




## THE INFLUENCE OF BROADCASTING RIGHTS ON SPORTS JOURNALISM: A STUDY WITH JOURNALISTS ON THE COVERAGE OF THE RIO/2016 PARALYMPIC GAMES

*A INFLUÊNCIA DOS DIREITOS DE TRANSMISSÃO NO JORNALISMO ESPORTIVO: UM ESTUDO COM JORNALISTAS SOBRE A COBERTURA DOS JOGOS PARALÍMPICOS RIO/2016* 

*LA INFLUENCIA DE LOS DERECHOS DE TRANSMISIÓN EN EL PERIODISMO DEPORTIVO: UN ESTUDIO CON PERIODISTAS SOBRE LA COBERTURA DE LOS JUEGOS PARALÍMPICOS DE RIO/2016* 

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**Abstract:** The objective of the investigation was to characterize influences of image and transmission rights in production of news about the Rio/2016 Paralympic Games. This study was qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and inspired by some characteristics of news making studies. We interviewed 15 journalists and editors from different Brazilian media groups and newspapers that covered that sports mega event. The definitions and delimitations of journalistic making guided by commercial issues – such as time and space limits to interview athletes and occasional difficulty to access regional sports idols for news coverage directed to specific locations - indicate that, when broadcasting rights are not available, the breadth and complexity of the information collected by journalists for the production of news is restricted.

**Keywords:** Sports. Mass media. Journalism.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Brazilian Paralympic Committee (CPB), responsible for financially and socially supporting Paralympic sports in Brazil since its foundation in 1995, focuses its efforts and investment on communication and media actions around sports for people with disabilities, particularly in the dissemination of the Paralympic Games (JP) nationwide. All chairmen who have led the entity so far considered media relations as key to mainstream Paralympic sport in Brazil and also to attract potential sponsors for this sporting event (MIRANDA, 2011).

Based on Pires (2006), regarding sports mediatization stages, we can say that the Paralympic games would be maturing and heading towards the transition from the first to the second stage. According to the author, the first stage is about the media itself broadcasting and producing news to expose different brands and selling advertising quotas. The second stage of the process, in turn, takes place when the sport itself becomes the product and is negotiated and sold to the media under broadcasting rights. This is when the media ceases to be a mere interpreter or informant and becomes the co-author of the sports phenomenon, as well as when stadiums become stages (SPÀ, 1999).

Twenty years after the beginning of the media-focused communication policy developed by the Brazilian Paralympic Committee, Paralympic sports have gained not only room in national sports shows<sup>1</sup> but also sponsors and advertisers. Nevertheless, it was not until 2012 that Brazil's largest media corporation, Organizações Globo, purchased the rights to broadcast the Paralympic Games on their pay TV channel (SporTV). In 2016, Globo acquired the broadcasting rights for the Paralympic Games once again and for both broadcast and pay TV. In the case of broadcast TV, rights were sublicensed for TV Brasil.<sup>2</sup> On pay television, Sportv had the highest audience share in its history during the broadcasting of the 2016 Paralympic Games' Opening Ceremony.<sup>3</sup> Television audience around the world saw record viewing rates for the 2016 edition of Paralympic Games.<sup>4</sup>

In this context of closer relations between Paralympic sports and the media, is it important to understand how negotiations and exclusive broadcasting and image rights over Paralympic sports interfere in news making and dissemination of information about this sporting event? With this research problem in mind, this study aimed at understanding the influences of image and broadcasting rights on news making during the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games by sports journalists.

## 2 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES AND STRATEGIES

This research was qualitative, descriptive, exploratory and inspired in some features of newsmaking studies. The methodological approach of news making

1 An example of national media space gained is the website *globoesporte.com*, which created a specific section to disclose news on the event. Available at: <http://globoesporte.globo.com/paralimpiadas/>. Accessed on: Dec. 21, 2017.

2 The sub-license agreement is available at: [http://www.etc.com.br/institucional/sites/institucional/files/atoms/files/contrato\\_1042-2015\\_-\\_globosat\\_programadora\\_ltda.pdf](http://www.etc.com.br/institucional/sites/institucional/files/atoms/files/contrato_1042-2015_-_globosat_programadora_ltda.pdf)> Accessed on: Oct 31, 2017.

3 Ibope data is available at: <http://natelinha.uol.com.br/noticias/2016/09/12/sportv-2-atinge-maior-audiencia-da-sua-historia-com-abertura-da-paraolimpiada-102033.php>. Accessed on: Dec. 21, 2017.

4 The official data provided by the IPC are available at: <https://www.paralympic.org/news/rio-2016-paralympics-smash-all-tv-viewing-records>. Accessed on: Dec. 21, 2017.

studies, according to Wolf (1987; 2001), demand follow-up of newsmaking inside a newsroom, while interviews are a complementary strategy of data research and production. However, as we seek a range of possibilities and ways of acting in journalistic culture with regard to Paralympic sport, by adopting Patton's maximum variation approach (2001), it was impossible to attend and be present in real time in different newsrooms during the 2016 Paralympic Games coverage. Therefore, as a way to collect the largest number of reports from different newsrooms, we used semi-structured interviews as the main procedure for data production with our interlocutors.

We conducted 15 interviews, which took place between February October 2, 2016 and November 21, 2016, with average duration of one hour. Eight interviews took place in person and the other seven were conducted via Skype.

We interviewed 15 journalists and editors from different media groups and newspapers across the country who covered the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. They included professionals who worked for both local and national media. We selected eight professionals from four local media outlets and eight from two national media outlets, as well as three press officers working for the Brazilian Paralympic Committee. Over the course of work, the media groups were referred to as 'Local,' listed from one to four, or 'National,' listed from one to three (this group includes the Committee). For purposes of example: 'Regional 1,' 'Regional 2,' 'National 1' and 'National 2.'

In order to present data, we maintained subjects' anonymity and preserved their identities using fictitious names.<sup>5</sup> In Table 1 below, we present a profile of each of the participating editors and journalists according to their roles, the reach of the media outlets for which they worked, the positions they held during the coverage of the mega event, and whether their companies held image and broadcasting rights for the 2016 Paralympic Games.

**Table 1** – Presentation and description of subjects

Número	Nome	Função	Mídia	Posição	Detentor de direitos
1	Fred	Editor	Regional 1	Direct from newsroom	No
2	Luiz	Journalist	Regional 1	Direct from newsroom	No
3	Rodrigo	Editor	Regional 2	Direct from newsroom	No
4	Sara	Journalist	Regional 2	Direct from newsroom	No
5	Mariana	Editora	Regional 3	Direct from newsroom	No
6	Antônio	Journalist	Regional 3	<i>In loco</i>	No
7	Ícaro	Journalist	Regional 3	Direct from newsroom	No
8	Philipe	Journalist	Regional 4	Direct from newsroom	No
9	Fernando	Editor	National 1	<i>In loco</i>	Yes
10	André	Journalist	National 1	<i>In loco</i>	Yes
11	Vinicius	Journalist	National 1	<i>In loco</i>	Yes
12	Francisco	Journalist	National 2	<i>In loco</i>	No
13	Martins	Editor	National 3	<i>In loco</i>	Yes
14	Jaciara	Journalist	National 3	<i>In loco</i>	Yes
15	Jorge	Journalist	National 3	<i>In loco</i>	Yes

Source: the authors

5 This work was endorsed by the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Paraná under Report No. 1.574.202.

In the organization and analysis of the data collected, we used the content analysis technique (BARDIN, 2009). We organized the content presented by the subjects in their speeches according to elementary newsmaking elements, that is, work conditions, work routine, reporting criteria, and news values. Therefore, we present the data (research registration units) and their relations and intersections with the characteristics and influences of broadcasting and image rights for the 2016 Paralympic Games coverage. We conducted this analysis by exploring different approaches and contrasts pointed by the subjects.

### 3 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first element we can highlight from the influence of broadcasting rights on the newsmaking process during the 2016 Paralympic Games was the space and time restriction imposed on the work of journalists covering the day-to-day of the competition. According to the journalists, there were perks for professionals working for media groups that held broadcasting rights, both in terms of placement in interview areas – called mixed zones – and the time they had to talk with athletes.

The statement given by André, a journalist who was part of the team of one of the TV stations that held broadcasting rights in Brazil, in contrast to that of Antonio, the only journalist from a local written media outlet doing *on-the-spot* coverage, is conclusive about the spatial and temporal distinction in the newsmaking logistics during the Games.

ANDRÉ: There were two mixed zones, which was interesting. One was the mixed zone for those who would go live after the competition [...] we were the only Brazilian TV station there [...] And there was the mixed zone where the other stations would stay, but they did not have access to the pools, where the athletes would pass by.

ANTONIO: TV stations such as Globo, EBC would hold athletes for a long time there, sometimes for up to 40 minutes before they could make it to other media outlets or websites. Sometimes the athletes would come to us already tired of answering the same things or had to rush to the medal ceremony, so there was very little time for us there.

Antonio's statement demonstrates the imbalance in allocation of athletes' time to grant interviews to journalists. Among a series of questions that could be raised from the testimonials above, the first one to highlight is the distinction between space and time given for television and what was left for other media outlets – printed newspapers and websites. The former enters into commercial agreements with institutions representing the sport, as it is the case with the Paralympic Games, thus becoming partners in the business (BETTI, 1998; SPÀ, 1999; 2007; PIRES, 2002). Although other media could contribute to provide wider social reach and visibility to the major event by broadcasting news in their outlets and regions – whether nationally or locally – thus generating more audience and attracting more advertisers, these minor outlets still lose significance in the newsmaking process because they do not take part in the sports-media relationship by injecting money.

Placing priority on television channels in the context of the 2016 Paralympic Games is proof that sports TV shows (BETTI, 1998) still prevail as the object of

symbiosis between media and sport. Even though the Paralympic Games are a contemporary sports event (MARQUES; GUTIERREZ, 2014), concurrent with the media convergence phenomenon (JENKINS, 2009), the economic and symbolic power of television appears to have gained only a few more ramifications. This example confirms the theory of Duarte (2011), according to whom the Internet 2.0 is nothing but capillarization of traditional cultural domination mechanisms, of which television is the main representative.

The space-time marginalization engendered by the commercial prevalence that affected newsmaking during the Paralympic Games, as highlighted by André and Antonio, also entails the impoverishment of reports and information that could be produced and later broadcast in the news. Therefore, a major event like the Paralympic Games, which is great opportunity to value and recognize the worldwide experience of sports practiced by people with disabilities (MARQUES, 2016), instead of having multiple media outlets to give a voice to athletes, ends up restricting itself to sports communication outlets that pay for broadcasting rights.

The imbalance of news making spaces pointed by journalists in our study is another indication of what has been shown by Spà (2007) and Sanfelice (2010) as the prevalence of a financial-media-commercial way of thinking about a sports-focused approach in the relationship between the media and sport. In the balance of power between both approaches, the interests of hegemonic mass communication groups are met by sports managers, which grant them such privileges through broadcasting right agreements. In this sense, the search for balance in this relationship is the responsibility of entities within the sports system (SPÀ, 2007), and in the case of our research, it is up to both International and National Paralympic Committees.

However, this balance is hard to achieve, since sports managers, including Paralympic Committees, are interested in the money coming from exclusive broadcasting rights as they are budget-relevant for their management and for turning any sporting events into a spectacle (PAYNE, 2006; PIRES, 2002; PRONI, 2008). On the side of journalism, it is worth mentioning that scoops and exclusives are mechanisms of distinction and appreciation in the media and journalistic culture (TRAVANCAS, 2010). These reasons help explain high financial investments made by the media to purchase broadcasting rights and, as a consequence, its demand for exclusivity in broadcasting sports and images. Otherwise, it would be difficult to invest so much in sports coverage.

In addition to journalistic and sport-related factors affected by the business approach of broadcasting rights, Antonio's testimonial also shows how the media's this ownership/co-ownership relationship with sports can be exhausting for athletes. Athletes then have other responsibilities – in this case, towards the media and the business itself – that go beyond competition and physical and mental efforts required by a major event like the Paralympic Games. Journalists' understanding about the time spent by athletes with the media after intense fatigue from the competition, particularly with television, reasserts how the human and sports sides of the true protagonists of the show are reified and treated as commodities. According to Marin (2008, p. 86), "the television showcase resumes the liveliness and fluidity of human



activities, packs them with mundane and fascinating strategies and offers them as commodities.”

Relations between the media and sports institutions could be different so as to not undermine interpersonal relationships between the stakeholders – journalists and athletes. The situation below, brought up by André, reveals a certain level of understanding towards the psychological and physical conditions of athletes after the competition. However, the same situation also reveals how they have to return to grant interviews to at least the media outlet holding broadcasting rights, even when they are frustrated with the results of the competition.

ANDRÉ: It was André Brasil's first race and he was very angry when he left the water; he arrived in fourth, without a medal, and it was a race that he had won twice before. So he said he didn't want to talk. And then people were asking me: what about André? I said: well, he said he didn't want to talk. Okay, life goes on. A little bit later, he came back there to talk. I mean, access was very easy, the guy knew where to find us too.

The situation explained by the journalist shows his respect towards the athlete's moment. While editors initially demanded a live interview with the athlete after the race, apparently the journalistic team was quite understanding with the swimmer's disappointment at the final result.

The fact that André went back to talk to the journalist after a while, the athlete's easy access to the journalist and the fact that he knew exactly where to find the journalist to grant the interview indicate that different factors may affect the relationship between journalists and athletes. Paralympic athletes are aware of the importance of the media for purposes of promotion, appreciation and recognition of Paralympic sport among society (FIGUEIREDO, 2019; MARQUES *et al.*, 2014; 2015). Like the institutions that manage Paralympic sports, they also understand how important the media is in the process of building and disseminating a positive image to possible investors (CEGALINI; ROCCO JUNIOR, 2019). Since sports journalism is an important stakeholder in socially shaping sports (BORELLI; FAUSTO NETO, 2002), the athlete may have gone back to talk to the journalist to take advantage of the opportunity to promote both his image and that of Paralympic sports.

For some journalists, Paralympic sport and Paralympians are some kind of 'under-representation of sports' as they are not as popular and are believed to be less competitiveness and have lower athletic content (GOLDEN, 2003; SOLVES *et al.*, 2018). Paralympians, on the other hand, believe sports journalists are not trained to cover sports for people with disabilities. According to Brazilian high-performance athletes, reporters usually do such work on a temporary, short-term basis and are not trained for it, as they do not follow up any of these sports between editions of Paralympic Games (FIGUEIREDO, 2019). Perhaps André also returned because he recognized the unique opportunity that he had been offered to report on his experience.

Another reason that could explain the little recognition or disregard for the space and time dedicated to news making is that the journalist in this case worked for a local print newspaper, particularly because it was a low-reach, low-circulation media outlet. However, Francisco, a journalist working for a nationwide media outlet, also

reiterates the inconvenience of benefits and perks that are granted to the television channels that hold broadcasting rights.

FRANCISCO: There is a clear advantage to TV press, especially major broadcasters – TV Globo and Sportv, namely [...] I understand that they hold the rights and so on, but I think that the Brazilian Paralympic Committee made a mistake at some point... it failed to understand how news coverage works. I think that even though we have to meet TV's demands and everything, I think it is somewhat unethical to give priority only to TVs all the time.

Francisco's comment about television stations' privileged access to athletes is related to the commercial issue of the cultural industry within the scope of Paralympic Sports. His report demonstrates how entertainment feeds into journalism and its final product: news. This is an example of infotainment – the crossing of borders between information and entertainment (GOMES, 2008). In other words, we have an example of how sports businesses' commercial interests affect the news making process in the sports world. Therefore, the strategies of the sports media market demonstrate that they operate within the organization of journalists' research work. Even being part of the journalistic team of a nationwide written (print and online) media outlet, the disappointment expressed by the journalist concerns the ethical boundaries that balance the distribution and organization of spaces and time for news making within the Paralympic Games.

Journalists expressed dissatisfaction with the benefits granted to broadcasting rights holders, as this also implies possible losses that the organization of time and space in the interview zones may cause to their activities. The difficulty of accessing and sometimes interviewing Paralympians in the mixed zone during the Games affected their coverage of the major event directly. Athletes are the primary sources of sports journalists. When facing difficulties or being prevented from contacting the Paralympians, these journalists see their work threatened. Despite the possibility of incorporating specific sports-related factors to help news making, such as the technical profile of games and races, sports journalism must also follow the guidelines of general journalism, including interviewing sources (BORELLI; FAUSTO NETO, 2002).

Jaciara, press officer of the Brazilian Paralympic Committee, who also worked as an adviser to the Brazilian Olympic Committee (COB) for the 2016 Olympic Games, says that this issue is present in virtually all sporting events.

JACIARA: Now there is this problem that television stations hold broadcasting rights, so when athletes arrive in the mixed zone, they go right to them and often these television stations hold athletes for a long time, and then when they pass by other print press outlets, they are almost out of time [...] But that did not happen only in the Paralympic Games. It also happened with the Olympic Games, as it happened in London, as it happened in Toronto.

Pires (2006, p. 6) argues that turning sports into show business “concerns the purposeful equality that disguise its various manifestations, mediated by television and the impossibility of alternatives that do not undergo such uniformization.” The author also adds that “it does not mean that different sports are becoming similar, but rather that production, sales and consumption of sports follow a similar logic, based on identical technical procedures and equal commercial interests” (PIRES, 2006, p.

6). We can infer from the speech of our interlocutors that this procedure was also applied to journalistic coverage within the informative context of sports during the Paralympic Games. In other words, in the present study, we found that the Paralympic sports-media system replicated both technical and commercial processes from other sports systems, such as the Olympic Games (PAYNE, 2006; PRONI, 2008), FIFA<sup>6</sup> (BORGES, 2018) and football clubs (BORGES, 2019).

Another issue that emerged within the relationship between the media and sports with regard to broadcasting rights agreements was restriction on the work of journalists from local/regional outlets in accessing information and/or athletes, when they tried to do direct coverage from newsrooms. According to a report by Rodrigo, an editor from a media outlet that did not qualify to work in the Games and did not send any journalist for on-site coverage because of the company's budget restrictions, broadcasting and image rights were a way to prevent contact with athletes during competitions, reducing the volume of information available for news production.

RODRIGO: Still, we tried to work things around, interviewing several people from Santa Catarina who were successful in the Paralympic Games – not many. Santa Catarina does not have much tradition, but those that achieved something, we got them covered, right? Covering here, interviewing there, and it was not easy, I should say. In the case of swimming, we sent messages to some of the champions, tried to access them, but they could not answer our questions because Committee said so.<sup>7</sup> They could only talk to those who were covering the event. So we had a delay in the coverage, we could only interview them much later, then timing had passed, you know?

In this case, once again it is clear that negotiation of broadcasting rights crossed the lines of news making in the context of Paralympic sports. Again, granting exclusive television rights and restricting other media outlets prevented, above all, printed media journalists from accessing athletes. In other words, rights functioned as a way to block contact with those who are, according to Borelli and Fausto Neto (2002), the primary sources of information on sports. This way of acting and organizing the sports show business in the purchase and negotiation of broadcasting rights means, according to Martín-Barbero (2009), transforming press freedom into free market competition and consequently into hegemony and monopolization of sports communication.

In addition to preventing journalistic activity, the negotiation of broadcasting rights also inhibited the possibility of giving athletes a voice to share some of their experiences with the public from their own regions. It is important to highlight that printed and regional media have no means to compete for image and broadcasting rights, since they are negotiated nationwide and usually restricted to audiovisual outlets such as the Internet and television. In this sense, the only alternative for printed and online media is to take part in a media conglomerate that acquires the broadcasting rights for the major event.

The establishment of media conglomerates is a global phenomenon that drives globalization of culture and that has been no different when it comes to sports, since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (PIRES, 2002). Such phenomenon bolsters cross-national

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6 International Football Federation.

7 When he refers to the Committee, the interlocutor means the Brazilian Paralympic Committee – he simply changed the acronyms.



symbolic and commercial interests to the detriment of interactions and demands of single cultures and locations.

Restricting access to athletes, including phone contacts, is a non-democratic determination of commercial relations surrounding sports and Paralympic sports. The case mentioned by the editor of the printed newspaper demonstrates how broadcasting rights agreements between media conglomerates and sports institutions can inhibit news making for local media outlets during large-scale coverages such as the Paralympic Games. These limits imposed on local news making that we found in our research may be one of the reasons for the lack of visibility and media coverage alleged by national and local Paralympians as stated by Marques *et al.* 2014.

The global-local dialectics, for example, is a symbolic operation commonly used by printed and local sports journalism to attract the attention of their audience (SANTOS; MEZZARROBA; SOUZA, 2017). Especially in the coverage of global sporting events considered distant from certain realities, the global-local dialectics operates strategically in bringing the audience closer to something that is familiar to them. The media-sports discourse is usually built from a narrative that brings together contextual elements of the global sports fact with elements of the socio-cultural context where the media circulates. These elements of the narrative can be verbal or non-verbal, direct or indirect. Usually the global-local dialectics is brought to bear on the journalistic discourse by the athletes who represent locations where a media outlet is based and where it works to disclose information and cover sports icons that belong to that specific universe (BITENCOURT *et al.*, 2005; PIRES *et al.*, 2008).

Another influence of the broadcasting rights in the coverage of the Paralympic Games that is worth highlighting is the intervention of *Olympic Broadcasting Services* (OBS) on the journalistic work of making news and broadcasting information. OBS is a company linked to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and responsible for negotiating broadcasting rights for both the OJ and the PG with media groups from around the world. It is also responsible for generating the official images from these mega sporting events.

Commercial operations and broadcasting rights have been managed by OBS since the early 2000s, through an agreement signed between the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and the International Olympic Committee. This association of the Paralympic institution with Olympic business ensured financial stability for the IPC (HOWE, 2008; PURDUE; HOWE, 2012), because it allowed the Paralympic Games to be included in the structural and logistical requirements for cities that bid to host the Olympic Games. Upon this rapprochement with the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee also began to enjoy media visibility and advertising quotas that its Olympic counterpart already held. The agreement with the IOC, however, provides that this entity is entitled to a share of profit in all advertising agreements signed by the IPC. It also establishes that all images of the Paralympic Games should be controlled by the OBS (HOWE, 2008; PURDUE; HOWE, 2012).

The contractual relationship between IOC and IPC, according to Howe (2008) and Purdue and Howe (2012), brought implications for the Paralympic movement's

educational discourse of appreciation and recognition of Paralympians because they no longer have any broadcasting autonomy. According to the authors, the correlation between Olympians and Paralympians caused marginalization of the latter and placed them as second-level high-performance athletes, thus undermining their potential for expanding their cultures and their sports at an international level through the Paralympic Games.

Advisors to the Brazilian Paralympic Committee reported, as shown below, that communication efforts of the Committee are subservient towards the commands and logic of the OBS. An example is the disregard and uncertainty about the broadcasting of certain sports at certain moments in the daily routine of the competition, even though some of the sports raised much interest among Brazilians during the Games. As it could be imagined, these situations may impair the cultural growth and the educational discourse of the Paralympic movement (HOWE, 2008; PURDUE; HOWE, 2012), which also demonstrate, as described by Spà (2007), the fragility and little influence of sports institutions (Paralympic, in this case) on media and communication decisions.

MARTINS: [...] So, during the Games, I think the most striking example was sitting volleyball, which started to be broadcast from the semifinal due to a certain pressure from Brazilian broadcasters such as TV Brasil, Globosat. So, Brazil was on both male and female semifinals, so what's the point... To make them broadcast it. And there was that case I'd told you about... table tennis, right!? Bruna Alexandre was in the semifinal, a Brazilian player against Poland, which is the big star of Paralympic table tennis and... they were playing and table tennis had only signal on a table with no game on it. So, it was a clear disregard... I don't know if it would come to that point, but I think information was lacking, I think the interests of the host country were not met.

The interlocutor's statement reveals the impacts caused on communication due to centralization of media power in OBS and due to the way image and broadcasting rights were negotiated by the Olympic company. It is a profit-oriented way of working that impoverishes the cultural experience of Paralympic sport, besides constraining its growth to different environments and locations. How is it possible to educate the international audience and teach that it is possible to play high-level volleyball or table tennis while having some sort of motor impairment if the media do not broadcast these sports massively during an opportunity like the Paralympic Games? The media discourse is one of the main creators and disseminators of symbols, values and codes that make up the sports culture (PIRES, 2002).

The limited broadcasting of sitting volleyball during the semifinals and the failure to broadcast the women's table tennis semifinal, where a Brazilian athlete was competing and expecting a medal, are also evidence that the ability of Paralympic sports to educate and disseminate their culture through the Paralympic Games is subject to the commercial interests of the Olympic company, OBS. This example reinforces the view that the negotiation of broadcasting and image rights is behind the entire communicative process of sports in every dimension – from show business to journalism. It also confirms the view that financial, media and commercial aspects are more important than sports itself in the relationship between the media and sports, and reasserts the responsibility of sports institutions in finding balance in this relationship in order to preserve the true role of the sport (SPÀ, 2007).

According to the subjects of this study, OBS establishes some requirements for broadcasting rights holders. According to testimonies from the editor of 'Nacional 1' and also from one of the journalists who covered the event, both IPC and OBS required at least one hour of live broadcasting per day and at least one hour per day of news coverage dedicated to the Paralympic Games.

FERNANDO: Initially, the contract with *Nacional 1* provided for one hour of live coverage and another hour of news coverage per day, which, over the 11 days of competition, would add up to 44 hours... no, 22 hours to talk about the Paralympic Games. But we actually broadcast over 110 hours. So, we actually did much more than we should under the contract.

VINICIUS: The agreement required one hour of live broadcast per day and at least one hour of other programs about the Paralympic Games. But there was more than that, right? Because the company was interested in making a much broader coverage.

First, we highlight the interest of the institution represented by both journalists in broadcasting more hours of the Paralympic Games – about five times more than the minimum time provided for in the contract. However, such a minimum requirement of coverage hours represents, once again, the shallowness of media-sports space required by managing entities from broadcasting rights holders in an event that includes more than 20 sports, 4,000 athletes, 100 nations there, and attracts a large audience and lots of private money. If we consider the length of the competition – 11 days, 16 hours a day in different sports – 11 hours of news coverage corresponds to 6.25% of the global time of the sporting event.

In other words, in the commercial relationship between media and sports institutions within the scope of Paralympic sport, it becomes clear that the former's investment has guaranteed profit from advertising quotas while the latter risks having more than 90% of the event unseen due to the limited journalistic coverage. This portrays the imbalance between the media and sport industries (SANFELICE, 2010), now illustrated by Paralympic Games. It is also another indication of the media and communication damage caused by this sports event, due to the lack of responsibility, which according to Spà (2007), managing institutions should have in order to preserve the autonomy of sports in their relations with other industries, such as the media.

#### 4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We observed that the benefits and priorities granted to companies that hold image and broadcasting rights in the news making process during the 2016 Paralympic Games generated information losses to the sporting event. The constraints of the journalistic activity, predominantly based on commercial issues, restrict the reach and complexity of the information to be gathered by journalists for news-making purposes, which in turn impairs the quality of information that reaches the audience. Therefore, commercial interests and the media monopoly endorsed by sports managers when negotiating broadcasting rights caused sharp fragmentation and a lost opportunity for paralympic sports to grow.

We can consider that the commercial relationship between media and sports is making education about Paralympic Sports poorer. The main characteristic of

low education on sports has been the replacement of the real sport experience by its consumption through the media (PIRES, 2002, 2006). However, based on the examples of the journalistic coverage of the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games, we can say that now we also have restricted information on those sports, which leads directly or indirectly to the transformation of journalistic coverage into pure propaganda of sports. We envision increasing in commodification and marketization of sports and Paralympic sports as their journalistic coverage is increasingly conditioned to the information market approach.

The results of this study indicate that (Paralympic) sports institutions need to fight in their negotiations with the media, in order to change the *status quo*. This should be a battle for contractual guarantees of communicative broadcasting of sports culture, involving, for example, the wide range of sports and Paralympians with various levels and types of disabilities. This battle must also set contractual limits to the distinction between entertainment broadcasting and news making. In other words, sports institutions must clearly define broadcasting rights without creating space and time privileges within the journalistic scope, allowing, for example, all journalists to conduct interviews and access athletes – whether they work for companies that hold broadcasting rights or not.

Studies focused on analyzing existing documents on the negotiations between media and sport institutions can contribute to deeper discussions on the matter. We have evidence that turning high-performance sports, as Paralympic sports are today, into show business is not possible without the mediatization and commodification that has been taking place since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. High technological and scientific cost for continuous training of athletes, equipment, materials and sports venues present in the spectacle-like sporting achievements and help retain the audience around the world require massive injection of funds arising from broadcasting rights. Thus, other than challenging the legitimacy of such rights as the object of symbiosis between the media and sports, our study points to the need of further investigation into the ways in which this phenomenon takes place and the search for alternatives for sport managers in order to preserve it as an element of the contemporary culture.

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**Resumo:** O objetivo da investigação foi caracterizar influências da detenção dos direitos de imagem e transmissão no processo de produção de notícias sobre os Jogos Paralímpicos Rio/2016. Esta pesquisa foi de cunho qualitativo, descritivo, exploratório e se inspirou em algumas características dos estudos de news making. Entrevistamos 15 jornalistas e editores de diferentes grupos de mídia e jornais do país que cobriram o megaevento esportivo. As definições e delimitações do fazer jornalístico pautadas pelas questões comerciais, como por exemplo os limites de tempo e espaço para entrevistar os atletas e a dificuldade de, por vezes, eles acessarem ídolos esportivos regionais para a cobertura noticiosa direcionada a localidades específicas, indicam que, quando não se possui os direitos de transmissão, se restringe a amplitude e a complexidade das informações a serem recolhidas pelos jornalistas para a produção das notícias.

**Palavras chave:** Esportes. Meios de comunicação de massa. Jornalismo.

**Resumen:** El objetivo fue determinar las influencias de la posesión de los derechos de imagen y transmisión en el proceso de producción de noticias sobre los Juegos Paralímpicos de Rio / 2016. Esta investigación fue de cuño cualitativo, descriptivo, exploratorio y se inspiró en algunas características de los estudios de news making. Se ha entrevistado a 15 periodistas y editores de diferentes grupos de medios y periódicos del país que realizaron la cobertura del megaevento deportivo. Las definiciones y delimitaciones del hacer periodístico pautadas por las cuestiones comerciales, como por ejemplo los límites de tiempo y espacio para entrevistar a los atletas y, a veces, la dificultad de acceder a los ídolos deportivos regionales para la cobertura noticiosa dirigida a localidades específicas, indican que, cuando no se poseen los derechos de emisión, se restringe la amplitud y la complejidad de las informaciones recogidas por los periodistas para la producción de las noticias.

**Palabras clave:** Deportes. Medios de comunicación de masas. Periodismo.