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# Conceptualizing a 'power game field' through the case of 'Padrão FIFA': bridging together Beckian and Bourdieusian insights

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## Conceptualizing a ‘power game field’ through the case of ‘*Padrão FIFA*’: bridging together Beckian and Bourdieusian insights

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### ABSTRACT

A central question within social theorization relates to the rescaling of ‘power’ in a globalized world. This paper advances sociological debates on power by cross-pollinating Beck’s power game theory with Bourdieu’s field. Hence, it conceptualizes what we call a ‘power game field’. This captures the power competition that cuts across local, national and global fields and involves, likewise, local, national and transnational actors whose capital and social relations shape the field’s outcomes. Using a global sport mega-event as our empirical setting, we explore the struggles and compliances in the power game field. Specifically, in the context of how the standards imposed on Brazil by football’s governing body (FIFA) – framed nationally as ‘*Padrão FIFA*’ – were contested within a localized media setting (2007–2014). This is done through a frame analysis of readers’ letters and media articles, which reveals the importance of Beck’s ‘both-and’ logic and the notion of ‘communal capital’.

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## Introduction

This article puts in conversation and advances further social theorizations of ‘power’ extracted from the works of Ulrich Beck (1999, 2000, 2005a, 2007a, 2007b, 2016) and Pierre Bourdieu (1993). It does so, employing the empirical frame of a sport mega-event. In the globalized world, Beck declared that *global power games* are being played out. These struggles for power essentially involve global businesses and corporations, nation-states, international organizations and sub-political movements/actors situated within civil society. This has generated a *reframing of power* in modern societies: away from traditional, territorialized understandings of state-centric power and towards more deterritorialized and *cosmopolitan* power games (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024).

Building upon this starting point, this article reconsiders and cross-pollinates Beck’s (2005a, 2005b) theory of ‘power games’ in globalized societies with Bourdieu’s field theory (1993) in order to analyse *how* power struggles and competitions that emerge between actors, and are made sense of, and framed in localized media contexts, within what we conceptualize here as the ‘*power game field*’ around the case of Brazil’s 2014 *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) men’s football World Cup. We argue that the *power game field*, which emerged

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especially around the prescribed standards defined by the World Cup's owner, FIFA, reveals how dynamics of power in modern societies is globalized and no longer confined to the nation-state (Beck, 2005a, 2005b). These power games, however, also depend on the types of capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993) held by the relevant actors within a *localized* context.

For decades, states have considered the hosting of sport mega-events including the FIFA World Cup or Olympics as a

part of their strategic politics and policies formed within the context of the prevailing neoliberal, globalized order, aimed at using the event as a means to 'capture' mobile international capital or to align national development processes with perceived international tendencies. (Cornelissen, 2012, p. 322)

However, in recent years there has been a notable shift, whereby Global South locations have continuously been awarded mega-events' hosting rights (Graeff, 2020). This again carries repercussions on how the *'power game field's'* struggles are played out.

In this respect, the selection of a mega-event as *the* empirical frame of this analysis is justified because mega-events commonly reveal the interest-driven interactions between states, international organizations, corporate sponsors, global and local media, law enforcers, local and regional authorities, residents and activists who are critical or advocates of mega-events (Cornelissen, 2012; de Oliveira, 2022; Włoch, 2020). Indeed, mega-events are theoretically illuminating because they configure socio-political fields in which power struggles take place (de Oliveira, 2022) and should thus be regarded as important sites of sociological inquiry and theoretical extensions. Bourdieu (1996) himself recognized the sociological importance of mega-events. He observed how the commercialization of the Olympics had enhanced the power of its governing body, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and the event's broadcasters who re-created the Games through media. Crucially, a similar logic comes into play before and during editions of the FIFA World Cup. Here, FIFA *owns* the event rights and therefore imposes standards and commercial criteria on the relevant states seeking to acquire the mega-event's hosting rights (Petersen-Wagner, 2024; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024). The regulatory regimes set out by FIFA, constituting a 'global governor' (Włoch, 2020) and 'neo-communitarian entrepreneur' (Eick, 2011), therefore *reconfigures* state's sovereignty and interests because a state – to acquire or retain mega-event hosting rights – must *adhere* to the global governor's preconditions. Crucially, and importantly for this article, this logic – which is enabled by FIFA itself (Eick, 2011) – is neither uncontroversial nor uncontested, therefore the outcome – the mega-event itself and its final regulations – becomes a hybrid of those contestations and power struggles (Petersen-Wagner, 2024; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024). Within these struggles, FIFA's legitimacy and social capital – although challenged by recent corruption scandals – stem from the organization's power to award or strip countries' hosting rights; while also gate-keeping which nations can participate in their competitions and regulate world football (e.g. rulemaking). If social capital refers to 'social networks and the creation of valuable connections in order that they may lead to productive relationships' (Ibrahim, 2013, p. 66), then researchers have also established FIFA's position within global networks, and their alliances with 'the world of global corporations' through partnerships and sponsorships (Włoch, 2020, p. 46). FIFA's legitimacy and social capital are historically significant because they – for decades – have been widely accepted and reinforced by governments and national football associations alike (Meier & Garcia, 2015).

Since the early 2000s, scholars have drawn attention to mega-events' urban and social impacts, their commercialized and globalized nature and their position within state's soft power and, most

recently, ‘sportswashing’ strategies. Yet, prior to the intensification of mega-events’ globalization and commercialization processes in the 1980s (Włoch, 2020), it is also possible to observe their status as a microcosm for global interactions, by working as spaces where international organizations like the IOC and FIFA began partnerships with global sponsors and whereby events, albeit smaller in scale than today, were resisted on a civil society level. This is exemplified by the case of Denver where political dissent, partially, contributed to Denver withdrawing as a host city for the 1976 Winter Olympics (Boykoff, 2014). Currently, mega-events are deeply embedded in global consumer cultures (Smart, 2018) and, against the neoliberal branding of the World Cup as an urban/sporting festival (Eick, 2011), one common slogan among critics and Brazilian protestors before the Brazil World Cup was: ‘*We want FIFA standard hospitals*’ (Watts, 2013). The backdrop for this expression was Brazil’s commitment to, and investment into, so-called ‘FIFA quality’ or *Padrão FIFA* (‘FIFA standard’) stadiums for the month-long World Cup to meet the strict preconditions set by FIFA, and the simultaneous, perceived neglect of investment into other areas of society and public life. The opening of the World Cup (June 2014) was met by hundreds of anti-World Cup protestors who took to the streets with banners reading ‘FIFA go home’ and ‘World Cup of corruption’ (Watts, 2014). Public opposition to, and protests against mega-events and their costs are not unique to the specific case of the 2014 World Cup nor Brazil. However, we argue that the case of Brazil’s 2014 World Cup and the negative framing of both FIFA *and* the state’s commitments is exemplary of the *contested* and *glocalized* interactions between states, private corporations, international organizations, global and national media and civil society in contemporary societies (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024).

In this paper, we interrogate questions of ‘power’ by borrowing theoretical frames from Beck and Bourdieu. We examine how the interactions and struggles described above – involving FIFA, the nation-state of Brazil, residents, campaigners, corporations, celebrity politicians, and media organizations – and the global assemblages of standards arriving *with* mega-event hosting rights, were framed in a localized media context, within the coverage of the newspaper *Correio Braziliense*.

Hence, the article’s aims are twofold. First, we aim to unpack ‘power’, with reference to Beck (2005a, 2005b) notion of (global) power games and Bourdieu’s field (1993). This, in turn, steers us towards one contribution in this paper: the synthesized *power game field*. Second, we aim to elaborate on this conceptualization in an applied, empirical context. Thus, we turn towards how localized media framed the power games prior to, and during, the 2014 World Cup and, specifically, the norms, rules and standards set by FIFA and commitments by Brazil and their ‘from-below’ contestations. Overall, this article contributes to and advances the wider political sociological literature on the nexus between power, globalization and sport mega-events, and it advances both Beck and Bourdieu’s original conceptualizations through what we conceptualize as the ‘*power game field*’.

### Power game fields: towards a synthesized Beckian and Bourdieusian framework

The social theories of Ulrich Beck and Pierre Bourdieu should be seen as seminal in their own right. Though, social scientific discussions of the potential synergies and similarities between the two have, hitherto, remained somewhat under-developed. Jong (2022) remains an exception and has argued that, *despite* the epistemological difference between the two, Beck’s social theory and Bourdieu’s field can, as returned to, be viewed as complementary. Before expanding on the grounds upon which the two theorists are complementary – even to the extent where may tentatively conceptualize a *power game field* – we seek to unpack the two influential works separately.

First, whilst it is impossible to consider Beck's (1992, 2000, 2005a, 2016; Beck & Grande, 2007) theories on risk, reflexivity, cosmopolitanism, globalization and power as isolated from each other, it could be argued that his conceptualization of the 'power game' remain ready for further empirical extensions and applications (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024). Before doing so, we seek to outline the key tenets of his conceptualizations of power.

Beck (2005a, 2005b) observed a globalized world in which a new political economy and definition of power emerged. This world, however, is increasingly defined by risk and uncertainty and the reflexive transnational responses (Beck, 1992). Therefore, following Beck, the traditional and *state-centric* methodology that characterized sociological, political and international political studies remained inadequate and should be replaced by a more cosmopolitan social science that bypasses the more nationally focused outlook (Beck, 2007b; Beck & Delanty, 2006; Beck & Grande, 2007). This, in order to capture the epoch of globalization, which has seen the rise of a 'strategic game for world power' (Beck, 2007a, 2007b), involving a variety of different actors, as power is no longer concentrated mainly in the hands of nation-states. Therefore, Beck (2005a) prescribed a social scientific 'both/and' approach – opposed to methodological nationalism's 'either/or' logic of national politics. The 'both/and' approach, subsequently, captures the more fluid boundaries between earlier categories in a global age, whereby, for example, risk can be both media staged and real; both locally and globally politically significant. Though, against debates around the erosion of state power, we concurrently argue that this approach concurrently captures the co-existing, continued or, indeed, renewed power of the state and its sovereignty, which is underlined by, for instance, an emerging multipolar world and the limitations of international organizations in face of a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic (Weiss & Wallace, 2021).

As Beck (2005a, 2005b) contended, this new meta-power game initially involved the redrawing of borders, and the acceptance of incongruency between the first modern static boundaries that were clearly separated between economic, political, and social spheres. When looking at the intersections between the economic and political, Beck (2005a, 2005b) argued that, in this new meta-power game, the economic – and here he explicitly refers to global economy – takes the upper hand by being able to change the rules of state power when not only *entering* the state but especially by *leaving* or threatening to leave. This can be seen in terms of FIFA and its requirements to change and adapt local legislations (Petersen-Wagner, 2024; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024) as a prerequisite to host a mega-event with an invisible and implicit risk of not entering, or as Beck (2005b, p. 150, original emphasis) argued: 'there is only one thing worse than being overrun by big multinationals: *not* being overrun by multinationals'.

These new, translegal meta-politics environment brings to the fore new actors who can set standards – ultimately *privatizing* the role of rulemaking that nation-states had a monopoly during first modernity (Beck, 2005a, 2005b). In sport, not only does FIFA (Eick, 2011) become a key actor in the new privatized rulemaking environment, but also other large international organizations such as the IOC is able to set standards regarding sustainability and risk (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2023). Building on Beck, sport's governing bodies can therefore be approached as *global governors* that not solely set the rules for sport federations, teams and athletes; but for states and transnational corporations (e.g. sponsors, broadcasters), too (Włoch, 2020). Nevertheless, while these 'new' actors (i.e. FIFA and IOC) have newly found powers to play in and even *dictate* this meta-power game, they lack not merely a *territory* – revealing the lasting relevance of the nation-state (Beck & Delanty, 2006) – but an inherent legitimacy to enact their standards, finding a counterpoint in NGOs, social movements and civil society who, while not in possession of the similar power, have *legitimacy* on their side (Beck, 2005a, 2005b).

Second, social fields are among the main conceptual tools developed by Bourdieu (1993; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Power struggles and relations are central to the field, and upon proceeding, we are, importantly, in agreement with de Oliveira (2022, p. 4) who proposes that ‘Bourdieu’s concept of the field provides us with the opportunity to reflect on interactions between the production of sport spectacle and the production of the city’ without limiting such analysis to describing merely the field’s commander; FIFA. Fields are ultimately socially relational spaces – situated within overarching societal field – where agents or players are positioned according to their acquired power or forms of capital, including economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital.

As Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 97) maintain, ‘a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions’. However, despite these objectively defined positions, fields are characterized by the struggle within them: the agents within a relevant social field struggle for capital relevant to, and at stake, in the social field. For Crossley (2002, p. 674), fields are thus constituted by the objective relations ‘which hold between specific agents, organizations and institutions, and organized around the common participation of these “players” in a historically and culturally specific social “game”’.

Bourdieu’s field can therefore be applied to, for example, educational, artistic and creative fields and explain how context-specific hierarchies are created *within* these social spaces. Yet, de Oliveira (2022) documents how, in the case of Brazil’s 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics, a ‘sporting spectacle’ field emerged. A key theoretical implication of de Oliveira’s (2022) Bourdieusian study thus relates to viewing sport mega-events as constituting a ‘social universe’ which recognizes that the players of the field are composed by dominating and dominated players (local, national and transnational) who adapt different strategies in order to raise their stakes in the social game of defining the outcomes in the staging of mega-event. It is here, we argue, one may locate a key synergy between Beck and Bourdieu; which goes beyond the mere metaphor of *a game*.

We contend that Beck and Bourdieu, essentially, are concerned with many of the similar, overarching questions. Crucially, synthesizing their conceptual registers allows us to, and is fruitful to better capture the *local/global* tension (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024) existing within the construction of mega-event spectacles. These relate to how power is distributed and maximized, how power is diffused across a variety of agents, and how the *social* (Bourdieu) and *transnational* (Beck) relations are based upon *power struggles* between different actors who consciously play, stage, or become embedded in the ‘power game’.

Thus, while Beck (2016) considered Bourdieu’s social theory to fall into the trap of methodological nationalism, some argue the two insights can be juxtaposed and complement each other. Jong (2022) argues that it is possible to draw the two together to conceptualize ‘cosmopolitan fields’, as referring to fields that have emerged ‘as a direct result of global risks [...] as well as fields that have been formed to deal with these threats. These fields are beyond national and even international fields’ (p. 11). By building on this proposed synthesized Beckian-Bourdieuian notion, we argue that, similarly, a ‘*global power game*’ field may be conceptualized. This captures that the competition for power and its ramifications cut across local, national and global fields, and involve local, national and global actors whose capital and social relations shape the outcomes within the social game (Crossley, 2002). Furthermore, by cross-pollinating Beck and Bourdieu’s main theoretical arguments, it is possible to uncover how the reframed *cosmopolitan* class distinctions – the cosmopolitanized haves and haves-not – (Beck, 2007a, 2007b) are configured in a situated field (Bourdieu, 1993) that contains agents that are not bounded to the geographical borders of modern nation-states. Further, what this synthesized cosmopolitan field – in what we conceptualize as *power game field* – affords us to unpack is the dynamics of power and legitimacy – and the latent

and manifest haves and have-nots – that go beyond the original capital dynamics developed by Bourdieu (1993). Drawing on the perspectives of the English School of International Relations, Bucher and Eckl (2022) argue that the World Cup's societal actors reproduce and uphold an *international society* whereby state and non-state actors contribute towards the 'reproduction of the goals, rules, and institutions' (p. 312). Concerning the make-up of an (international) society, this suggests it is possible to employ those analytical concepts offered by Bourdieu to the global level (i.e. field, capital); whereby transnational actors possessing capital are also occupants of social fields.

As the paper continues, we aim to utilize this conceptual relation to capture the contestation over the imposed standards by FIFA upon Brazil as the 2014 World Cup host country. Whilst the question of powers, norms and standards imposed by sport governing bodies has been explored through frameworks of Bourdieu (de Oliveira, 2022) and Beck (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024) in this context – as within the wider sociology – there have been few attempts to bridge the two so far. Specifically, within this *power game field*, we aim to shed a light on how local media and, specifically, readers' letters framed these contestations and thereby occupy an important role within the power game. Hence, we explore what the media coverage concerning 'Padrão FIFA' can tell us about the distribution of power within a field composed of FIFA, the Brazilian state, local authorities, journalists, residents and 'anti-World Cup' activists.

### Methods: capturing the *Padrão FIFA*–media nexus

In this article, we build upon our previous research where *Lei Geral da Copa* (the General Law of the World Cup) was analysed *vis-à-vis* the media framing of power relations between the Brazilian national government and FIFA (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024). In the current paper, we adopt a similar methodology but remain principally concerned with how *Padrão FIFA* became the leitmotif for a *power game field* that had not only journalists and editorials but also readers – and therefore citizens – at the heart of it. As unpacked later, by employing a frame analysis (Goffman, 1986) of news articles, opinion pieces, and readers' letters published by *Correio Braziliense* between 2007 and 2014, our approach sought to unveil how a certain discursively reality was constructed, in which *Padrão FIFA* was conceived not only as an external imposition by FIFA – as alluded to previously (Petersen-Wagner, 2024; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024) – but also as forms of resistance and struggle within the above-mentioned *power game field*.

More broadly, this demonstrates the power of the media's agenda setting (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2021) whereby media outlets not only influence what readers should think about (e.g. send/submit letters about the FIFA World Cup) but ultimately which attributes and frames that should be ascribed to the event and the latent *power dynamics* between Brazil and FIFA. Consequently, the discursive reality – framed and constructed through newspaper coverage – had a latent influence on how readers approached what was viewed as FIFA's external imposition within the power game field (Petersen-Wagner, 2024; Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024).

Regarding the data collection, the first author (in March 2024) accessed the publicly available digital repository Biblioteca Nacional Digital (2024) and searched for '*padrão FIFA*' as a term, within two different time ranges (2000–2009 and n.i that referred to 2010–2014) yielding 180 matches, where two were in the first period and the remaining in the second period. This time range corresponds with the entire period from when Brazil was awarded the World Cup by FIFA, and to the aftermath of the tournament which ended in July 2014 and was broadcast globally, underlining its social significance. In terms of these 180 matches, they correspond with the amount of time the search term appeared on different pages in *Correio Braziliense*, meaning that after data



consolidation and cleaning we ended up with 155 pages that comprised our analysis in this paper. Some matches were excluded because they did not directly concern our *power game field* analysis, as Brazilians have adopted the term jocularly to mean ‘gold standard’, and therefore the term has appeared in the classified section where ranches, houses, and flats were advertised for sale, and even translation services were offered as having ‘FIFA standard’ (*padrão FIFA*). Our selection of the newspaper, *Correio Braziliense*, is justified as it ranks ninth on the list of Brazilian newspapers with the most circulation (Statista, 2021), and it is produced in the national capital, Brasília – the third largest city in the country (IBGE, 2023) – and therefore centrally situated in the *power game field* that comprises the three branches of the national government (executive, legislative and judiciary), FIFA, and an important parcel of the population.

Following the collection of the media articles, opinion pieces and readers’ letters, rendering the unit of analysis the local community’s sensemaking (as actors in the global power game), we followed the principles of Goffman’s (1986) frame analysis technique. Crucially, Goffman was concerned with how frames are utilized by individuals to organize their experiences and frame their understandings of specific social situations. As Millward (2017, p. 762, original emphasis) highlighted, Goffman’s frame analysis therefore underpins the ‘methodological need to look at the ways in which individuals organize their experiences into meaningful activities and settle on a clear definition of *their* reality’. In fact, Goffman’s (1986) own approach to frame analysis bore similarities to ours, given that he also was originally concerned with – and looked at how newspaper opinion letters were used to organize individuals’ ideas of society, and how discourses changed the way in which situations were described (Millward, 2017). Accordingly, the use of frame analysis can be rationalized here because it permitted an understanding of how micro-level newspaper interactions settle on definitions of macro-level power.

We organized our frame analysis, which we unpack in the next section, by following Beck’s (2016) argument regarding the cosmopolitanized distribution of ‘bads’ and ‘goods’ – or in his words, the new class distinctions (Beck, 2007a, 2007b) – where common goods are side-effects of bads. However, we contribute further to Beck’s (2016) analysis by also demonstrating how common bads can be staged as side-effects of goods. What this ‘both/and’ frame analysis reveals, is how power, its dynamic, agents involved, and the consequent constataions constitute what we conceptualize as the *power game field*.

Here, however, we acknowledge the complex nature of social fields. Whilst this study highlights, specifically, the role of journalists, commentators and writers in the relevant field, more research is undoubtedly needed to capture the governmental, corporate and international organizational actors’ interactions, to gain a more holistic analysis. In line with Beck’s ‘both/and’ perspective and Bourdieu’s (1984) preference for mixed methods for field analyses, such research could benefit from diverse methodological approaches.

### The ‘bads’ and ‘goods’ of *Padrão FIFA*

Our frame analysis following Goffman (1986) identified two common frames in which *Padrão FIFA* were used across the different content published in *Correio Braziliense*. While, *prima facie*, this analysis might look simplistic as *either* goods as side-effects of bads, *or* bads as side-effects of goods frames, what a more nuanced reading of those two frames will show is how they are complementary constituted in a both/and perspective. Furthermore, what this nuanced reading of the two frames reveals is how this *global power field* is not only composed by a new set of cosmopolitanized actors with distinct power and legitimacy claims, but how a metamorphosed capital – what

we unpack in the next section as *communal capital* – exists beyond the traditional Bourdieuan methodological individualist theorization by embracing the civil society level, and their sub-political capital, as reflected by the frames devised through published newspaper readers' letters and opinion pieces.

As Beck (2007a, 2007b, 2016) argued, the new class distinction, and therefore the underlying cosmopolitanized *power struggles* and subsequent inequalities, are characterized by the outcome distributions of risks. While Beck (2007a, 2007b, 2016) remained predominantly concerned with ecological risks and their outcome distribution, in the case of the 2014 FIFA World Cup the existential risks was the threat of the global governor – FIFA – exiting Brazil in a case where their norm *impositions* were not implemented for the month-long tournament (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024).

### The 'goods' as side-effects

The *impositions* – and ensuing negative connotations – in the figure of the General Law of the World Cup (Petersen-Wagner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2024) found a *slogan* in *Padrão FIFA* as an external threat for Brazil to adapt to an international set of requirements. Therefore, *Padrão FIFA* was framed through *Correio Braziliense* as a *bad* that carried unintended good side-effects – to a parcel of the population – in distinct fields. Within this frame, we therefore see the emancipatory potential embedded within a political risk (here: the staging of a World Cup) – which for Beck was characterized by how 'the talk about bads produces "common goods"' (Beck, 2015, p. 80) as situated within his aforementioned both/and logic.

For instance, *Correio Braziliense* started its coverage using *Padrão FIFA* in 2008 (Magalhães, 2008) when Gama – a local club in the federal capital Brasília – would re-inaugurate the stadium in which it plays – public owned by the Federal District Government – by following FIFA standards refurbishments which would 'guarantee modernity to the new home of Gama' (translated by the first author). At that time, Gama was playing in the Brazilian second division and the journalist Luiz Magalhães played with words by headlining the news as 'first-class stadium'. This modernization frame was common across different news stories published by *Correio Braziliense* during our data collection timeframe, not only focusing on the 12 stadiums (re-)built for the tournament but also other stadiums like the ones from Grêmio (from Porto Alegre in the South) (Melo, 2012a) and Palmeiras (from São Paulo in Southeast) (Seffrin, 2012). As such, the World Cup was viewed as a catalyst for the construction of what *Correio Braziliense* headlined in their sport section cover page as 'new temples' that 'mark[ing] a more modern phase in the country' (*Correio Braziliense*, 2012).

Importantly, this modernization frame – as a good side-effect of bad – also appeared in terms of new ticketing system that promised 'less queues' and a 'faster access' to the fanzones by following the FIFA standard of visual checks in the first barrier (*Correio Braziliense*, 2013a). Alongside the new ticketing system that promised a more efficient experience of accessing the stadium, *Correio Braziliense* compared the novel security measures – portal metal detectors – that were implemented during the Confederations Cup in 2013 to portable metal detectors being used after it, which would again make the access to stadiums slower and less efficient (Antonelli, 2013). This *nostalgia* towards the efficient *Padrão FIFA* became clearer when journalists Braitner Moreira and Thais Cunha covered the Flamengo (from Rio de Janeiro) versus Coritiba (from Paraná) game – which was played in Brasília – and reported that the stadium had 'changed the reserve bench, allowed the entry of flags, and even had a flare lit in the upper stands. However, one disorderly thing remained the same: the service provided by the snack bars' (Moreira & Cunha, 2013, pp. 2–3). This nostalgic feeling

towards the efficient *Padrão FIFA* in contrast to the local government standard (*Padrão GDF* [*Governo do Distrito Federal*]) was reported by the commentator Ari Cunha when he wrote an opinion piece on the poor ticketing service that not only required fans to purchase tickets online, pay a 10% convenience fee, collect the ticket six days in advance, and ‘to cross your fingers that the reserved seat isn’t occupied. The GDF misses the chance to organize the habit before the problem settles in’ (Cunha, 2013a, p. 13). This nostalgic feeling was also expressed *after* the 2014 World Cup, when *Correio Braziliense* published an opinion piece reflecting on security in and around stadiums where they have stated that: ‘Thanks to the care taken, the games have been proceeding with undeniable safety. Families go to the stadiums without fear [...] The containment of barbarism should be among the legacies of the World Cup in Brazil’ (*Correio Braziliense*, 2014a, p. 10) and further emphasized a month later by the commentator Severino Francisco who stated:

I’m still under the impact of the recently concluded World Cup. Not precisely from the nightmare lived on the field by Brazil in the semi-final, but rather from the surprising security setup in the city. For the first time in a long while, I circulated in the central area of the Plano Piloto [the main region in Brasília] with the sensation of being minimally protected [...] But the World Cup left us with a lesson: when they want to, His Excellencies are surprisingly efficient. There were police officers on the streets, free buses to the stadiums, people directing traffic. It gave the feeling of living in an organized city. (Francisco, 2014, p. 20)

Fundamentally, *Correio Braziliense*, when discursively constructing *Padrão FIFA* as a good side-effect, went beyond the ‘on-field’ happenings as the above quote showed, to encompass the political sphere. What Francisco (2014) alluded to in terms of incapacity of the political class when he mentions ‘His Excellencies’, stemmed from protests that took place in Brazil prior the 2013 Confederations Cup in which the population demanded quality-assured public services meeting high standards akin to the *Padrão FIFA*. On the cover page of the 22nd June 2013 edition, *Correio Braziliense* headlined one of its top stories as ‘Demands: FIFA standard: beyond football: Brazilians demand the same quality of services offered during the World Cup’ (*Correio Braziliense*, 2013b, p. 1). On the 27th June, the aforementioned commentator Ari Cunha proposes a plebiscite around this question: ‘are you in favor or against health, transport, education, and security in the FIFA quality standard?’ (Cunha, 2013b, p. 15). The protests and demands for *Padrão FIFA* in all public sphere became a central topic for the newspaper, with the journalist Rafael Campos having a news story headlined as ‘almanac of protests’ and a sub-heading it with the at that time Twitter hashtag #vempruarua that encapsulated the protestors’ cry for the public to go to the streets to demand excellent public services. In a small feature in this new story, Campos wrote:

The so-called FIFA standard has been demanded on posters at all protests across the country. This standard accounts for international analyses to determine if Brazil could guarantee the necessary structure to host a major event like the World Cup [...] What do the protesters want? They want the same standards that FIFA demands from host cities to reach all cities. (Campos, 2013, p. 18)

As reported by *Correio Braziliense*, these protests had an important impact upon the then-President Dilma Rousseff’s (Workers Party) popularity to a point in which they fully quote her saying that ‘I believe that the issue of the *pact of the streets* (protests) must make any political leader and ruler more accessible to discussion’ (Rousseff quoted in Kleber & Braga, 2013, p. 2). This new way of *doing politics*, which Kleber and Braga (2013) alluded to when fully quoting Rousseff, was further contextualized in a feature box where they list seven key points discussed by Rousseff in a ministerial meeting that covered political reform, plebiscite, protests, bus fares, health, education, and her popularity. The political reform appears again in connection with the World Cup and protests

when *Correio Braziliense* in their editorial headlined it as ‘Mini-reform undermines protests’ as ‘after much controversy, back and forth, what politicians are voting on in the National Congress does more than blatantly disregard what was requested by the youth who apologized for changing the country, as one of the banners stated’ (Correio Braziliense, 2013c, p. 12). On the same page, *Correio Braziliense* added a readers’ letter that linked to the negative aspect of protests – vandalism committed by a violent small parcel of protesters (*Black Blocs*) – which read: ‘The black blocs protest against political vandalism in Brazil’ (Correio Braziliense, 2013d). In a way, when deciding to publish this reader’s letter, *Correio Braziliense* was actively giving weight to a redefinition of what was considered to be vandalism – moving from infrastructure vandalism through acts of destruction to poor governance and politics that leads to sub-standard infrastructure (see also Correio Braziliense’s editorial on 14th March 2014). This ‘*Padrão FIFA* social pressure’, as *Correio Braziliense* headlined its editorial piece with on 11th May 2014, was building up as the World Cup approached:

What the black blocs brought to light a year ago was only news because of the exacerbated violence. Furthermore, everyone was aware of the latent dissatisfaction with public services – from transportation to healthcare, from education to security. So, what has happened since then? The increase in discontent with leaders and politicians in general. This includes the perception that the so-called FIFA standard is not present even in the works endorsed by the International Football Federation, which is equally displeased with delays and improvisations. (Correio Braziliense, 2014b, p. 14)

While the discontent was visible and increasing as *Correio Braziliense* made clear in their editorial, the form in which this discontent was manifested became a contentious point after the World Cup’s opening ceremony and game, when Dilma Rousseff was booed by sections of the crowd. In its readers’ letters section, *Correio Braziliense* gave a voice to two contrasting perspectives, one claiming that: ‘The mob cursed and insulted the nation’s highest representative at a World Cup event. If the majority elected President Dilma Rousseff, she deserves the respect of everyone: opponents or not’. Meanwhile, another reader wrote:

The hypocrisy of the Workers’ Party knows no bounds. Now that the president received low-brow insults at the opening of the World Cup, all the *petralhas* [an insult that plays with words between Workers’ Party members – PT – and Beagle Boys cartoon which in Brazil were translated as *Irmãos Metralhas*] suddenly become prudish, and with moralistic airs, they condemn the insults and say that swearing is not allowed! Even the vocabulary of fans has to be FIFA standard! (Correio Braziliense, 2014c, p. 10)

As a reader summarized concerning the situation on the 17th July 2014 edition, ‘is the people demanding FIFA standards in services and government themselves FIFA standard?’ (Correio Braziliense, 2014d, p. 12). This demonstrates the existence of *were power struggles* in this *power game field* in terms of defining who could speak, their legitimacy to speak, and what could they demand. Finally, in a longer opinion piece by a reader headlined by #tevecopa (*#therewasworldcup*) – in direct contrast to the protesters’ slogan #nãovaitercopa (*#therewontbeworldcup*) – the author, while listing a range of accomplishments in the hosting of the event, weigh up those by contrasting what else could have been achieved such as improving local public transport (in contrast to national air travel), public healthcare (in contrast to medical support to athletes), international media exposure (in contrast to the lack of access to energy for over 1 million Brazilians), and ends his piece by concluding:

in the balance of gains and losses, the result of the ‘cup of cups’ will have been neutral. Brazilians now have splendid stadiums, but the daily woes continue as before [...] We missed an exceptional opportunity to improve the lives of residents and to uplift Brazil’s image. It’s for another time. (Correio Braziliense, 2014e, p. 11)

## The 'bads' as side-effects

Alongside the *goods* as side-effects, *Correio Braziliense* published news stories, opinion pieces, and readers' letters showing how *Padrão FIFA* proceeded with inherent *bad* side-effects that cut across different segments of the civil society, organizations involved in the tournament, government levels (municipal, state, national), and politicians. One common frame found in the analysed coverage of *Padrão FIFA* related to the construction projects undertaken by the government to improve the infrastructure for the month-long tournament. The issue of large-scale construction works prior to World Cup editions in Brazil, South Africa and Qatar, indeed, has become a highly controversial and politicized issue for decades, with recent questions asked about treatment of workers, FIFA's standards, economic costs and sustainability (Cornelissen, 2012; Millward, 2017).

As discussed above, during the period prior the mega-event, Brazil embarked on a construction strategy in which the *good* side-effect was framed as modernizing its footballing – and non-footballing – infrastructure. Nevertheless, this *good* side-effect had a counterpoint in a *bad* side-effect that became a recurrent topic for *Correio Braziliense*: work being done behind schedule. For instance, on 6th May 2010 *Correio Braziliense* headlined and sub-headlined its news as 'Unfulfilled promise: GDF fails to start Mané Garrincha Stadium renovation. Bidding process will only be completed four days after the deadline for the start of construction' with two features in the news titled as 'festival of postponements' and 'slowness' with a feature box stating:

The first date established by FIFA and the local organizing committee for the start of stadium construction for the 2014 World Cup was January 1, 2010. At the beginning of the year, they extended the deadline to March 3, but since at least half of the host cities had not even completed their bidding processes, they extended it to June 3, 2010. (*Correio Braziliense*, 2010, pp. 12–13)

This construction delay was again the focus of *Correio Braziliense* in 2012 when the journalist Grasielle Castro headlined her article with 'Red alert: Unlike the stadiums, urban mobility and infrastructure works have hardly begun. Eight out of the 12 host cities haven't even reached 1% of the work completed' where she directly quotes in a feature box the President of the Architecture and Engineering Union (José Bernasconi) who stated that 'The legacy will indeed come. It's just going to be late. We'll see all these changes, but in about 10 years' (Castro, 2012, pp. 8–9). In May in the same year, the journalist Lorrane Melo headlined and sub-headlined her news as:

Official delay: a balance from the federal government itself shows that the country has only completed 5% of the 101 projects planned for the World Cup. However, the Minister of Sports [Aldo Rebelo, then at *PCdoB* – Brazilian Communist party, and now member of the *MDB* – Brazilian Democratic Movement] maintains the conviction that everything will be ready on time. (Melo, 2012b, pp. 8–9)

There she also directly quoted Rebelo replying to a criticism by Joseph Blatter (then-FIFA president) stating that 'Brazil is democratic. We are open to receiving criticism from nationals, so why wouldn't we receive criticism from foreigners? [he questioned] Brazil has a very important challenge to be publicly discussing with officials responsible for organizing the World Cup' (Melo, 2012b, pp. 8–9). Indeed, as Castro and Bernasconi alluded to in 2012, which disproved the promises by the then-Minister of Sport found on Melo's article, some of the transport and mobility projects intended for the 2014 World Cup were only finished in 2024, with around one-third of them not even yet completed (Altino, 2024). The fact that construction was behind schedule for both footballing and non-footballing infrastructures became weaved into another recurrent frame by the newspaper that focused on the lack of planning for the 'legacy' of the event. This has appeared in an editorial piece by the newspaper on 8th May 2014:

If Brazilians who took to the streets in June for ‘*Padrão FIFA*’ in transportation, healthcare, education, and public security knew what such a level of quality would mean in the World Cup, they would certainly demand something else. Because even if the World Cup leaves legacies – and it would be unthinkable folly to pass totally unnoticed –, they will fall far short of promises and projects. From this point of view, frustration is also certain. (Correio Braziliense, 2014f, p. 16)

This lack of legacy planning and, indeed, the cost of construction – which was and still is under-going – became a central point for Ari Cunha’s columns. For instance, on the 1st January 2014, he questions the investment of over 1 billion Reais to renovate the public-owned stadium in the Federal District by comparing it to the lack of investments on other areas such as schools and hospitals when he states:

The more than 70,000 red seats installed in the Mané Garrincha National Stadium – a tribute to the colors of the party currently governing the Federal District [a reference to Agnelo Queiroz from the Workers Party – *PT* – who was the Governor and previously served as Minister for Sport between 2003 and 2006] – will remain as reminders, once the World Cup games are over, of a time when, even with hospitals and schools crying out for help, the government dared to build a monument dedicated to sports. (Cunha, 2014a, p. 11)

On the same page was an opinion piece by the President of the Paulista Academy of Legal Letters questioning the use of the scarce public resources to build stadiums for the event and claiming that now it was a good opportunity for society to have deeper discussion about public expenditures and the quality of the services provided (Altenfelder, 2014). Continuing with that frame, on the 5th June 2014 edition, Ari Cunha stated:

as citizens become informed about the costly championship and the true mountain of public resources spent, without returns and without legacy, pressures increase on the streets. [...] At first glance, thanks to the daily work of the press, it is possible to sense that the gains have been largely surpassed by the expenses, in any aspect analyzed. (Cunha, 2014b, p. 11)

Here, it remains significant how the journalist emphasized the role of the press, the *enlightenment* of the public, and their subsequent protest as important aspects and agents in what we conceptualize as the *power game field*. Those returns that Ari Cunha refers to must be understood in light of the public investments made by the federal Government to subsidize the construction of both public (municipal or state-owned) and private stadiums, and the end given to stadiums after the event. For instance, the journalist Ana Pompeu reported on the protests that happened during the final game of the Confederations Cup when two volunteers who were part of the closing ceremony dressed up as footballs stopped their choreographed performance and unfolded a banner that read ‘Immediate cancellation of the privatization of Maracanã [Rio de Janeiro state-owned stadium]’ (Pompeu, 2013).

Those newly refurbished – and commonly *privatized* – public stadiums became of central importance for *Correio Braziliense* in terms of how the legacies to the event were framed as *bad*. Writing a week after the World Cup final, journalist Amanda Mortimon (2014) headlined her news with ‘I am out’ and covered how the costs to play in some of the refurbished stadiums surpass the gate receipts by football clubs, particularly in cities where at the time there are no big footballing traditions such as Brasília, Manaus, and Cuiabá. Alongside this notion of costing, *Correio Braziliense* also framed it through another side of the coin, where the private companies who won the concession of those stadiums were increasing ticket prices such as the game between Vasco (from Rio de Janeiro) and Corinthians (from São Paulo) that was played in Brasília. Explaining the increase in ticket prices, the promoter Roberto Siqueira argues that:

The ticket prices reflect the costs of a FIFA-standard event. ‘The seats in the stadium will be assigned, and the number of security personnel will follow the same criteria used by FIFA’ [a direct quote attributed to Siqueira]. However, for security reasons, the organized fan groups – which do not have separated sections in stadiums meeting the world football entity’s standards – will continue to be placed in opposite sections in the upper stands. (Mortimon, 2013, pp. 5–6)

Nevertheless, while this was the *planned* organization for the event, what happened was that there was no segregation in the upper stands as the promoters ended up by following the FIFA standard when selling tickets, and Gaviões da Fiel’s (Corinthians’ organized fan group) members invaded the area where Vasco da Gama’s fans were and started a mass confrontation against fans and police (Mortimon & Cunha, 2013). Not only was *Padrão FIFA* framed as a *bad* because it increased tickets prices, but it also allowed fans to cause disturbance and violence.

Those *bads* as framed by *Correio Braziliense* carried inherent political risks for the Workers Party – and particularly to Dilma Rousseff who was the president between 2011 and 2016, the year she was impeached after being re-elected in 2014 – as seen in both news articles and opinion pieces. The political columnist Luiz Carlos Azevedo writing between the Confederations Cup and the World Cup argued that after inheriting the World Cup from Lula, Dilma was now ‘putting all her chips’ on a Brazilian victory as the organization of the event was marred by multiple controversies as ‘to suspicions of overpricing in the costs of construction for some stadiums and the failure to complete most of the urban mobility projects’ (Azevedo, 2013, p. 4). For Azevedo, while Dilma and her possible main opponents in the 2014 election (Aécio Neves from the Brazilian Social Democratic Party – *PSDB* – and Eduardo Campos from Brazilian Socialist Party – *PSB*) were all committed to hosting the World Cup, she was the one with the most to lose if the situation went from bad to worse. This view was echoed a year later by Sacha Calmon – a Lawyer, former tenured professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, and president of the Brazilian Association of Financial Law – writing an opinion piece:

In politics, administration, and football, we act disorganized and are fans of improvisation, and because of this, things don’t work. Hopefully, the ‘catastrophe’ [referring to Brazil’s lost to Germany] will make us more rational and analytical. Lula wanted the World Cup deliberately to support his obsessive power project, and Dilma spent enormous amounts to satisfy her boss and mentor, without planning or rationality. The legacies of the World Cup? Some barely adequate urban mobility projects, airports superficially improved despite being obsolete, costly stadiums to meet ‘FIFA standards’, lots of corruption, and overpricing! (Calmon, 2014, p. 11)

For Beck (2016), the media’s staging of risks contributes to the public understanding of the same risks. To understand how political risks and protests were generally framed by *Correio Braziliense*, it is important to address how the newspaper covered the reactions and decisions by the federal government after the initial protests around the Confederations Cup in 2013. On the cover page on the 23rd January 2014 *Correio Braziliense* headlined with: ‘Dilma launches FIFA-standard repression manual’ (Correio Braziliense, 2014g, p. 1), with a starker critique on the 12th February edition where the top half of the cover page contains an image of a closing fist squeezing small protestors inside and a red stamp next to it that reads ‘AI-5 Padrão FIFA’. To contextualize, the Institutional Act Number Five was enacted in 1968 during the military dictatorship which suspended most of civil rights in the country and is considered to be the peak of the totalitarian military regime. This image is composed with a headline that reads ‘The project classifies street protests as terrorist acts’ (Correio Braziliense, 2014h,, p. 1). Furthering this frame, the commentator Plácido Fernandes headlined his piece as ‘AI-5 Bolivarianist’ and wrote that:

it will be a Bolivarian AI-5, which is when a parliament uses the legitimacy of the ballot box to pass authoritarian measures supposedly in the name of the people who elected it [...] after the bread, the circus, and [now the] the iron fist. A grotesque spectacle. (Fernandes, 2014, p. 14)

Overall, therefore this analysis reveals the framing of *Padrão FIFA* in terms of ‘bads’ and ‘goods’ but that this, broadly, reveals the wider ‘both/and’ logic which prevails within the power game (Beck, 2005a). More broadly, with reference to our theoretical framework, our analysis reveals an exemplar of how a power game mobilizes a field of contestation across locally significant spaces. Here, this ‘game’s’ ramifications are played out between players whose capital determines their position in a co-existing local, national and global space. Here, Bourdieu’s (1984) dynamics enable us to capture the importance of social capital of the 2014 World Cup’s actors, but also theorize the *co-existing* local and global scope of *Padrão FIFA* and its dialectic (good/bad) nature firmly embedded within Beck’s ‘both/and’ logic.

## Discussion and conclusion

Beck (2005b, p. 150) observed how the era of globalization meant that the ‘[t]he relationship between world economy and the state now resembles a *meta-power*, that is: the power to change the rules of the national and international power relation’. This power game (Beck, 2005a) co-exists with social games of struggle in context-specific fields (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993; Crossley, 2002). With this as a starting point, this article contributes further towards an emerging, conceptual framework for the study of ‘power’ which fuses conceptual tools from Beck and Bourdieu’s scholarship, whilst it – empirically – drives forward our knowledge of how what we conceptualized as ‘power game fields’ emerge and develop around the world’s largest sport mega-event which, in the case of Brazil, saw hundreds of thousands of people join nationwide protests in Brazil in 2013 and 2014 (Millward, 2017).

Within Beck’s (2005a, 2005b) and Bourdieu’s (1993) social theory, the concept of ‘power’, specifically the execution, reproduction and mechanisms of power, occupies a central position. Accepting the divergences between the two theorists (Jong, 2022) but building upon their insights, this article explored broad questions relating to the interactions between local and global power by first revisiting Beck’s notion of a meta-power game and Bourdieu’s field; and cross-pollinating these notions into a synthesized power game field which captures how multiple actors enter a ‘game of power’ whose outcomes rely upon both social (Bourdieu) and transnational (Beck) relations. Second, while the compatibility between the two theorists has been emphasized previously (Jong, 2022), we set out here to extend this proposition further, by applying their ideas in an under-explored but politically and socially significant empirical setting, where the power of a ‘global governor’ (Włoch, 2020) to impose requirements upon a state is contested not solely to between those two actors (sport authority and country), but between a wider field including civil society groups, activists, local residents and, as we have focused upon here, the media (specifically journalists).

Thus, this article synthesizes Beckian and Bourdieusian framework in a context where, as visible above, global agendas meet local resistance and compliance – as epitomized by our analysis of the coverage of *Padrão FIFA* – that is, FIFA’s standards *imposed* upon Brazil. What the *Correio Brasileiro* coverage, analysed above, reveals enables us to forward three key arguments in that regard. First, in compliance with Beck’s idea of the substitution of ‘either-or’ with ‘both-and’ logics, *Padrão FIFA* was framed both according to its ‘good’ and ‘bad’ side-effects. Second, we see the importance



– in the global power field that emerged around Brazil’s World Cup – of what can be understood as communal capital. This type of capital exists beyond Bourdieu’s methodological individuals forms of capital (social, economic, cultural) and is constituted and co-produced across time by different actors who possess distinct forms of traditional Bourdieusian capital and legitimacy. As seen in our analysis, not only journalists, political commentators, columnists and editors employed by *Correio Braziliense* constituted this *power game field*, but members of the civil society too; either through long opinion pieces or shorter, sentence-long ideas. In the backdrop of this constituted *power game field*, we can add the global governor – FIFA – that lacked legitimacy but possessed a higher degree of power, and the different political actors either acting as part of the government or as oppositions who on their hand had the democratic legitimacy but at some points lacked power. Thus, in this *power game field*, it becomes imperative to address notions of what *having* or *having-not* means for instilling changes that are in accordance with actors’ particular viewpoints, and how those can change during an extended period. Hence, we contend that the *power game field* is constituted – and *only* exist – because of the struggle and the different viewpoints, therefore implying that those opposing views are not distinct entities in an either/or frame but sides of the same coin as both/and.

Importantly, the notion of a ‘*power game field*’ must not be limited to the empirical frame of mega-events. Through diverse methods, it may be constructively developed in and portable to other context where a series of local, national, and transnational actors clash, cooperate and struggle for power and their interests, including urban festivals, anti-corporate or anti-austerity movements, political summits and the gentrification of neighbourhoods. In such work, the cross-pollinations of Beck and Bourdieu allow us to examine how new forms of cosmopolitan capital matters and shape master frames by the actors playing ‘a game’ which is concurrently socially relational and transnationally significant. These notions, accordingly, contribute to our understanding of how ‘power’ in a globalized world is rescaled and increasingly disposable.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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