

IDENTIFICAÇÃO E CATEGORIZAÇÃO DOS *STAKEHOLDERS* DE UM CLUBE DE FUTEBOL PROFISSIONAL BRASILEIRO

RESUMO

Considerando que um passo inicial para a gestão do *stakeholders* é a identificação e categorização desses atores, o estudo buscou responder à questão de pesquisa: como os dirigentes dos clubes de futebol profissional brasileiros identificam seus *stakeholders* e os classificam quanto à saliência? O marco teórico utilizado foi a Teoria dos *Stakeholders*, desenvolvida por Freeman (1984) e outros pesquisadores. O método usado foi o proposto por Almeida et al. (2000), que avalia a saliência por meio dos conceitos de poder, legitimidade e urgência, conforme o estudo de Mitchell et al. (1997). Foram feitas duas proposições, relativas ao contexto dos clubes de futebol brasileiros: uma, de que a urgência percebida pelos dirigentes no atendimento às reivindicações de um *stakeholder* será alta quando sua legitimidade for alta e outra de que os *stakeholders* mais salientes para os dirigentes serão aqueles com legitimidade alta. Foram pesquisados os *stakeholders* segundo a percepção dos dirigentes da Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras. Três tipos de *stakeholders* foram classificados como exigentes (patrocinadores, parceiros e o atual parceiro para a construção do novo estádio – arena) e três como dependentes (os associados, os atletas do futebol profissional e a mídia em todas as suas formas). Outros *stakeholders* identificados foram classificados como irrelevantes, entre eles os torcedores e as torcidas organizadas. Pode-se dizer que, no caso específico desses dirigentes do clube de futebol em questão, a tendência é pela aceitação das duas proposições.

Palavras-chave: *Stakeholder*; Categorização; Identificação.

IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF *STAKEHOLDERS* IN A BRAZILIAN PROFESSIONAL SOCCER CLUB

ABSTRACT

One initial step in the management of stakeholders is the identification and classification of these actors. This study sought to answer the research question: how managers of Brazilian professional soccer clubs identify and classify their stakeholders? For this purpose we used the theoretical framework Stakeholder Theory, developed by Freeman (1984) and other researchers. We used the method proposed by Almeida et al. (2000), which assesses the saliency through the concepts power, legitimacy, and urgency, which were proposed in the study by Mitchell et al. (1997). There were two propositions concerning the context of Brazilian soccer clubs: first, the urgency perceived by managers in demands of a stakeholder is high when his legitimacy is high; second, the most salient stakeholders for managers are those with high legitimacy. Stakeholders were studied as perceived by the managers of Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras. Three types of stakeholders were classified as demanding (sponsors, partners and the partner for the construction of the new stadium), and three as dependents (members, athletes of professional soccer team and media). Other stakeholders identified were classified as irrelevant, including fans and the organized groups of fans. In the specific case of these managers of this particular soccer club, the trend was the acceptance of both propositions.

Keywords: *Stakeholder*; Categorization; Identification.

IDENTIFICACIÓN Y CLASIFICACIÓN DE LOS GRUPOS DE INTERÉS DE UN CLUB DE FÚTBOL BRASILEÑO.

RESUMEN

Teniendo en cuenta que un paso inicial en la gestión de los grupos de interés es la identificación y categorización de este grupo de personass, el estudio trató de responder a la pregunta de investigación: ¿Cómo los dirigentes de los clubes profesionales de fútbol brasileños identifican sus grupos de interés y rango como el jefe? El marco teórico utilizado fue la Teoría de Grupos de Interés desarrollados por Freeman (1984) y otros investigadores. El método utilizado fue propuesto por Almeida et al. (2000), que evalúa el jefe a través de los conceptos de poder, legitimidad y urgencia como el estudio de Mitchell et al. (1997). Había dos propuestas relacionadas con el contexto de los clubes de fútbol brasileños: una que la urgencia percibida por los líderes en el cumplimiento de las demandas de un grupo de interés es alta cuando su legitimidad es alta y uno de los grupos de interés más destacados de los líderes serán aquellas con alta legitimidad. Las partes interesadas fueron encuestadas según la percepción de los líderes de Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras. Hay tres tipos de grupos de interés que se clasificaron tan exigente (patrocinadores, socios y la actual pareja de la construcción del nuevo estadio - Arena) y tres como dependientes (miembros, atletas de fútbol profesional y los medios de comunicación en todas sus formas). Otros grupos de interés identificados fueron clasificados como irrelevantes, incluyendo los fans y animadoras. Se puede decir que en el caso específico de estos dirigentes del club de fútbol de que se trate, la tendencia es la aceptación de dos proposiciones.

Palabras clave: Grupos de Interés; Categorización; Identificación.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Soccer, understood as a social phenomenon, affects all parts of society (Da Matta, 1982) and, for this reason, among others, attracts great interest worldwide. According to a research conducted in 2006 by the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA), 265 million people play soccer around the world, which is almost 10% more than the number found in the latest census, realized in 2000. There are 209 confederations affiliated to FIFA, with 38 millions of registered soccer players. Brazil has almost 13.200.000 soccer players, including professional players, amateurs and young people (aged under 18), which represents more than 7% of its population (FIFA, 2006). Also according to FIFA (2006), there are 28.970 registered Brazilian soccer clubs, with both male and female teams. The last FIFA World Cup occurred in 2014 in Brazil with a total audience in the stadiums of 3.429.873 people (FIFA, 2014). The previous FIFA World Cup, in 2010, was in South Africa. It was broadcasted to 214 countries and seen by approximately 2.2 billion people worldwide (FIFA, 2010).

The huge interest for soccer in all the world can be seized by those numbers and gives rise to the study of this phenomenon under the management point-of-view. Two examples of subjects that have draw academic attention are the professionalization of soccer, which was discussed by researchers under different approaches (Van Uden, 2005; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2001; Bocketti, 2008; Daflon & Balve, 2004), and soccer governance (Marques & Costa, 2009; Walters & Chadwick, 2009; Van Oosterhout, 2007, Marques, 2005; Darby, 2003). Ferkins and Shilbury (2012) also discussed governance in sports in general terms. Another recurring theme in sports management is the Stakeholder Theory, addressed, among others, by Anagnostopoulos (2011), Cooper and Weighth (2009), Xing, Church, O'Reilly, Pegoraro, Nadeau, Schweinbenz, Heslop and Séguin (2008), and Covell (2004).

The Stakeholders Theory, which was developed on the seminal work by Freeman (1984), proposes that the decisions and operations of organizations should take into account the interests of various groups that affect or are affected by it. This idea suggests a conflict between the proposal of the Stakeholders Theory and the objective function of the Theory of the Firm, originated in Economics, which preaches profit maximization (Siqueira, 2012). In this sense, one may suppose that the adoption of the Stakeholders Theory in a non-profitable organization would be more natural than in an enterprise. Stakeholder management implies the identification and classification of the

stakeholders and creation of strategies for the proper management of these groups. Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) propose a classification of stakeholders through the analysis of their salience, according to the attributes power, urgency and legitimacy.

There are relatively common situations in Brazilian professional soccer in which people – or groups of people – who has some kind of relationship with a soccer club affect its performance and, in some cases, are also impacted by its actions. Examples of these situations are found in the Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras. Three of its soccer players, João Vitor (Globo Esporte, 2011), Wagner Love (R7, 2009) and Fernando Prass (Esportes Terra, 2013), and the coach, Vanderlei Luxemburgo (Estádio Esporte, 2008), were attacked by fans. During a game, the defender Maurício and the striker Obina had a hard discussion and were punished by the club's managers (Esporte UOL, 2009). The same team has lost some home-field advantage due to fights among supporters (Globo Esporte, 2013).

These facts, although relative to one team, suggest that some of the people with interests in soccer clubs consider that their demands are not met and also that the soccer clubs, apparently, do not have an appropriate stakeholder management. The lack of ability of the directors of clubs to manage their stakeholders may stem from many aspects, such as the intricacy to identify and classify them. Hence, the lack of clarity of managers to assess the importance – or, in other words, the salience – of their stakeholders may be a problem for the management of soccer clubs.

Understanding how managers currently identify and classify stakeholders of their teams is a necessary step for a further discussion of the management about their stakeholders. The present study sought to answer the research question: how managers of the Brazilian professional soccer clubs identify and classify their stakeholders in relation to their salience? In this study, we analyzed the identification and classification of stakeholders on the point of view of the managers of Brazilian soccer clubs, according to the model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997).

The discussion on the use of the Theory of Stakeholders may contribute, on the practical perspective, to the improvement of the relationship between clubs and stakeholders, and even help to understand violence in stadiums.

This article is structured into seven sections, including the introduction. The following is the theoretical reference framework, including the conceptual development with two propositions, the description of the method, the results, discussion, the conclusions and the references.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

The word stakeholder was used for the first time in 1963, in an internal memorandum of the Stanford Research Institute and was defined as “those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (Freeman, 1984, p. 31). According to Freeman (1984, p. 25), a stakeholder is “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the firm’s objectives”. Other researchers contributed with their visions of stakeholder concept, stating that stakeholders are individuals who “benefit from or are harmed by and whose rights are violated or

respected by corporate actions” (Evan & Freeman, 1988, p. 79).

Figure 1 displays a timeline with some of the stakeholders definitions contained in a chronological list elaborated by Mitchell et al. (1997). One may note that the core of these definitions did not change significantly since its inception and continues to consider, broadly speaking, a firm’s stakeholder as everyone that may have an impact on its performance or may be, in some way, affected by it. However, some authors refer to the stakeholders as those who have contracts with the company or participate in exchange relationships (Hill & Jones, 1992; Freeman & Evan, 1990; Cornell & Shapiro, 1987).

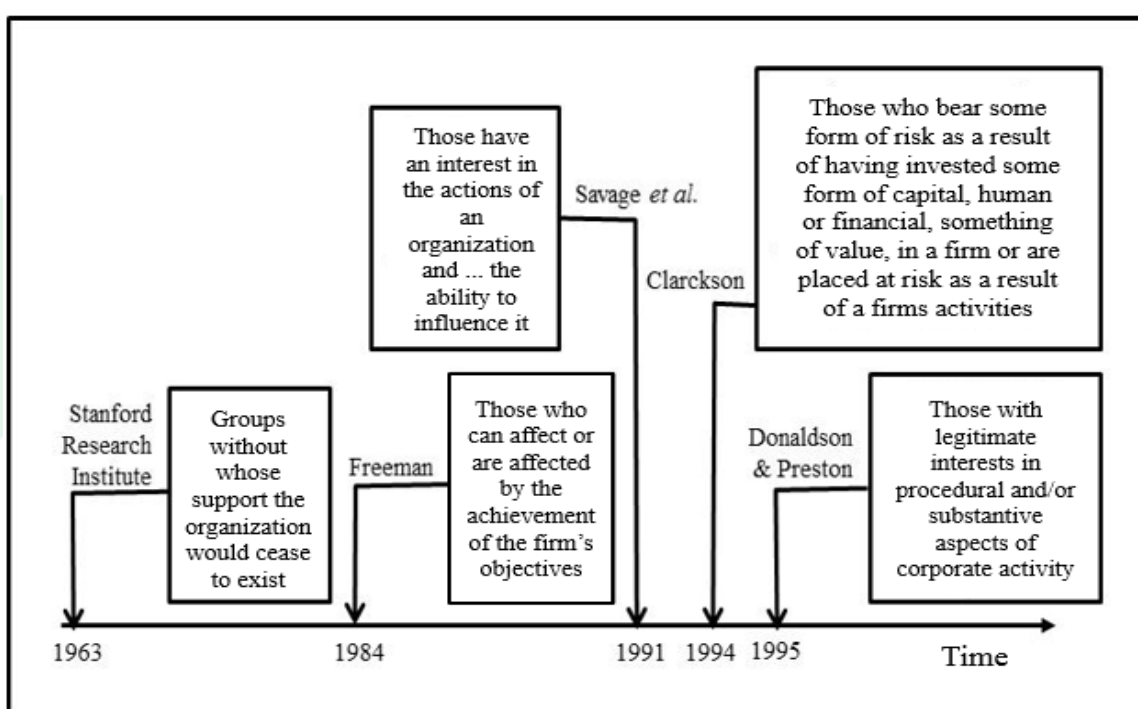


Figure 1 - Stakeholder definitions timeline. Adapted from Mitchell et al., 1997.

According to the Theory of Stakeholders, as proposed by Freeman (1984), managers should orientate their management processes externally, seeking to respond to the interests of their many stakeholders. This proposal implies major changes in the management of companies, as it suggests a change in the focus of the objective function - which, according to the Theory of the Firm, should be the maximization of profit - to a concern with the satisfaction of stakeholders (Siqueira, 2012). Since this conflict does not exist in non-profit organizations, the use of the Theory of Stakeholders to manage this type of organization seems to be more natural and defensible.

The international literature presents studies on the theme stakeholders applied to sports from

different approaches. Anagnostopoulos (2011) conducted the identification of key stakeholders of the Greek professional soccer clubs and ranked them according to the attributes of power, legitimacy and urgency used by Mitchell et al. (1997). Von Roenn, Zhang & Bennett. (2004) investigated the perception of stakeholders on unethical behavior in contemporary sport. Heinzen, Rossetto and Altoff (2013) conducted the identification and classification of stakeholders from a non-profit organization using the model proposed by Almeida, Fontes Filho and Martins (2000). Other studies analyzing the Theory of Stakeholders on related to sport management organizations are presented in Figure 2.

RESEARCHER (YEAR)	CONCEPT	PURPOSE
Anagnostopoulos (2011)	Identification and salience of stakeholders	To identify the stakeholders that should be the object of attention of football officials.
Von Roenn, Zhang & Bennett (2004)	Stakeholder and ethics	To assess how stakeholders perceive misconduct ethics in sport.
Wolfe (2000)	Stakeholder and ethics	To study the meeting of the expectations of stakeholders in the university sport in the US.
Covell (2004)	Stakeholder definition	To study the impact of the interests of stakeholders in college male ice hockey in the organization of the championships.
Parent (2008)	Descriptive approach to Stakeholder Theory	To analyze the performance of the organizing committee of the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg (Canada) and its relationship with stakeholders.
Cooper & Weight (2009)	Stakeholder definition	To assess the level of satisfaction of the stakeholders of the university wrestling in the US.

Figure 2 - Research on stakeholders and sport.

Adapted from Wolfe, 2000; Covell, 2004; Parent, 2008; Cooper & Weight, 2009.

The research and investigations on the topic stakeholders have grown considerably in recent years (Horneaux Junior, 2010) however this topic is still the subject of few studies in the field of soccer administration, particularly in the Brazilian context.

The strategic management of stakeholders starts with the understanding of the importance of specific stakeholders of firms. The first step in the management of the stakeholders is the identification and categorization (according to the interests) of these actors (Hourneaux Jr., 2010; Freeman, 1984). Different strategic directions can be analyzed depending on the level of mutual dependence

between the firm and its stakeholders (Frooman, 2002; Frooman, 1999).

The identification of the stakeholders of an organization can be made from generic lists of possible stakeholders available in the literature, such as the map of stakeholders proposed by Freeman (1984, p. 55), or brainstorming, to create an initial list of stakeholders and subsequent evaluation. In the latter case, three distinct groups of stakeholders should be considered, as displayed in Figure 3: the ones that influence the organization's inputs, the ones that influenced by the outputs of the organization and the organization's agents (Almeida et al., 2000).

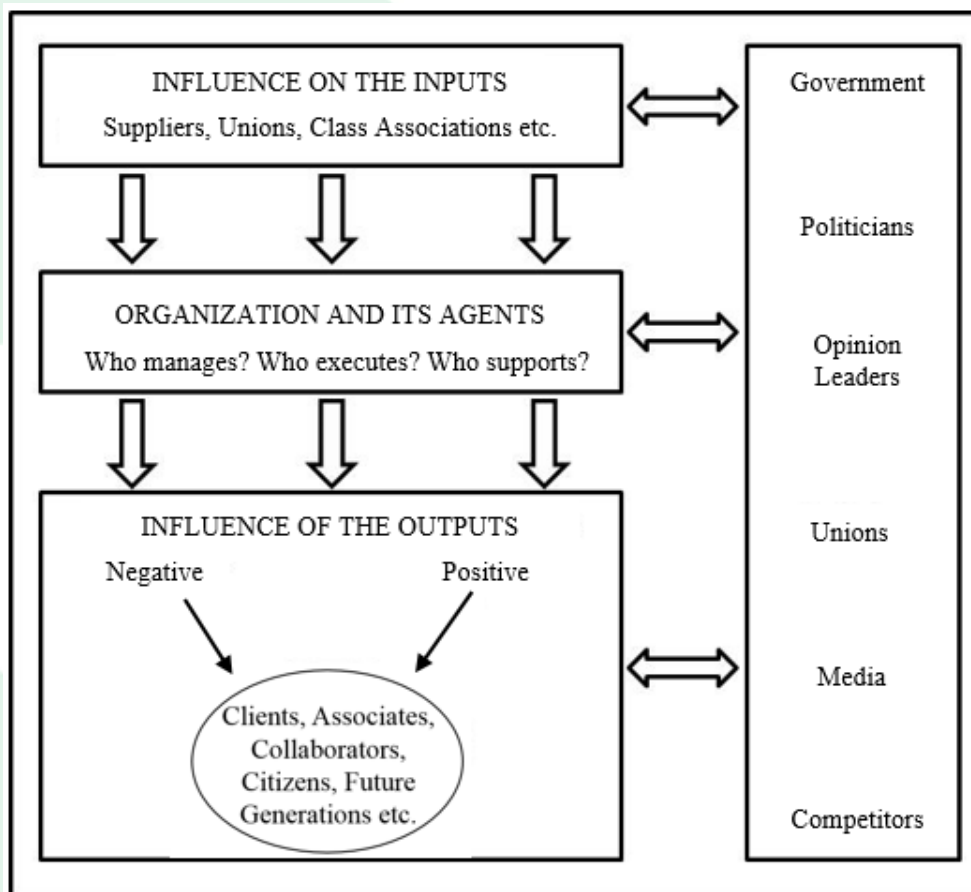


Figure 3 - Viewing of potentials *stakeholders*.
Adapted from Almeida et al. (2000).

The typology of stakeholders presented by Mitchell et al. (1997), which can be seen in Figure 4, classifies stakeholders according to the presence of the attributes power, legitimacy and urgency,

placing them in compartments created from the intersection of graphical representation of these attributes.

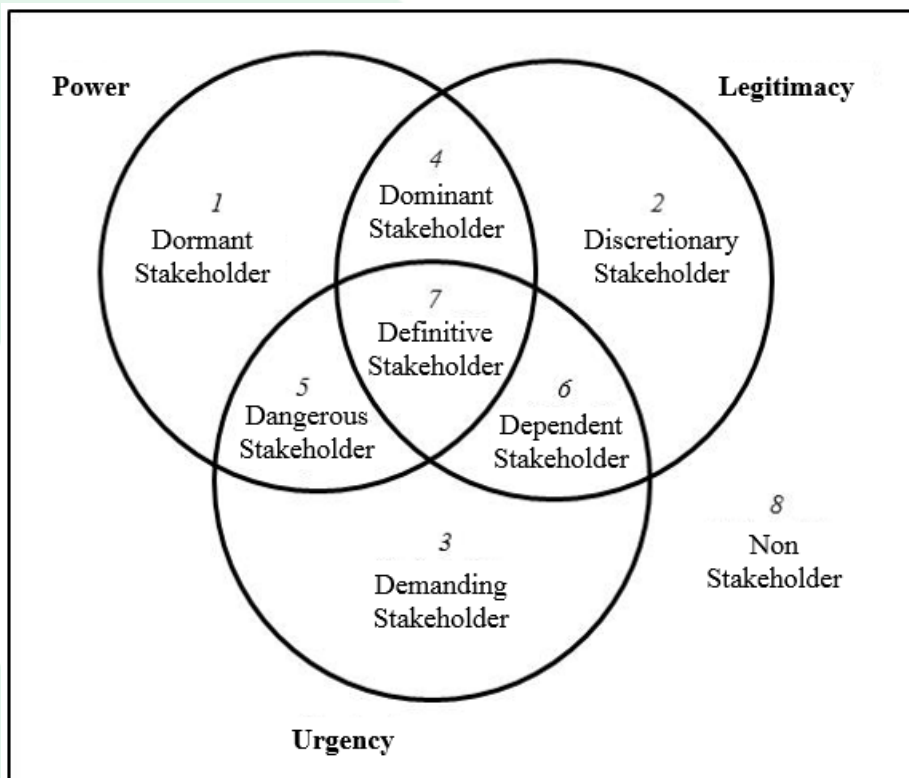


Figure 4 - Qualitative classes of stakeholders.
Adapted from Mitchell et al., 1997.

The combination of the three attributes generated seven types of stakeholders. Three of them have only one attribute (latent stakeholders); other three types of stakeholders have two attributes (expectant stakeholders), and one type has three attributes (definitive stakeholders). The individual, group or entity that does not have any of the attributes (insignificant stakeholder) is not considered a stakeholder of the organization (Mitchell et al., 1997).

The attributes power, legitimacy and urgency are constructs used by Mitchell et al. (1997) to analyze the salience of a stakeholder. For those researchers, the salience is “the degree to which managers give priority to competing stakeholder claims.” Accordingly, the salience of a stakeholder in relation to other stakeholders will be assessed by the amount of attributes that each one has.

Mitchell et al. (1997) say that “a party to a relationship has power, to the extent it has or can gain access to coercive, utilitarian, or normative means, to impose its will in the relationship.” As well, legitimacy is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some

socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman, 1995 cited by Mitchell et al., 1997). The same authors define urgency as “the degree to which stakeholder claims call for immediate attention.”

The comprehension of how managers of the professional soccer clubs perceive these attributes regarding its stakeholders contributes to the strategy area of knowledge in sports management. Although studies with propositions usually tend to be conceptual (Ferreira, 2013), this article is concerned with the identification and classification of stakeholders according to the perception of managers - that is the reference to the salience of stakeholders - and since the model adopted for this goal (Mitchell et al., 1997) is based on constructs, two propositions are made:

Proposition 1: The urgency perceived by managers in meeting the claims of a stakeholder is high when its legitimacy is high.

This proposition is based on the fact that the legitimacy, in soccer clubs, in many cases refers to rules regarding legal aspects and contracts, which if not met can have a negative impact - including from a legal point of view - in the management of the club, affecting the assessment of the managers.

Continuing the first proposition and in the same line of thoughts, that is the concern of managers with self-preservation, the second proposition is made:

Proposition 2: The most salient stakeholders for the managers are those with high legitimacy.

3 METHOD

The study referred to in this article may be understood as qualitative, as it seeks the understanding of a social phenomenon through the eyes and experiences of members of this segment (Merriam, 2002). A qualitative study "is based on small samples in order to provide insights and understanding of the problem" (Malhotra, 2006, p. 66). It is important to highlight, however, that some calculations have been carried out, without being sufficient to characterize the present study as quantitative.

This investigation is characterized as an exploratory study, what is, according to McDaniel and Gates (2003, p. 30), a preliminary research to define the exact nature of the problem to be solved. This kind of study is carried out when the researcher is seeking an understanding of the general nature of a problem (Aaker; Kumar & Day, 2004), and wants to obtain clarification of the environment in which the phenomenon is happening and what is the problem faced for the researcher (Malhotra, 2006, p. 98). In exploratory research, methods are very flexible, unstructured and qualitative (Aaker et al., 2004, p. 94.).

Exploratory studies generally use small-scale samples (Gates & McDaniel, 2003) and non-probabilistic procedures for creating the sample. In these studies, usually the research object is selected for convenience. "Qualitative samples tend to be more purposive than random [...] partly because the social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling of events or treatments usually reduces to uninterpretable sawdust" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 36). Although this kind of procedure is suitable for exploratory research, it also has limitations in the results in terms of risks and uncertainties (Oliveira, 2001), specifically, about the impossibility of generalization of the results.

In the present study, the sample was intentionally selected by the researchers, who chose a group of directors of a soccer club with features that could be considered compatible and, as much as possible, representative of the whole set of Brazilian professional soccer clubs. In this sense, Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras was chosen because its origin was in 1914 (and hence it is not a new

club, with new practices); it has participated in both the Series A and B of the Brazilian Championship (and experienced the environment of these two categories); it went through moments of success as well as failures; and mainly due to incidents with fans and players. So, that is possible to infer that there is a dissatisfaction situation or some kind of difficulty to manage their stakeholders.

Interviews were conducted in November, 2013 at the premises of the club, in its training center. Six directors were interviewed, namely: the President, a Vice-President, Executive Director and three members of the Board. All respondents have activities related to the soccer team and other sports played in the club, but only the Executive Director receives a salary for his work.

3.1 Instrument for data collection

The data used in this study were obtained in semi-structured interviews, supported by a script that was previously prepared according to the objectives of the research, but with flexibility to add other questions that could have arisen during the interviews. We also allowed respondents to make observations and suggestions. As stated by Thomas and Nelson (2002, p. 34), during the interview, "the researcher can rephrase questions and make a few more questions to clarify the answers and ensure more valid results." The identification of the stakeholders of the soccer club and their subsequent classification was based on the study by Mitchell et al. (1997) and its operationalization by Almeida et al. (2000).

3.2 Identification of potential stakeholders

We used interviews adapted from the script developed by Almeida et al. (2000), which enabled the identification of the stakeholders by asking general questions about their relationship with the soccer club. In sequence, each of the identified stakeholders was individually assessed by the managers, using a rating scale for the attributes power, legitimacy and urgency, proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997).

According to the perspective described above, and considering the three groups of potential stakeholders (influencers of inputs, the organization and those who suffer the impact of outputs) proposed by Almeida et al. (2000). and also in order to obtain the necessary comprehensiveness, the script of semi-structured interviews was composed of the following questions:

- a) What are, in your opinion, the groups, organizations, companies or individuals affected by the decisions made by the managers of Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras?
- b) What are, in your opinion, the groups, organizations, companies or individuals affected by the actions related to the operation / functioning of Palmeiras?
- c) What are, in your opinion, the groups, organizations, companies or individuals that affect / interfere in decisions made by the managers of Palmeiras?
- d) What are, in your opinion, the groups, organizations, companies or individuals that affect / interfere with the / in activities related to the operation / functioning of Palmeiras?

3.3 Classification of the stakeholders

In sequence, after the managers of the soccer clubs have identified the stakeholders, three instruments adapted from the work by Almeida et al. (2000) were used to collect data. Those instruments aimed to detect whether the actors previously identified effectively had stakeholders characteristics, and to classify the stakeholders according to the attributes power, legitimacy and urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997).

The instrument represented in Figure 5 was used for interviewed managers to assess the attribute power of their stakeholders, as proposed by Almeida et al. (2000). It is noteworthy that the respondents have direct relationship with the actors identified in the first part of the interview and that they occupy hierarchical and strategic position in their organizations and are responsible for major decisions, actions and activities.

Resources of Power								
Degrees of Power	Coercive means		Utility means				Symbolic means	Degree of Power
	Physical force X ₁	Weapons X ₂	Material or physical dependence X ₃	Financial dependence X ₄	Logistics dependence X ₅	Technological or intellectual dependence X ₆	Recognition or esteem X ₇	
Weight (Degree of sensitivity)	P ₁	P ₂	P ₃	P ₄	P ₅	P ₆	P ₇	
Actor 1: Degree of Power								GP ₁
Actor 2: Degree of Power								GP ₂
Actor n: Degree of Power								GP ₃

Figure 5 - Instrument to assess power.
Adapted from Almeida et al., 2000

The researchers asked the managers of the soccer clubs to indicate their perceptions of the sensitivity of the club in relation to the seven resources displayed in Figure 5. For this, they used a five-point scale, with one point being *awarded to the resource for which the club has no sensitivity* and five points for *the resource with the highest sensitivity*. The answers filled in the line *Weight* in Figure 5. Then the managers were asked to evaluate the actors identified in the first part of the interview, through the same five-point scale, according to their degree of domination and

capacity of manipulation of each resource, in order to fill in the lines *Actor n – Degree of Power* in Figure 5.

The degree of power of each stakeholder was then calculated by (1) taking the average of the values assigned by the managers to the resources, weighted by their respective weights (organization's sensitivity to each resource). In this expression, j is the number of the resource and i is the number of the stakeholder.

$$GP_i = \frac{\sum x_j p_j}{\sum p_j} \quad (1)$$

The legitimacy attribute is directly related to the perception of expectation to the actions of a social actor (Heinzen et al., 2013). So the more fair and appropriate are the demands of a stakeholder, the greater is its legitimacy in the relationship. For the evaluation of this attribute we applied the instrument

Actors	Desirability Levels		Total Degree of Legitimacy $GL = (L_0 + L_S) / 2$
	For organization L_0	For society L_S	
Actor 1			
Actor 2			
Actor n			

Figure 6 - Instrument for data collection of legitimacy attribute.
Adapted from Almeida et al., 2000

According to Martins et al. (1999), the legitimacy attribute should be evaluated considering two different perspectives: the organization's vision (micro-social legitimacy) and the vision of society (macro-social legitimacy). Each of the managers interviewed assessed the degree of legitimacy of the stakeholders identified in the previous step of the interview, using a five-point scale, with one point being awarded for action considered illegitimate or undesirable and five points to the highest level of desirability and legitimacy of the action.

for data collection suggested by Almeida et al. (1999), shown in Figure 6.

Finally, to evaluate the urgency attribute, which is related to the pressing need of the organization to pay attention to stakeholder, we used the data collection instrument suggested by Almeida et al. (2000), as shown in Figure 7. This evaluation considered the urgency of the actors according to two criteria: the temporal sensitivity (related to the acceptance or rejection of delay in meeting the demands) and the criticality (importance of the need of the stakeholder).

Actors	Urgency Criteria		Total Urgency Degree $GU = (S + C) / 2$
	Temporal Sensibility S	Criticality C	
Actor 1			
Actor 2			
Actor n			

Figure 7 - Instrument for data collection of the urgency attribute.
Adapted from Almeida et al., 2000

The respondents were asked to evaluate the degree of urgency of the stakeholders, according to the temporal sensitivity and criticality criteria, considering the same five-point scale. For the temporal sensitivity criterion, one point should be awarded to total tolerance of the stakeholder to any delays in responses generated by the organization and five points for maximum intolerance to any delays. The criticality criterion is

related to the importance that the organization should consider in meeting the demands of each of the stakeholders, once that failing to meet their deadlines could result in significant losses for the organization. In this case, the value one represents the actor that does not imply any loss to the club and five indicates the actor who can cause significant losses (Heinzen et al., 2013).

After the identification of the potential of the stakeholders, they were classified according to their importance in relation to the clubs and their power to pressure them. Based in this classification, this study used the model proposed by Almeida et al. (2000), in which the managers assessed the previously identified stakeholders according to their attributes power, legitimacy and urgency. This classification allowed classifying the stakeholders in the eight main categories proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997).

3.4 Categorization of the stakeholders

In order to categorize stakeholders of the club, the researchers analyzed the results obtained through the instruments for collecting data shown in Figures 5, 6 and 7. The scores obtained on the basis of the three investigated attributes, as described in item 3.3, resulted in degrees of power (GP), legitimacy (GL) and urgency (GU) of each of the actors, that were compared to the criticality constant k (Almeida et al., 2000).

The criticality constant k defines the point from which a stakeholder may be considered relevant for organization, in relation to the

measured attribute, and is calculated, in accordance with Almeida et al. (2000):

[...] from the function of the mean and the standard deviation of the data sets related to the ratings of power, urgency and legitimacy. For example, the constant k could be defined as $k = \mu + \sigma$, where μ = the overall average data and $\sigma = (\sigma GP + \sigma GL + \sigma GU) / 3$, ie, the arithmetic mean of the standard deviations of the three sets of measurements.

Thus, a stakeholder that gets degrees of power, legitimacy and urgency higher than the constant k , is considered a definitive stakeholder. Stakeholders that get higher scores, higher than k , in two of the three attributes are considered expectant stakeholders. Finally, the stakeholder that gets scores higher than k in only one attribute is considered a latent stakeholder. A stakeholder that gets PG, GL and GU below the value of constant k may not be considered stakeholder of the organization (Almeida et al., 2000). Figure 8 shows the relationships between the combinations of the degrees of attributes with the types of stakeholders.

$GP \geq k; GL < k; GU < k$	Dormant
$GP < k; GL \geq k; GU < k$	Discretionary
$GP < k; GL < k; GU \geq k$	Demanding
$GP \geq k; GL \geq k; GU < k$	Dominant
$GP \geq k; GL < k; GU \geq k$	Dangerous
$GP < k; GL \geq k; GU \geq k$	Dependent
$GP \geq k; GU \geq k; GL \geq k$	Definitive
$GP < k; GU < k; GL < k$	Non stakeholder

Figure 8 - Attributes and types of stakeholders.

Source: Almeida et al., 2000.

4 RESULTS

The first stage of the field research led to the identification of the stakeholders on the point of view of the managers, considering their interrelations with the club. For the purposes of this study only the actors (potential stakeholders) cited by at least two respondents were considered in the

analysis, being disregarded those cited by only one respondent. Figure 9 shows all 18 stakeholders identified by at least two managers, including those who influence the club inputs, the ones that are affected by club outputs, as well as those with direct involvement in the operation and functioning of the club (named *agents* in this study) (Almeida et al., 2000).

Actors	Influencers of Inputs	Affected by Outputs	Agents
Members of the Club	X	X	
Employees			X
Surrounding Community	X	X	
Fans	X	X	
Organized fans	X	X	
Sponsors / Partners	X	X	
Athletes			X
Suppliers	X	X	
Media	X	X	
Club Powers (branches)			X
Political Groups			X
Public Power	X	X	
Club member-fan	X	X	
Internal Boards of the Club			X
Sports Entities	X	X	
Arena Partner	X	X	X
Press	X	X	

Figure 9 - Roles of the potential club stakeholders.

Source: Data obtained in field research.

It is important to highlight that in Figure 9 the term *press* is used for vehicles of information with journalistic content and *media* is used in a broader way, for example in case of firms involved in transmission of games, brand promotion and publicity. *Sponsor* is someone who provides resources to the club in the form of cash, *partners* are those who also provide resources that are not cash and *suppliers* are those paid to provide something, like sporting goods, food and transportation. The *arena partner* is a construction company with a special partnership with the club for the construction of a new stadium; the *powers (or branches) of the club* are the structures listed in the statute of the club (The Deliberative Council - CD, the Council of Guidance and Inspection - COF, and the president and his deputies). *Political groups* are groups that are organized independently of the official structure of club management in order to support or be an opposition to them. Generally, these groups try to run for president in club elections and indicate candidates in the elections of the board.

In the second stage of the interviews in our study, on the vision of the club managers, we aimed to classify the previously identified actors, according to their capacity to push up the decisions of the club. For this, each potential stakeholder was assessed on attributes related to power over the actions of the club, the legitimacy of their demands in the perception of the club and society, and the urgency in serving their interests under the temporal aspects and criticality.

As suggested by Almeida et al. (2000), the classification of the actors was carried out by calculating their degrees of power (GP), legitimacy (GL) and urgency (GU), as detailed in section 3.3, and by comparing them to the criticality coefficient (k) from the statistical analysis of the total data collected in this study. The attributes were considered relevant when their score was greater than or equal to the value of the coefficient of criticality k (3.8). The result of this analysis is presented in Figure 10.

Stakeholders	Atributes				Type of Stakeholder
	Degree of Power (GP)	Degree of Legitimacy (GL)	Degree of Urgency (GU)	Saliency	
Members of the Club	2,7	3,8	4,3	10,8	Dependent
Employees	2,3	3,6	3,5	9,4	Irrelevant
Surrounding Community	2,2	3,0	2,3	7,5	Irrelevant
Fans	2,6	3,4	3,4	9,4	Irrelevant
Organized fans	1,9	1,6	2,5	6,0	Irrelevant
Sponsors	2,8	3,5	3,8	10,1	Demanding
Partners	2,8	3,7	4,2	10,7	Demanding
Athletes	2,8	3,9	4,4	11,1	Dependent
Suppliers	2,8	3,5	3,5	9,8	Irrelevant
Media	3,1	3,9	4,3	11,3	Dependent
Club Powers	2,4	3,0	3,4	8,8	Irrelevant
Political Groups	1,9	2,1	2,6	6,6	Irrelevant
Public Power	2,2	2,8	3,0	8,0	Irrelevant
Club member - fan	2,8	3,3	2,7	8,8	Irrelevant
Internal Boards of the Club	2,9	3,0	3,5	9,4	Irrelevant
Sports Entities	2,5	2,8	3,6	8,9	Irrelevant
Arena Partner	2,9	3,3	4,0	10,2	Demanding
Press	1,4	2,0	2,3	5,7	Irrelevant
Standard Deviation of the attributes (σ)	0,6	0,8	1,0		
MDP – Attributes Average Standard Deviation ($\sigma GP + \sigma GL + \sigma GU$)/3					0,8
MGA – Attributes Average					3,0
k – Point of criticality (MDP + MGA)					3,8
Saliency = GP + GL + GU					

Figure 10 - Classification of club stakeholders according to their GP, GL e GU.

Adapted from Heinzen et al. (2013), with data obtained in the field research.

The identification work resulted in six stakeholder groups perceived as relevant by the managers of the organization studied. According to the model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997), shown in Figure 4, the two resulting types (demanding and dependent) are located in the latent and expectant stakeholders groups, respectively. Three of them were classified as demanding (sponsors, partners and the current partner for the construction of the new stadium - arena) because they have scores higher than the critical factor only in the degree of urgency. According to Mitchell et al. (1997), a demanding stakeholder requires little attention by the organization's managers since there is no legitimacy nor power to effectively transform their claims in a situation that requires attention from managers. They represent [...] "mosquitoes buzzing in the ears of the managers: irksome, but not dangerous" (Mitchell et al., 1997). The Arena

Partner appears due to the relationship that they started during the construction of the new stadium. This relationship is expected to last for 30 years, according to the managers.

Other three groups of stakeholders identified in the research were classified as dependents (members, athletes and the media), as they had scores higher than k in the legitimacy and urgency degrees. Dependent stakeholders, according to Mitchell et al. (1997), have low level of power, however, their claims are perceived as legitimate by the organization as well as by society and are considered urgent, in temporal aspects and criticality.

The remaining potential stakeholders were classified as irrelevant, since their demands related to each of the investigated attributes presented scores below the criticality coefficient k. These results show low levels of inter-relations between

the club and such stakeholders, being impossible to affirm, according to the model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997), that such groups are organization's stakeholders

Regarding the two propositions made, it was found that managers see all the stakeholders that have legitimacy ($GL \geq 3.8$) as deserving urgent attention ($GU \geq 3.8$), which is consistent with the proposition 1. The interviews with the managers have also shown that stakeholders with legitimacy ($GL \geq 3.8$) have the highest of values of salience, which is a result aligned with the proposition 2.

5 DISCUSSION

The fact that the respondents did not give higher scores to the attribute *power* of the stakeholder allows some considerations. First, this result might be attributed to the characteristic of the attribute, which puts the actors in an influential position on the club inputs and imply an eventual and / or partial dependence of the club to the demands of those actors. Such situations, that expose weaknesses of respondents, could show different results with research approaches that use indirect questions in interviews, and therefore are a limitation of this study and that may be explored in future works.

One may also consider that, according to the analysis of the responses in confrontation with the two propositions, the leaders are more concerned over the legal and contractual aspects - which probably are the ones that first come to mind when talking about *legitimacy* - and less on strategic issues relating to the *power* attribute and operation, relating to *urgency*. Thus, the stakeholders seen as the most salient would be the ones linked to the club by legal and contractual relationships and have legal conditions to be heard if they do not feel satisfied.

The research contributes to the Theory of Stakeholders providing empirical evidence of its use in an area that has not received many studies, which is the sport and, in particular, the sports clubs geared to soccer practice. In addition, the study collected information that may be of interest to researchers in the field, which is the fact that the managers see fans in general and organized fans as irrelevant stakeholders. If this perception also occurs in other clubs and types of organizations, a possible object of research would be a shortsightedness of the managers and their consequent difficulty to manage their stakeholders.

As collaboration with practice, it can be noted that the application of the Theory of Stakeholders in the management of associative

clubs may be appropriate due to the characteristics of these organizations, which are not tied to profit and have several groups whose demands must be considered. For this purpose, the use of the model for identification and classification of stakeholders proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997), and operated as proposed by Almeida et al. (2000), is an initial step forward to the formulation of strategies.

This work also contributes to the management of professional soccer clubs mapping and to the classification of the main actors that relate to sports clubs. While there is no possibility of generalization, the information obtained can be used as a starting point for more comprehensive studies and to generate insights for managers of other clubs. Future studies may extend the investigation to other clubs and organizations of the sport and seek the perception of other actors, besides the managers.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the present study, the model for identification and classification of stakeholders proposed by Almeida et al. (2000) was used to find out how managers of Brazilian professional soccer clubs identify and classify their stakeholders. Based on the proposal of Mitchell et al. (1997), the researchers considered the constructs of power, legitimacy and urgency to assess the relevance - or salience - of the stakeholders identified in a field survey conducted with managers of the soccer club Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras.

The research question was "how managers of the Brazilian professional soccer clubs identify their stakeholders and classify them in relation to their salience?" The first part of the answer of this question can be found in Figure 9, which contains the list of stakeholders that were spontaneously mentioned by at least two of the respondents. The second part of the question, according to the vision of the managers, two groups of stakeholders, the latent ones, corresponds to those classified as dependent (ie, associates, athletes and media) and expectant, concerning those that were termed as demanding (partners, including responsible for the new stadium, and sponsors). Other stakeholders were classified as irrelevant, including the fans and cheerleaders, a fact itself that might serve as a starting point for studies which aim at understanding the conflicts between these groups and the club.

Stakeholders classified as dependents, although having little power, tend to have their

claims perceived as legitimate by the organization and be considered urgent, in terms of time and criticality. A demanding stakeholder requires little attention of the organization's managers since there is neither legitimacy nor power to call for the attention of the managers (Mitchell et al., 1997).

Regarding the two propositions made, the results indicated that, on the point of view of the managers, the urgency perceived by managers in meeting the claims of a stakeholder will be high when his legitimacy is high and that the most salient stakeholders have high legitimacy. This indicates that in the specific case of these managers of the soccer club studied, the trend is the acceptance of the two propositions.

The analysis of the roles played by potential stakeholders showed that those who influence the club inputs are also perceived by the managers as being influenced by its outputs. This fact suggests that the managers recognize the interdependence of the activities of the club and its stakeholders. This finding is consistent with the proposal of the Theory of Stakeholders on the challenge of establishing strategies for management of the relationship between organizations and their stakeholders (Freeman, 1984).

The fact that the stakeholders perceived as legitimate are also seen as associated with the urgency attribute, may be attributed, in the case of sponsors and partners, to financial matters and contractual requirements, and in relation to current partner for the construction of the new stadium, to contractual agreements and the proportion of the partnership object.

Stakeholders classified as dependents have their demands recognized as legitimate and require urgency in their attendance (Mitchel et al., 1997). Therefore, it is reasonable that this group contains the members of the club, for they support to the social area of the club, the soccer players, who are the key actors of the main operation of the club, and the media, which promotes actions of the professional soccer team and generates revenues by broadcasting the games.

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