in the context of also showcasing their own distinctive cultural, social and political values. In this way the narrative used by states – their purposefully constructed identity – that is mobilized in the process of utilizing sport mega events as public diplomacy tools, is similar to “those others on one level”: it is based on the reproduction of universal sporting norms that are rooted in international sport in order live up to certain international standards of competition states. But also provides with an opportunity to highlight the host country’s distinctive qualities.

Selling a positive image is part of public diplomacy, but besides that it also involves the creation of long-lasting relationships that create a receptive environment for government diplomacy and soft power strategies. 

80 Ibid., 527
81 Ibid., 526
policies. The combination of government information and long-lasting cultural relationships alter within the three dimensions of public diplomacy:

1. Daily communication that involves the explanation of both domestic and foreign policy decision to the press with a great deal of attention dedicated to how and what to present.
2. Strategic communication that includes developing a set of central themes in states’ in states’ narratives in order to reinforce and advance certain central themes of a government policy.
3. Development of long-lasting relationships with key individuals through exchanges, conferences and access to media channels among others.

The combination of public diplomacy’s three dimension plays an essential role in creating an attractive image for a country that would later help in obtaining certain desired outcomes. But more importantly with regards to the analysis, through the interplay of these three stages soft power, hosting sport mega events becomes a “discursive mechanism for increased agency in global affairs through the performative politics of attraction” and the power lies in shaping others’ preferences in a way that it would align with the preferences of those practicing soft power.

Framed as public diplomacy instruments, sport mega events can be seen as state-centric affairs of which the aim is to create an open and responsive environment for the host state’s foreign policies and economic interests by using positive images and messages. Staging sport mega events allows for creating attraction even where states lack attractive characteristics. This is especially important in the case of emerging powers that have to deal with unattractive social or political features. They can impact others’ perception of those (that often derive from particular historical events, human rights issues or poverty) by utilizing soft power to change their image positively. However, Grix and Lee point it out that the failure of communication practices and the attempts to construct a balanced cultural distinctiveness and value/normative sameness can render the legitimacy of the discourse used in the process questionable which then results in diminished agency in the global system. As they regard present day politics a

84 Ibid., 94.
86 Ibid., 529.
87 Ibid., 528.
88 Ibid., 530.
“contest of competitive credibility” in which narratives matter more than economic or military power, they argue credibility is essential in the process and that is what differentiates public diplomacy from propaganda that can be counterproductive when undermining a country’s credibility. ⁸⁹

In this way the 2016 Rio Olympics – being conceptualized as a public diplomacy instrument – becomes a political manoeuvre targeting global public with a purposefully constructed narrative that sends out positive messages about the country. As the practice is primarily being played out through the press (mass media) and the public plays an essential role in the success of public diplomacy efforts, assessing the reaction to the campaign, or the reception thereof should be studied through the counter-discourse presented in the press as well. Studying if the positive messages were received does not only tell a great deal about the success of Brazil’s effort to project soft power (in this case). If bearing mind that Brazil’s aim was to challenge the global political system by hosting the games, studying the success of its campaign is an indicator of the global power relations as well. Studying the constitutive role of media in Brazil’s post-games perception is missing from academic literature, therefore, the aim of this paper is to fill this gap and to study how does this discourse impact the outcome of Brazil’s campaign and the current state of international affairs.

2.1.2 Problematising sport mega events’ contribution to shifts in the global system

Although many argue that the movement of mega events to the Global South heightens the visibility of development opportunities brought about by such events, a handful of scholars have expressed their concerns about these opportunities both in terms of economic and political success. Dowsea and Fletcher argue that this trend has brought “the issues of world justice to the fore” of the global political arena that has long been dominated by “self-serving discourse” of the world’s leading economic powers. ⁹⁰ This chapter will give an overview about the issues surrounding the trend of mega events being hosted by emerging states.

Although in IR states are regarded to be principle actors with no internal and external superiors and with the sovereign right to implement domestic policies and those which govern its foreign engagement in practice the international community reflects a great deal of diversity in terms of sovereign capacity. This is reflected in the power configuration that stems from the division between the Global North and the Global South / First World and the Third World

which reflects a strong subordination that has no theoretical base and stems from a history of imperialism and colonialism. Cornelissen claims the Olympics Games’ “rocky history” remind us that the most of the world’s ideological issues still revolve around these challenges of domination. She points out the institutionalization and diffusion of the early Olympic movement as an example that strongly reflects the “hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles that were part of decolonization’s early processes of state building in the developing world”. In this period it was common for new countries of the Third World to seek a de jure recognition from the International Olympic Committee, even membership in the Olympic movement as a means to gain de facto recognition as states. These political contours are still visible today in international sport and can well be observed in the bidding processes for major sport events as many countries are still seeking prestige, profile and economic benefits from through hosting. Put this way the movement of sport mega events to the Global South can be seen as a way of rearticulating global structural inequalities. The Olympic Games has European epistemological roots and along with other sport mega events it has long been hosted exclusively by nations of the developed world and undemocratic Western organizations with anarchic decision making, lack of transparency and in the interest of global flows rather than local communities. This means that developing countries that are thriving for hosting have to live up to these standards that were previously set by the Western world (and that include economic liberalization) in order to succeed in the bidding process. However, economic liberalization often contradicts discourses of human rights and political liberalization. The contradiction is mostly resolved in favour of economic liberalism. Therefore, the pursuance of the world class status by the elites of the bidding countries raises questions about the social distribution of both the social and economic benefits and of whether sports mega events contribute to naturalizing social inequalities. Neoliberalism that favours competition in both economic and human relations, and is carried by sport mega events, often fails to address issues of inequality.

91 Dowse and Fletcher “Sport Mega-events, the ‘non-West’ and the Ethics of Event Hosting”, 751.
93 Ibid., 3011.
94 Ibid., 3013.
97 Ibid., 16.
98 Ibid., 8,16.
Darnell however, argues that the sport-focused development program of the IOC – Sport for Development and Peace – which is aimed at challenging a traditional development orthodoxy that targets inequality, clearly aligns with neoliberal approaches and philosophy. This is because sport-focused development mainly involves the improvement of physical infrastructure, the business and private sector as well as increasing employment opportunities. Therefore, through the hegemonic notions of sport that Darnell found to promote an “individualized ethos that supports notions of upward mobility” but fall short in redressing issues of inequality and the hegemony of neoliberal development, he argues that the political economy of global competitive sports rather represents a traditional top-down notion development model.\textsuperscript{99} This raises questions about the ability of sport mega events to bring egalitarian social change to host societies.

Scholars of political science highlighted the role and importance of ideology both in terms of the discourse construction through hosting sport mega events, and within problematizing sport mega events movement to the Global South – which pressures states of the Global South to live up to certain ideological norms previously set by the Global North – as a way of rearticulating global structural inequalities. Others studied sport mega events as a means of projecting soft power. Grix and Lee framed the Rio Olympics as a public diplomacy instrument that would help increase Brazil’s discursive agency in the global arena. They pointed out the significance of public opinion in the process and the importance of the perception of the narrative created within such a practice.

Despite the fact that scholars agree on the perception of sport mega events’ campaign being crucial to the success of the events in bringing political benefits – in increasing the host states’ discursive agency in the international system – the perception of such efforts is neglected in scholarly literature. Although the Rio Olympics got a great deal of attention in Western media, the impact of this perception on Brazil’s effort was not examined in academic literature. This thesis therefore aims to critically examine the Western discourse on Brazil’s Olympic campaign in terms of its impact on Brazil’s global status and contribution to the global political reality. The deconstruction of the Western discourse will focus on the political practice behind its creation and the role of ideology within to discover the power relations embedded in the Western discourse.

Chapter 3: Analysis

The analysis will be focused on deconstructing the Western media portrayal of the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, with the aim to discover the political practice behind its construction – the hypothesized hegemonic rhetoric embedded within. This deconstruction is based on Howart’s discourse conception, according to which Brazil’s Olympic campaign can be conceptualized as a public diplomacy effort aimed at the rhetorical redescription of the current global order through the inclusion of certain ideological elements that are represented by themes in its narrative. And the Western discourse as the counter discourse disrupting Brazil’s effort. Therefore, the focus is on the construction of difference ingrained in the Western discourse. A combined method of CDA and a content analysis will be utilized throughout the study of the news articles selected from The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Independent and The Sun as representatives of Western media.

A CDA that integrates the analysis of text, with the sociocultural analysis of the discursive event, will be utilized to “increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others”\(^{100}\). The content analysis – a systematic quantitative study – will be applied to describe the large amount of data, to map coded themes in the Western discourse that are antagonistic to the themes identified in Brazil’s narrative. This coding of the themes is based on the idea that the creation of antagonistic relations between differently positioned social actors through the logic of difference, (re)creates the political boundaries between these two historical blocks\(^{101}\) – the Western world and the Global South. The coding will be performed through the coding process of the content analysis outlined in section 3.3.

According to the discourse conception applied in this thesis, the Western discourse only makes sense in relation to Brazil’s narrative. Therefore, it is important to discover the issues Brazil’s campaign targeted, and themes that were used within its Olympic narrative for this purpose first. In the next section, the themes will be identified in Brazil’s narrative, based on primary sources on the campaign (governmental documents) and on secondary academic literature.

---


3.1 Brazil’s Olympic Narrative

The Olympic Games did not only provide a great chance for Brazil to crown the achievement of three decades of democratic rule and rapid economic expansion.\textsuperscript{102} The main motive for Rio for hosting the 2016 Olympic Games was that the Games was seen as a turning point for both Rio and for Brazil.\textsuperscript{103} What differentiated Rio’s bid from other cities’ and what helped Rio in its bidding contest, is the fact that in Rio’s view the games would serve the city, not the other way round. According to the games’ public policy guide, 2016 Rio was seen as a “the Olympic Games of transformation” – it was supposed to transform old problems into opportunities.\textsuperscript{104} Rio’s management and sustainability plan claimed that “All the planning carried out in precedent phases have as reference the goal of creating a positive, enduring transformations, maximizing the social, economic, sport and environmental benefit of the Games”.\textsuperscript{105} The IOC’s Evaluation Commission perceived Rio plans as “closely aligned with the general development plans and the social needs of the city”.\textsuperscript{106} If carried out successfully, the Olympic Games would help Rio sending out positive messages about the country – such as becoming a progressive global competitor that is able to host an event of global scale. It provided with a chance to mask domestic issues through the creation of a narrative that would dismantle negative stereotypical associations of Brazil.

In order to understand the key themes of the Olympic campaign that were aimed at transforming Rio’s problems into opportunities and its identity into the identity of a global player, it is important to understand those issues and stereotypes that have prevented Brazil from becoming a full member of the regime of the developed states.

In the past decades, the country has steadily been gaining fame, attracting foreign investors and tourists.\textsuperscript{107} During Lula’s presidency it was emancipated from its characterization of a “third world nation” and converted into a potential economic superpower.\textsuperscript{108} With an efficient government policy that targeted income inequality Lula’s Workers Party lifted many

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 2.
to the middle class of which the size reached 50% of the population during his presidency. Despite of all the achievements, however, the social problems from the past century persisted with the gap between the poor and rich far from being disclosed and remained closely associated with and characterizing Brazil.\textsuperscript{109} Although the country has made strong attempts to incorporate a “narrative of racial harmony” into its identity, this narrative collapsed as economic disparities currently are still linked with racial inequality, diminishing opportunities for mostly Brazil’s darker skinned poorer populations\textsuperscript{110}.

The representation and the study of such inequalities is often treated through study of the “favela culture”. Favela’s are high-density population areas, typically defined by low-quality infrastructure and insufficient public services, such as education and healthcare. They perform the highest rates of violence and crime within Brazil. Favela populations have been discriminated against throughout the history. The division between favelas and the asfalto (the asphalt pavement symbolizing the formal city) and the problematic relationship between the two areas has lead to the criminalization and stigmatization of favelados (favela residents), with the term becoming derogatory.\textsuperscript{111} In movies, murders happening in favelas are treated as casualties of a war on drugs.\textsuperscript{112} The security and housing policies implemented in the lead up to the Rio Olympic Games indicate it well how favelas are “regarded both as stains on the landscape and as threats to the non-favela residents and visitors of the Marvelous City”.\textsuperscript{113} Besides its wealth distribution, and social problems however, Brazil was also working out its internal organization and economic policy that are important factors in determining Brazil’s path as a global actor. Protests were started against poor quality public services during the 2013 Confederations Cup Soccer events. Soon, as corruption have benefited the economic and political elite the implementation of neoliberal economic policies did not provide support for the marginalized, these protests have taken the form of a “collective appeal for a change that can only be reached through a deep political reform”.\textsuperscript{114}

3.2 Identifying Themes

The main themes of the Olympic public policy plan were developed to cover and improve these issues of inequality (both economic and racial) encapsulated in the division

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 13
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 139.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 139.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 13.
between asfalto-Rio and the favelas. Problems of crime, war on drugs, low quality infrastructure, insufficient public services like education and healthcare as well as poor internal organization.

The Rio City Council used the games to improve the quality of life for its citizens – to create a Rio that is a better city to live and work in and visit – through the development of issues of social inclusion and dealing with urban issues like security, environment and infrastructure.

Examples of this include restoring the degraded areas of the city and enhance mobility through a new road network in order to create a city that is completely interconnected and integrated – a city in which both the traditional geographical and social barriers would be removed.\(^\text{115}\) The environmental legacy of the plan included the regeneration of waterways and sewerage works the improvement of healthcare the constant monitoring of water quality and the expansion of sanitation infrastructure.\(^\text{116, 117}\) Issues of education were targeted through the city turning its Olympic stadiums into municipal schools after the games and through moral education that the practice of sport carries.\(^\text{118}\) The poor were going to be occupied during the construction period and security would be enhanced through the establishment of strictly governed public spaces.\(^\text{119}\) The financial strategy of the development plans followed a model in which the government transferred half of the costs to the private sector in order to relieve taxpayers and avoid curbing public investment into other areas.\(^\text{120}\)

The ideational dimension of international sport that are carried by such universally shared values as unity, fairness and rivalry among nations, and that are reflected by the measures taken during the Olympic preparation, interlaced Brazil’s Olympic narrative. They were applied to further enhance Brazil’s image as harmonious and to create attraction, thereby appealing to the international society.

Based on Brazil’s official public policy plan and the issues it targeted with its Olympic campaign, one can identify the following key themes in its Olympic narrative:

1. **General Prosperity** – reflected by the effort of reducing the poverty gap within Brazil’s society and occupying the poor during the preparations in order to increase general prosperity.


\(^{118}\) Ibid., 53.

\(^{119}\) Darnell, "Olympism in Action, Olympic Hosting and the Politics of ‘Sport for Development and Peace’”, 873.

2, *Social Inclusion* – present in the effort of erasing both the geographical and social barriers between different layers of society.

3, *Good Governance and Internal Organization* – that is to say, easing discontent with the existing political system and involving the private sector into the preparation to enhance stability and to relieve taxpayers.

4, *Peace and Security* – through establishing strictly governed urban spaces and reducing inequality that is considered to be the main source of violence.

5, *Environmentalism* – a factor present in the regeneration of waterways and monitoring water quality.

Besides easing its domestic issues, Brazil also used these elements to prove its modernity through incorporating these elements that are considered to be Western standards of civilization. This strategy to incorporate such norms into its identity while also emphasizing its originality carries a great deal of ambivalence. By such a practice, if carried out successfully, Brazil becomes the “reformed, recognizable other” that is almost the same as the powerful Western states, but not quite.\(^{121}\) It creates its meaning “along the axis of metonymy”\(^{122}\) – the partial incorporation of such Western standards, but then also gains it meaning in relation to the powerful Western states which is problematic given the fact that its main goal with its campaign was to challenge the hegemony of Western states in the global arena.

This ideological dimension of the discourse creation will be further elaborated in *chapter 4* while situating the descriptive analysis of the research in the global explanatory framework of neoliberal Western hegemony. In the next section, a content analysis will be carried out in order to discover antagonisms to the themes identified in Brazil’s Olympic narrative in the Western discourse. The content analysis will give a quantitative account of the presence of these antagonistic themes, and will involve the sampling of the dataset, coding of the key themes identified in Brazil’s discourse and the descriptive analysis of the results.

### 3.3 Content Analysis

In this section, to test the hypothesized construction of difference within the Western discourse on the 2016 Rio Olympic Games, a systematic quantitative study is carried out in the form a content analysis. The aim of this is to discover linguistic patterns – themes – that are

---

\(^{121}\) Bhabha, Homi. “*Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.*” *October* 28 (1984), 126.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., 130.
antagonistic to the themes that Brazil tried to incorporate into its narrative in a relatively large amount of data.

The analysis was based on the news articles of four major British online newspapers – *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Sun*. The articles were sampled based on Rose’s (2014) method in a way that they would be representative of Rio and Brazil during the Olympic preparation time. The information providing with an answer to the research question was obtained from a centralized online database – *Lexis-Nexis* – that is the world’s largest database of full text news and that covers all the four aforementioned British online newspapers. The sampling procedure was performed through the *Lexis-Nexis* search engine, with the four online newspapers selected within. The criteria for selecting the articles covering the 2016 Rio Olympics was the articles containing the phrase ‘Rio Olympic’ in the headline and/or in the full text of the articles. The time frame for the search was set to between the dates 01/01/2015 and 04/08/2016.

The first round of sampling of the dataset resulted in 1726 articles from the four online newspapers – *The Guardian* covering 551 articles, *The Independent* 426, *The Daily Telegraph* 364 and *The Sun* 385 pieces. In the second round of the selection the relevant articles were selected from those that contained the keyword ‘Rio Olympic’. That is to say, those articles that were not descriptive of Rio or Brazil, the Olympic campaign or the organization of the event (such as the ones only informing about the athletes taking part in the Rio Olympics) were excluded from the dataset in order to get a clear picture of the proportion of the articles carrying a negative meaning compared to the whole of the descriptive ones. The second selection narrowed the dataset to 170 articles in total. Of these, *The Guardian* covered 45 pieces, *The Independent* 72, *The Daily Telegraph* 25 and *The Sun* 28. (See Table 1) The relevant articles were handpicked. Those articles informing about athletes withdrawing from participation in the games because of considering Rio dangerous, were kept in the second round of sampling as they were considered to carry meaning that is relevant to the research. For instance, *The Daily Telegraph* article’s citing Rory McIlroy’s reason for his withdrawal: “the risk posed by the Zika virus is one I am unwilling to take”.

---

After fully preparing the dataset for the study and taking the context of the Olympic event and the preparation period into consideration, the key themes identified in Brazil’s Olympic campaign – *General Prosperity, Social Inclusion, Good Governance and Internal Organization, Peace and Security, Environmentalism* – were coded into antagonisms. In line with Rose’s coding method the coding was based on the theorized connection between the texts that were going to be studied and “the broader cultural context in which their meaning is made”.\(^{126}\) Thus, on the hypothesized hegemonic political practice behind the creation of the Western discourse which entails the (re)creation of political boundaries through the construction of antagonistic relations (see section 1.4.4).\(^{127}\) So, the original themes identified in Brazil’s discourse were coded into antagonistic themes – labelled with a code word simple enough for a content analysis:

- ‘Poor’ – as a noun it stands for poverty, representing the poorer population of Brazil that contradict the theme of *General Prosperity* identified in Brazil’s narrative.
- ‘Favela’ – that stands for the groups that are socially excluded from Brazil’s society and entail not only social- and economic-, but also racial exclusion. This way, becomes an antagonism for *Social Inclusion*.
- ‘Chaos’ – speaks for the absence of *Good Governance and Internal Organization* and the presence of the opposite.
- ‘Violence’ – of which the presence suggests the lack of physical *Peace and Security*.
- ‘Pollution’ – that represents the failure of incorporating the factor of *Environmentalism* into the Olympic campaign through the ineffective regeneration of the water ways and monitoring of water quality which were identified as part of the environmental factor in Brazil’s narrative. (It is important to note that the findings for pollution within the dataset indeed referred to water pollution.)
- ‘Zika’ – given the outbreak of the Zika virus epidemic in Brazil right before the Games took place, this theme could not be ignored. As it is presented as a danger to both the

---

126 Rose, “*Visual Methodologies*”, 92.
local and international society it is considered to be an issue of health security that is an antagonism to the theme *Peace and Security*.

Zika was too prevalent of a theme in the newspaper articles to be ignored. It is a significant context that needs to be taken into account. Thus, it was added to the previously identified five antagonistic themes. As it was presented as a “danger” to both the local society and to the Olympic visitors in the newspaper articles, this theme will be discussed as an issue of health security under the broader theme of *Peace and Security* which in this way will be divided into two subcategories: physical security and health security.

It is important to note that initially the keyword ‘disorder’ was identified as the most suitable antagonism for Good Governance and Internal Organization. However, after testing the code ‘disorder’ in the first round of the content analysis, it was renamed as ‘chaos’ because the results for ‘disorder’ showed a too significant overlap with the results for ‘zika’. *The Independent*’s 55 newspaper articles that contained ‘zika’ almost entirely corresponded to the 56 positive results for ‘disorder’ as the articles mentioned disorders as the effects of the disease.

The six coded categories (the themes) were searched for in the news articles (both in the headlines and the body of the texts) that were previously considered relevant separately in each online newspaper, through the search engine of *Lexis-Nexis* database. Each article that contained a particular code were counted as one positive result. Because the aim of this content analysis is to discover to what extent are each of these coded themes present in the set of news articles selected as representative of the Olympic campaign, the articles that contained multiple of the code words were counted as a positive result towards all of those coded categories. There was a major overlap between the news articles that featured the particular codes. For instance, many of the articles featured both the code ‘pollution’ and ‘chaos’ or both ‘favela’ and ‘poor’. These articles were counted as a positive result towards both coded categories. (This is indicative of the themes being strongly interconnected.)

The articles were tested twice for the codes, first through the search engine of *Lexis-Nexis*. Then the ones that included any of the codes identified previously in the first round of the search, were examined again manually. The irrelevant results – codes that were not descriptive of Rio, Brazil, the Olympic Games or the Olympic preparation – were filtered and excluded from the final results. For example, such results that featured the code ‘poor’ describing an Olympic athlete’s ‘poor performance’ were not counted towards the positive results in the category ‘poor’. The *Lexis-Nexis* database featured certain relevant articles multiple times in its dataset. These were counted as many times as they were featured towards
the relevant articles, and the ones containing particular codes were counted as many times towards the coded categories as they were featured as well.

The quantitative account drawn from the research is the following (See also Table 2 and Table 3):

Although The Independent showed the highest number (72) of relevant articles, The Guardian features the most articles with a positive result (thus including any of the codes) in general. It highlights the themes antagonistic to those in Brazil’s discourse the most strongly, with 27 positive hits for ‘favela’ out of 45, which is 60% of all the relevant articles featured in the newspaper; 25 for ‘poor’ (55%); 22 for ‘zika’ (48%) 13 for ‘pollution’ (28%); 12 for ‘violence’ (26%), 6 for ‘chaos’ which is 13%. It is striking how many of The Guardian’s articles discuss the themes of favelas and poverty as well as violence. This indicates that The Guardian reflects concern about Brazil’s domestic social issues. The other three online newspapers show a significantly lower percentage of positive results in these categories, with The Independent featuring ‘violence’ and ‘poor’ in 13% and 16% of its relevant articles, ‘favela’ in just 6% of them. For the hits on ‘poor’ The Daily Telegraph and The Sun show the lowest rates – respectively 8% and 0%. ‘Chaos’ was a code present in all articles, with a higher prevalence in The Guardian (13,3%) and in The Sun (17%), while showing a lower frequency in The Daily Telegraph’s and The Independent’s articles – 4% and 5%. ‘Pollution’ was a common theme in all the four newspapers with 29% of The Independent’s articles featuring it, 28% of The Guardian’s, 20% of The Daily Telegraph’s and 17% of The Sun’s articles. Besides The Guardian that focuses more on themes that represent social issues, the online newspapers discussed the theme ‘zika’ the most often in their articles. The Independent showed an outstandingly high percentage (76%), The Sun 53% by which ‘zika’ was also the code that appeared in the most articles of the newspaper, and with 36% of The Daily Telegraph’s articles containing it.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favela</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaos</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zika</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

THE PREVALENCE OF CODES IN THE NEWS ARTICLES

Half of the news articles that were chosen as samples and that were relevant to the Olympics, feature the code ‘zika’ nearly in 20% of the articles in each online newspaper. *The Guardian* stands out among the four newspapers because it shows a relatively high coverage in all categories and because it is by far the most concerned with social issues, such as poverty and social inclusion, represented by the codes ‘poor’ and ‘favela’. *The Sun* shows a relatively
low number of positive results per category – non in the category of ‘poor’ – except in the category of ‘zika’ that speaks for health related security issues, and the category ‘chaos’ that represents disorder instead of the Good Governance and Internal Organization that Brazil tried to incorporate into its narrative. This suggests a difference in tone in The Sun’s discourse – a tone of sensation seeking by only highlighting the “dangers”— compared to that of The Guardian’s which discusses issues concerning Brazil’s local society as well. The Daily Telegraph shows similar trends in the number of positive results per category to The Sun – except that present favela in 20% of its articles that are relevant in terms of the research. The number of articles that only inform about Olympic athletes and were excluded from the dataset, could contribute to the results of the newspaper analysis in the sense that they would be indicators of to what extent are each newspapers informative of global reality or about entertainment. The political orientation of each online newspaper might have an impact on the papers’ portrayal of Brazil, which would be an interesting factor to examine. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow for such research.

Drawing on the results of the research, the conclusion of this content analysis is that the themes antagonistic to those in Brazil’s discourse (with a few exception) are present to a relatively high extent in the four British online newspapers that were chosen as representatives of the Western perception of the Rio Olympics. That is to say, the hypothesized instruments of othering are present in the Western discourse. The following chapter will further elaborate the meaning that the presence of the coded themes carry in terms of the relations between the two social actors – Brazil and the Western society – by situating them in the global explanatory framework of neoliberal Western hegemony.
Chapter 4: Analysis of the results & Discussion

4.1 The global explanatory framework:

The themes identified in Brazil’s narrative, mirror Western standards of civilization or universal norms that became so deeply embedded in common sense understanding that they became unquestionable goods.\textsuperscript{128}

This current mode of hegemonic discourse – and the form of governance of advanced liberal Western societies – is neoliberalism that builds on the idea of active use of freedom.\textsuperscript{129, 130} In terms of political economic practice, this means the role of the state is minimal, but involves securing proper conditions for markets (including to those of healthcare, education, social security and environmental protection)\textsuperscript{131} to function, and supporting free trade and social innovations that will advance individual freedom and responsibility.\textsuperscript{132}

In terms of ideology, Puchala argues what defines the Western-centered neoliberal world order, is the celebration of the classical liberal political ideology, and that the universalization of this – the creation of a liberal world – is the Western world’s project. The “overriding purpose of Western hegemony”.\textsuperscript{133} This liberal conception is modern in character, both of men and society. It entails elements that are individualist, thus asserts the moral primacy of the person instead of the community. Also, egalitarian elements, so it confers on all men the same moral status while denying the of legal or political order differences. As well as universalist elements, thereby affirming the unity of the human species while according secondary importance to historic associations and cultural forms.\textsuperscript{134}

Western liberalism advocates for the democratic governance, the rule of law, protection of private property and enterprise, capitalism, individual liberty, freedom of opportunity. In its liberal-internationalist form endorses international law, diplomacy as means of conflict resolution and free trade. But most importantly, liberalism accepts peace as a catalyst for

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 23.
\textsuperscript{130} Tennberg, Vola, Espiritu, Fors, Ejdemo, Riabova, Korchak, Tonkova, and Nosova. “Neoliberal Governance, Sustainable Development and Local Communities in the Barents Region.” \textit{Barents Studies} 1.1 (2014), 42.
\textsuperscript{131} Harvey, “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction”, 22.
\textsuperscript{132} Tennberg et al., “Neoliberal Governance, Sustainable Development and Local Communities in the Barents Region”, 42.
\textsuperscript{134} Gray, John. \textit{Liberalism}. 2nd ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), xii.
realizing all other values. Based on such values neoliberalism is constructed in a way that it appeals naturally to our intuitions and it is easily justified as universal good.

According to Cox, however, this neoliberal hegemony and its ideology are developed and communicated through international organizations – such as the United Nations – in a way that coincides with the current Western preferences. Cox argues (interpreting Gramsci) that this consensual aspect of power – the consent to the dominant neoliberal Western ideology – is the forefront in which hegemony prevails. This transposed to the global level becomes “world hegemony” that is describable as a social-, economic- and political structure. In this sense this hegemony is also a normative, ideological and ethical structure and it is expressed in universal norms as well as institutions and mechanisms which lay down general rules of behavior for states and for forces of civil society that act across national boundaries.

In this way, the global diffusion of these “self-styled values” of the powerful Western states that they represent as prerequisites for stability allows Western hegemons to disrupt other existing value structures and take advantage of the less powerful states. In Brazil’s case, politically excluding the country from the regime of the powerful by highlighting on its failure to include a neoliberal ideology into its identity, and to establish neoliberal political and economic structures.

In order to understand how the antagonisms to the themes Brazil had tried to incorporate into its Olympic campaign become means of othering, instruments of political exclusion within the Western discourse, it is important to see how are these themes interwoven with a neo-liberal ideology – the values and political economic structures of neoliberalism. The following chapter will situate the themes identified in Brazil’s narrative in the global explanatory framework of neoliberal Western hegemony and elaborate the meaning the antagonisms to those themes carry in this way.

4.2 The Antagonisms as Instruments of Political Exclusion

4.2.1 General prosperity

When one thinks about the West or the Global North in comparison to the developing world, prosperity is often a key aspect of comparison, associated with the Western world and the developing world associated with lacking it.

---

Acharya argues this profit motive accepted as political value system by both states and individuals stems from capitalism. It builds on a neoliberal rhetoric which is becoming the primary force of globalization that by its nature affects not only the economic aspects of life, also the social, cultural and political ones.\textsuperscript{139} According to Harvey the underlying individualistic neoliberal system that accepts the maximization of entrepreneurial freedom and the protection of individual liberties as the instruments for advancing well-being, had a destructive effect on social relations, welfare provisions, the way of life and the habits of the heart.\textsuperscript{140} Although the thrive for prosperity became deeply embedded in neoliberal ideology which previously has been utilized as the rhetoric for “curing sick economies”, its introduction often did not result in high economic performance.\textsuperscript{141} Moreover, neoliberalism also failed to resolve social inequalities, not only on the domestic level, but also on the global scale as it promotes competition.

For all these reasons, Brazil’s attempt to incorporate the theme of prosperity that is considered to be a Western norm was an instrument to prove its modernity and belonging to the group of the prosperous capitalist Western states.

Western media highlighting on Brazil’s poverty (represented by code ‘poor’ in the discourse analysis) then sends out the opposite message about Brazil, backwardness instead of modernity and exclusion from the regime of capitalist Western societies instead of belonging. The comment on Rio’s slogan “a new world” that features one on \textit{The Independent}’s article selected to the category ‘poor’:

“Rio 2016’s slogan is “a new world.” But outside the gleaming Olympic Park, that new world has no room for the poor”\textsuperscript{142}

indicates well how social difference is created through the elaboration of the theme of poverty in the Western discourse. Positioning the Western World (represented by the Olympic park) as the “new world”, and Rio’s residents as poor, excluded from this “new world”.

\textsuperscript{139} Acharya, “\textit{Globalization and Hegemony Shift: Are States Merely Agents of Corporate Capitalism?}”, 1.
\textsuperscript{140} Harvey, “\textit{Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction}”, 22.
\textsuperscript{141} Harvey, “\textit{Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction}”, 33.
\textsuperscript{142} Phillips, Dom. “\textit{Rio 2016: Favela residents being evicted days ahead of Olympics}”. The Independent (United Kingdom) August 2, 2016 Tuesday 6:29 PM GMT [Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis Database, accessed: 03/07/2019]
4.2.2 Social Inclusion

Social exclusion is a longstanding issue Brazil has tried to tackle and a strong stereotype associated with its society. Outlined in the previous chapter that maps Brazil’s domestic issues, it is explained that social exclusion is not only understood in economic terms, but it is also closely related with the racial discrimination. Both in academic literature and popular media it is often treated through the themes of favelas as favelas represent the layer of Brazil society that is the most heavily affected by both the issue of economic and racial discrimination. The theme of social inclusion can best be understood within Brazil’s Olympic campaign through the elimination of both social and geographic barriers between the favelas and the asfalto, as well as through the narrative of the celebration of diversity. Brazil had long been promoting a narrative of racial harmony and post-racial ideology that “negates the structural significance of race remains”. The transition to the recognition of difference and the effort to target the difference while promoting diversity as a positive feature of its society, resembles the idea of Western neoliberal multiculturalism. This is based on the liberal principles of tolerance and equality and more recently, mobilizes difference as a resource and a means to include excluded groups into worldviews, cultural practices as well as into state management and capitalist development.

The great attention given to favelas in Western media, usually in connection with other social problems, for instance, The Guardian highlighting on their criminalization through taking additional security measures during the Olympic preparation while also touching upon the issue of racial discrimination:

“They used it to increase the number of operations, to focus on criminalising a certain group of people instead of using it as an opportunity to change. We see a war against the poor, a war against the favelas, a war against the young black men who live there. It ends up reinforcing all kinds of stereotypes. That's why I see it as a huge missed opportunity.”

strongly disrupts this inclusive multicultural image of Brazil. The inclusion forwarded by states, corporations and supranational development institutions through discourses of human rights, development with identity and ethno-racial and cultural diversity, do not bring fundamental

---

144 Ibid., 23.
changes to the political-economic organization of societies or challenge inequalities. However, through its ideational dimension, it represent progressiveness and “Western-ness”.

By highlighting on Brazil’s inability to conform to such progressive Western moral standards through attributing the opposite quality to it (highlighting the issues of social exclusion present in its society) thus, the Western media portrayal draws another line of difference between the Western society and Brazil, thereby reaffirming the West’s superiority.

4.2.3 Good Governance and Internal Organization

In this thesis, Rio’s Olympic campaign is conceptualized as a public diplomacy effort that would create a receptive environment for Rio’s economic and foreign policies. Thus, the theme of Good Governance and Internal Organization in Brazil’s campaign is identified as an effort to prove the economic and political security – to ease the discontent with system that the 2015 economic recession brought about. In order to attract foreign investment, Rio wanted to establish the successful and effective cooperation of the state and the private sector tailored to a neoliberal model. The focus of such a neoliberal political economic system on which the Olympic campaign was based, is free trade and free enterprise that promotes both national and international prosperity, and the role of the state within is securing and preserving the conditions to such practices. This entails setting up defense, police and juridical functions required to protect private property rights and secure the freely functioning markets – including those for education, social security, healthcare or environmental pollution – by state action if necessary.\(^\text{146}\)

On one hand Rio’s effort to apply such a neoliberal model of private sector involvement can be seen as an effort to raise capital and spare public spending on the Olympic preparation, but on the other hand also as an effort to live up to Western political economic standards. The fact that the party in power during the Olympic preparation time was Lula’s Worker’s Party (that built on a leftist ideology) tried to conform to a neoliberal Western-styled political-economic structure, is also indicative of this theme primarily being Brazil’s means of living up to Western standards.

According to Western media however, Rio did not manage to secure the right conditions for the cooperation of the state and private sector, it presented Rio as chaotic, failing to establish the structures that would have enabled the smooth management of the event. The Guardian described it as the “Rio 2016 buildup part of the chaotic and corrupt tradition of Olympic hosts”

\(^\text{146}\) Harvey, “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction”, 23.
with Rio’s buildup as “the most disorderly” among the Olympic preparations throughout history and with “a disaster of unprecedented proportions” happened by will have already happened” by 26th July, the time of the article’s publication.

‘Chaos’ characterizing Brazil in the British media, was used to highlight Brazil’s failure to realize Good Governance and Internal Organization and thus present the country as different than the advanced and stable Western society.

4.2.4 Peace and Security

During the content analysis the media attention directed to the Zika outbreak was identified as an issue of health security, endangering the foreigners arriving to Rio for the Olympics. Therefore, this section is divided into two subcategories – physical security and health security – discussing both in terms of how the failure to provide each becomes the sign of being the “backward other”.

Throughout the research, physical security refers to the lack of violence within Brazil’s society that has long been a main goal of the government and health security to the absence of the challenges to public health.

4.2.1 Physical security

“Rio Olympics 2016: Mutilated body parts wash up next to volleyball venue on Copacabana beach; It came after at least 10 people died during police operations to capture a drug trafficker… The violence is adding to safety concerns in Rio during the Olympics, with officials warning have that budget shortfalls may compromise security during the games.”147

Wrote The Independent’s article just a month before the start of the Rio Olympic Games. This description represents the tone of Rio’s portrayal in Western media very well, describing Rio as deadly, violent and lacking security service which during the Olympic Games poses dangers to the foreigners coming to Rio. This differentiation between the Cariocas and foreigners – violence being normality to Rio’s peoples, but a concern for foreigners draws a civilizational line between the violent peoples of Rio and the civilized foreigners.

According to Roderick Campbell, in social studies, violence is always is always linked with the concept of civilization. In fact, he argues that “violence is the concept of

civilization”.

This suggests that civilizations can be described or identified based on their conceptions’ – their identity’s, normativity’s and power’s – nexus to violence. Some forms of violence, such as slavery for instance are more commonly features of past societies, but violence today still persists. If practices (or institutions) of violence are a both social and cultural, and are interlaced with modern political and economic regimes, than the forms of violence are affected by regime change.

Puchala argues, the modern neoliberal Western world regards peace (non-violence) the precondition for the realization of all other liberal values, such as individual liberty and freedom. Thus, the Western refusal of violence and physical harm rests on moral and ethical norms embedded in liberalism and it is strongly associated with Western civilization, thereby representing progressiveness.

This Western construction of civilization however, becomes questionable and renders its relation to violence and dominance ambivalent when one thinks of the West’s civilization missions. Both to the earlier civilization missions of colonial times that rested on the idea of a higher monopoly of coercive power being able to provide such levels of security to the oppressed that are comparable to the peaceful conditions natural to the civilized Western societies. Or, the current process of neoliberal globalization that brings Western standards of civilization to the developing world. Although put this way, Brazil’s effort to incorporate the theme of Peace and Security (the lack of violence) into its identity carries a great deal of controversy as the aim was to mimic a Western model, Western media effectively used the lack of security and the presence of violence to position Brazil as uncivilized. Thus, the Western world utilized this antagonism as an instrument in its narrative of othering.

4.2.2 Health Security

Given the Zika outbreak’s framing in Western media both as a challenge to the public health of Brazil’s society and a threat to the international society, with The Independent reporting:

“More than 200 health professionals wrote an open letter urging Brazilian officials to cancel or postpone the Games in Rio de Janeiro. The letter cited

the World Health Organisation's declaration of Zika as a "public health emergency of international concern."\textsuperscript{151}

And the Sun writing “Zika to hit Games,”\textsuperscript{152} causing Western athletes to withdraw because it is a “risk” they are “not willing to take,”\textsuperscript{153} it is important to study the theme in terms of health security.

Tim Brown argues that in the global era the understanding of public health is affected by globalization in the same way as the other aspects of cultural, economic and political life.\textsuperscript{154} The traditional division between national and international public health is replaced by globalized vision, not only of public health, but of all socio-ecological threats that threatens human health, which have become a much greater menace in the world of increased mobility and interconnectedness. National borders and traditional modes of defense do not protect against the spread of diseases and panic about diseased spreads with equal ease due to the global media. This resulted in an emerging sense of universal vulnerability to diseases.\textsuperscript{155}

Brown claims, one response to such feelings of vulnerability was the emergence of global- or international health security – the promotion of health internationally by international health organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO). The WHO identified international health security as: “the need to reduce the vulnerability of people around the world to new, acute or rapidly spreading risks to health, particularly those that threaten to cross national borders” in its 2007 World Health Report.\textsuperscript{156} Brown points that out, the main concerns are the health risks that cross international orders and it is the task of the international society to provide a “global safety net.”\textsuperscript{157} The facts that the main concern in terms of international health security is the infectious diseases, and that international sanitary conferences are mainly attended by Western states (which reinforces the neoliberal form of global governance and


\textsuperscript{152} Conlon, Owen. “Zika to hit Games; OLYMPICS FEAR AS VIRUS SPREADS”. The Sun (England) January 30, 2016 Saturday [Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis Database, accessed: 03/07/2019]

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{154} Brown, Tim. “‘Vulnerability Is Universal’: Considering the Place of ‘security’ and ‘vulnerability’ within Contemporary Global Health Discourse.” Social Science & Medicine 72, no. 3 (2011), 319.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 320.


\textsuperscript{157} Brown, “‘Vulnerability Is Universal’: Considering the Place of ‘security’ and ‘vulnerability’ within Contemporary Global Health Discourse”, 320.
power structures), raises questions about whose health is the securitization process is to secure.\(^{158}\)

Infectious diseases are currently still framed by their association with the “tropics” (countries of the Global South) which are characterized by poverty and are considered to be culturally and politically different than, alien to the West.\(^{159}\) The WHO declared in its annual report in 1995, that “the world’s deadliest disease” and “most ruthless killer and the greatest cause of suffering on earth” is poverty.\(^{160}\)

In this way, disease is also configured by the West in a cultural term, seen as the product of the powerless that threatens the Western society.\(^{161}\) It becomes a means of reaffirming the civilizational line between the progressive neoliberal West and “the rest” – a means of constructing difference within political discourses.

Thus, the focus on the Zika outbreak as a threat to foreign athletes in Western media differentiates Brazil from the regime of the powerful Western states by positioning it as a backward, poor and a dangerous place compromising global public health.

4.2.5 Environmentalism

Although one might think of environmentalism as a counterforce to neoliberalism or a restraint on capitalist production, and of the global environmental cause as the rhetoric used against the injustices created by capitalism, environmentalism is compatible with the global neoliberal discourse.\(^{162}\) Not only with the governing rationality of neoliberalism because it reinforces the current neoliberal structures of power – such as the norm-setting authority of Western international institutions like the United Nations. But, also with neoliberalism as economic policy because neoliberalism “disseminates market values to every sphere of life”.\(^{163}\)

In the neoliberal discourse, environmental pollution is conceptualized as “a matter of inefficiency” that operates within the lines of administrative efficiency and cost-

\(^{158}\) Brown, “‘Vulnerability Is Universal’: Considering the Place of ‘security’ and ‘vulnerability’ within Contemporary Global Health Discourse”, 323.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 319.

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 323.


\(^{161}\) Ibid. 283


effectiveness.\textsuperscript{164} In this way, environmentalism becomes a modernizing force of business and an engine for innovation in the effective methods of production, industrial organization, technologies of transport and consumer goods.\textsuperscript{165} The incorporation of environmentalism into governance or economic policy, thus becomes an indicator of modernity and progressiveness.

Brazil’s attempt to integrate a strong environmental vision into its Olympic plans through the incorporation of major government projects for water treatment, the regeneration of water ways and sewerage works as well as through the improvement of public transport systems\textsuperscript{166} is aligned with the neoliberal model of environmentalism. Therefore, it was also a theme in Brazil’s campaign that stood for representing its modernity and progressiveness. The media however, strongly highlighted on its failure to realize its plans, \textit{The Independent} writing just one day before the Games would start:

“Earlier this week, it was revealed that some 1,400 aquatic athletes were at risk of becoming violently ill due to high levels of pollution in Rio’s waters.”\textsuperscript{167}

This not only draws attention to Rio’s bad water quality, but also to the danger that is posed to foreign athletes because of the pollution, which strengthens the political boundary – the line of exclusion – between Brazil and the international society. This way, the theme is also strongly interwoven with the issue of health security that is described in \textit{section 4.2.4} and has a similar effect of differentiation between the Global South and the Global North within the Western discourse.

\textsuperscript{164} Nikula “\textit{Neoliberal Environmentalism}”, 4.
\textsuperscript{165} Nikula “\textit{Neoliberal Environmentalism}”, 4.
\textsuperscript{166} Zimbalist, “\textit{Rio 2016: Olympic Myths, Hard Realities}”, 189.
\textsuperscript{167} Critchley, Mark. “Rio 2016: Officials forced to cut their way into Olympic stadium after losing keys to gate.” The Independent (United Kingdom) August 4, 2016 Thursday 3:07 PM GMT [Retrieved from Lexis-Nexis Database, accessed: 03/07/2019]
Chapter 5: Conclusion

In the preceding section the themes identified in Brazil’s Olympic campaign were situated in the global explanatory framework of neoliberal globalization in order to discover how the presence of antagonistic themes in the Western discourse on the Olympic campaign become constructive elements of a narrative of othering. The six themes identified in Brazil’s Olympic campaign – General Prosperity, Social Inclusion, Good Governance and Internal Organization, Peace and Security – and their antagonisms in the Western discourse were shown to be strongly interconnected. The themes in Brazil’s narrative are all representative of and carriers of Western-styled neoliberal values and ethical and moral norms. As well as of economic and political structures that are tailored to a neoliberal model. These values and structures are considered to be modern, progressive and became so deeply embedded in commonsense understanding that they are seen as universal goods.  

This way, the antagonisms, the opposites to these themes identified in Brazil’s Olympic campaign, like anything outside this neoliberal order, become indicators of backwardness and are considered to be bad, the products of the powerless.

Brazil’s active consent to neoliberal norms – its strategy to incorporate a neoliberal ideology through the themes that stand as metaphors (to this neoliberal ideology) into its identity – carries a great deal of controversy. It provided Brazil with a chance to become the “reformed, recognizable other” that is almost the same as the powerful West. However, through such a practice Brazil’s narrative could only gain its meaning in relation to the powerful Western states. This is problematic not only because the main goal of Brazil’s campaign was to challenge the current global order – the dominance of the neoliberal Western states in the global arena. But also because Brazil’s effort provided a chance to the Western world to highlight Brazil’s failure to incorporate these neoliberal elements into its identity. Thereby positioning Brazil as different and backward, drawing an exclusionary line between Brazil and the Western society. That is to say, politically excluding Brazil from the regime of the powerful Western states by highlighting how it failed to conform to the neoliberal Western norms. In this way, the Western world naturalized its domination in the global arena through a neoliberal ideology.

---


that contains elements – both political and moral values – that are naturally appealing to one’s intuition and are easily justified as universal goods.\textsuperscript{170}

The Western perception of Brazil’s Olympic campaign is important to examine as it is representative of the broader discourse on emerging states that is currently prevalent in the Western world. It contributes to reaffirming the political frontier between the Global South and the Western world. The examination in this thesis was carried out through identifying a narrative of othering – a construction of difference – within the Western media portrayal of Rio’s Olympic campaign through discovering themes that are antagonistic to the neoliberal themes Brazil tried promote.

Scarlett Cornelissen, Janis van der Westhuizen and David Black (scholars of political science and international relations) have argued that the movement of sport mega events to the Global South strongly rearticulate global structural inequalities.\textsuperscript{171} And reflect the “hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggles” that were part of decolonization’s state-building processes in the developing world by states currently still seeking heightened visibility and “de facto recognition” from the Western world by hosting them.\textsuperscript{172}

This thesis has drawn on David Howart’s discourse concept and hegemony approach.\textsuperscript{173} Based on which, Brazil’s Olympic campaign was identified as Brazil’s effort for the rhetorical redescription of the current international order, and the Western perception was studied as a counter discourse aimed at disrupting Brazil’s effort through an “us versus them narrative,” while utilizing a neoliberal ideology to naturalize its domination. Thereby this thesis intended to contribute to the arguments of Cornelissen, Black and Van Der Westhuizen with a discursive account that reflects the hegemonic struggle through the Western discourse disrupting Brazil’s narrative of being a progressive global competitor that conforms with a Western neoliberal model, through the hegemonic practice embedded within its rhetoric.

Having taken an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the power of language and narrative in the construction of the global social and political reality, this paper fits well within a constructivist framework that attribute primary importance to intersubjective structures in giving the material world a meaning.\textsuperscript{174} The creation of meaning is central to the processes of

\textsuperscript{170} Harvey, “Neoliberalism as Creative Destruction”, 24.
political manoeuvre for advantage, and beliefs about events can naturalize or challenge inequalities, as well as immobilize political oppositions. Acharya claims this form of social construction allowed Western states to superimpose their value structures on the less-powerful non-Western states. This exclusionary practice, the consent to the norms previously set by Western states, disrupts other existing values structures and allows Western hegemons to take advantage of the less powerful states. In this way, a constructivist approach provides with a greater insight into the mechanisms shaping the international arena.

Greater attention to the impact of the dominant political discourses on the outcome of campaigns promoting sport mega events could provide fresh insights into the study of sport mega events impact on global affairs. As well as into dominant political discourses’ impact on the global political reality.

This paper was aimed at understanding the discrepancies and contradictions between Brazil’s Olympic campaign and the Western perception thereof. It was aimed at deconstructing the Western discourse on the Olympic campaign in order to discover a hypothesized hegemonic political practice behind its construction and thereby identify a relation of domination embedded within. According to the findings of the thesis, the Western discourse did serve as a means for the Western world to disrupt Brazil’s Olympic narrative and thereby reinforce its hegemonic status in the global arena and rearticulate the division between the Global North and the Global South through mobilizing a neoliberal ideology for the naturalization of its dominance.


Chapter 6: Bibliography


Brown, Tim. “‘Vulnerability Is Universal’: Considering the Place of ‘security’ and ‘vulnerability’ within Contemporary Global Health Discourse.” *Social Science & Medicine* 72, no. 3 (2011)


Dauvergne, Peter, and Déborah Bl Farias. “*The Rise of Brazil as a Global Development Power.*” *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 5 (2012)


Dowse, Suzanne, and Thomas Fletcher. “Sport Mega-events, the ‘non-West’ and the Ethics of Event Hosting.” *Sport in Society* 21, no. 5 (2018)


