

# The Brazilian foreign policy of the Lula da Silva government (2003-2010) in the pages of CartaCapital and Veja: a comparative study<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

The article compares the treatment of Brazilian Foreign Policy (PEB) in *Veja* and *CartaCapital* during two presidential terms of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010). Five thematic groups related to PEB were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively in order to contribute to the study of media and foreign policy in Brazil. Thus, in line with the Foreign Policy Analysis (APE) approaches and considering the mutual influence between media, public opinion and political processes, the role of the media as a political actor was emphasized. The difference in the treatment of the topic in the two weekly newspapers was demonstrated, while testing the hypothesis that the explicit divergence of editorial lines would result in contrasts in the coverage of the subject.

**Keywords:** Brazilian Foreign Policy. Media. *Veja*. *CartaCapital*. Lula da Silva Government.

## Introduction

“Diplomacy without results”. This is how *Veja* magazine described, in 2009, Lula da Silva’s Foreign Policy. *CartaCapital*, in the same year, published that “Lula’s business missions abroad yield good business.” A divergence in the reports of these two relevant Brazilian magazines in that period was thus evidenced. This discrepancy animated this study, which will analyze the journalistic coverage in the pages of *Veja* and *CartaCapital* of Brazilian Foreign Policy (BFP) during Lula da Silva’s two terms in office (2003-2010).

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While at the beginning of the 20th century the media was despised by policy makers, who understood that diplomacy was incomprehensible to ‘ordinary people’, it has gradually come to be valued in the political process. Herman and Chomsky argue that ‘mass communication’ serves to “amuse, entertain, inform and inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs and codes of behavior that integrate them into the institutional structures of the wider society” (HERMAN; CHOMSKY, 2002, p. 1). Nogueira, in turn, argues that “the mass media can be understood as important social agents involved in processes of collective cognitive constructions, since they broadcast interested speeches on a large scale” (NOGUEIRA, 2012, p. 118). Therefore, mastering the means of transmitting information continues to be a relevant factor in the acquisition and legitimation of power (KEOHANE; NYE, 1977).

With the growing process of easing the traditional borders between States, it is easier to access information and exchange ideas between different nationalities. For Lessa and Gavião (2001), this communication phenomenon provides more intense access to international issues, a fact that may have repercussions for countries’ foreign policy. In this sense, Robinson (2008) contends that the relationship between public opinion and foreign policy becomes crucial when observing the centrality of the various media in the production, transmission, and acquisition of information in all areas of human activity. However, more detailed studies on the relationship between the media and foreign policy are still scarce, especially in Brazil, as shown by the limited literature on the subject and the lack of data available to support more in-depth research.

To contribute to the consolidation of studies on media and foreign policy, the present work analyzes the coverage of the BFP in the governments of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) in two weekly newspapers in Brazil. A qualitative and quantitative approach to the treatment of BFP is adopted in examining the pages of CartaCapital and Veja. Considering the express editorial divergence of the two publications, it is established as an initial hypothesis that there likely exists notable distinctions in the qualitative presentation of the theme in each paper, with a greater negative bias expected in *Veja* than in *CartaCapital*. Therefore, the aim of this work is to demonstrate quantitatively and qualitatively the editorial bias expressed in these publications.

It should be noted that this study does not intend to demonstrate the influence of the aforementioned Brazilian magazines on the formulation of BFP, since establishing such causality would be beyond the scope of this study. In fact, until now, there is no agreement on how to quantify the influence of or the relationship between public opinion and the media, as an immaterial actor, in the formulation in State policies such as foreign policy<sup>2</sup>. However, in view of the debate regarding the mutual dependence between media, public opinion, and political processes, it can be indicated that such a variable could not be overlooked in the government’s decision-making process<sup>3</sup>. This article, in addition to the introduction and

2 For in-depth on such mutual influence, see: Robinson (2001), Naveh (2002), Hill (2003), Soroka (2003) e Robinson (2008).

3 For more details on the debate, see: Baum e Potter (2008, 2019).

conclusion, comprises three brief parts and a more extensive one to convey the relevant data. The first section will present the theoretical debate on the interconnection among public opinion, media, and foreign policy within the area of International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). It will also explain the methodological guidelines of the research. The second part will describe the communication structure in Brazil and the third will contextualize the two magazines within the Brazilian written press perspective. Finally, the fourth section, deliberately more extensive, is reserved to discuss the data through a quantitative and qualitative comparison of the treatment of Foreign Policy in the pages of the two Brazilian magazines. It will highlight four major themes: 1) the main themes of the reports; 2) thematic segmentation of articles; 3) publication bias; and 4) the presidential figure.

The final considerations will provide the confirmation or refutation of the main hypothesis of the work, as well as for the systematization of the data found during the investigation.

## **Theory and methodology**

Despite the importance of the media and public opinion as analytical variables, there is still no consensus on the influence of such variables on countries' foreign policy (HILL, 2003, ROBINSON, 2008, MARIANUCCI, 2009, NOGUEIRA, 2012). However, there is a consensus regarding the consideration of the media as participants in the social process of producing and transmitting information. The Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) subfield will make a major analytical contribution to such a debate by focusing part of its concerns on understanding the decision-making process. Thus, the dynamics between the media and public opinion are raised in a growing literature that analyzes the impact of corporate groups on the decision-making process of foreign policy (HUDSON, 2005). Thus, as the media is enmeshed in the socioeconomic structure, such means should not be considered neutral or disinterested in their action (HALLIN, 1986, HERMAN; CHOMSKY, 1988).

Burity (2013) argues that, despite the debate about the separation of the media and the State, the State has shown that it wants to instrumentalize the use of such means to achieve its objectives. Thus, there is a complex game being played in the relationship between the State and the media at both the domestic and international levels. Coinciding with this thought, Hill notes that "in the age of television, the media seem to be kings. They seem to be the key to influencing public opinion, and they have the ear and the eye of the government" (HILL, 2003, p. 73).

In this sense, one can consider the importance of the media as an actor in the political game, as they have influenced over public opinion and a close relationship with the government. One may conclude that, in this process, the media takes the role of information gatekeeper. According to Naveh (2002), the media not only transmits information, in an input system (before decisions), but is also part of the output system. Thus, the media is a component of the decision-making process, acting as an information channel and influencing

the formulation of policies. However, Cohen (1967) contradicts this notion in the US context, demonstrating that the space reserved for foreign policy news in the US press at the time of his research was limited.

In Brazil, the discussion on this theme is still incipient due to the relatively late start of such approaches in the Brazilian academy and the consequent lack of data collection that can provide an analytical basis for the subject. Research to date typically focuses its analysis on the importance of the media and its effects on society.

The present work, in addition to analyzing the media in general in Brazil, has as its main objective the demonstration of the editorial approach of two Brazilian weekly magazines with regard to BFP during Lula da Silva's terms (2003-2010). In this sense, a systematic reading of the articles published between 2003 and 2010 in *Veja* and *CartaCapital* that have BFP as a theme was carried out. To determine the scope of the theme to be analyzed, in addition to the terms 'Foreign Policy' and 'Brazilian Foreign Policy', related terms such as 'International Policy', 'Foreign Trade', 'International Negotiation', and related subjects that explained the link with BFP were also incorporated. After the selection, collection, and systematic reading of the data (to be detailed in the fourth section), quantitative and qualitative analyses were performed to identify divergences and convergences with the aforementioned main hypotheses of this paper.

## **Brazilian Press**

Radenovic (2006) suggests that the media became popular in the 20th century due to technological advances and evolution of the means for the transmission of information that allow it to reach unprecedented numbers of people. Initially, the media were considered uniform and unbiased transmitters of information that, despite differences in diversity and range, delivered the same information to everyone. Then, with 'mass media', people would be able to 'choose' the content to which they would like to have access (SHAW, 1979).

Since the 1970s, mass communication in the USA has changed and begun to take the form of conglomerates due to major mergers (BURITY, 2013, p. 169). Despite its particularities, Brazil has experienced a similar situation, whereby conglomerates concentrate the production and transmission of information. Between the last years of the military government (1964-1985) and the initial period of re-democratization (end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s) there were debates about the role of the media and its influence on public policies. The Brazilian Constitution was sanctioned in 1988 (CF88) and the new democratic conjuncture led to a growing participation of civil society in political matters. These ongoing structural changes, together with the constant technological advancement and evolution, fueled the media issue debate at the end of the 20th century. Regarding the theme under analysis, it would be "fair to assume that the 1990s represented a major change in the relationship between mass media, public opinion, and foreign policy" (CASARÕES, 2012, p. 212).

Analyzing the general characteristics of the media market in Brazil, one can perceive certain specificities. The first to be noted is the late appearance of the communication industry in Brazil. The first newspaper printed in Brazil was the *Gazeta do Rio de Janeiro* in 1808; the written press in Brazil only gained a commercial structure late in the 19th century. It was in this period that the great national newspapers gave rise to the so-called Rio-São Paulo axis “great press” (SODRÉ, 1999).

Since 1930, Brazil has seen a steadfast expansion of its means of communication. Two facts should be highlighted: the foundation of *Diários Associados* (Associated Diaries) in the 1920s (a group that reached its peak in the late 1950s) and of *Rede Globo* after the 1964 military coup (MIGUEL, 2000, p. 195). However, the mass market was only established through the arrival of television in the 1950s and the expansion of both radio and TV on national networks in the 1970s. Then, in the 1980s, the Brazilian media system consolidated itself as a mass industry, with television as the central means of communication for entertainment and information. In this process, monopolies of large families were formed, controlling the main communication vehicles in the country. Currently, a few family groups run the radio and TV sectors in Brazil. The most prominent are the *Marinhos* (Globo group), the *Saads* (Bandeirantes), the *Abravanel* (SBT), the *Civitas* (April to 2018 group), the *Mesquitas* (O Estado de S. Paulo group), and the *Frias* (Grupo Folha de S.Paulo) (AZEVEDO, 2006).

However, it is important to recognize that political issues are not a priority for the Brazilian audience: this topic ranks in 35th place among the types of most-watched programs in Brazil (AZEVEDO, 2006). This scenario directly influences the repertoire of the Brazilian mass media system, which is characterized by low external diversity and little heterogeneity of information and opinion. Thus, Brazilian citizens are under-exposed to distinct and conflicting political perspectives. These features have intertwined political interests and the communication system in Brazil (AZEVEDO, 2006).

Having outlined the structure of the communication industry and market in Brazil, we will now situate *Veja* and *CartaCapital* within that context.

## **Veja and CartaCapital in the Brazilian media context**

According to Azevedo (2006), the target audience of the main Brazilian print media is concentrated in classes A and B, due to the capacity of these social strata to form opinions<sup>4</sup>. To reach their targets, such publications adopt a specific language, prioritizing political and economic opinion coverage along with ‘information journalism’.

(...) [These publications] compensate the low penetration in the popular strata with great capacity to produce agendas, format issues and influence perceptions and behavior both in the political-governmental sphere and in the public in

<sup>4</sup> For studies on newspapers that focus on class C, see: De Figueiredo (2010) e Paula (2012).

general, the latter through opinion leaders or through the repercussion of the newspaper's agenda on open television (AZEVEDO, 2006, p. 8).

In this sense, CartaCapital and Veja are a representative sample of the media context in which the country's newspapers are situated. Veja was launched in 1968 under the responsibility of Editora Abril. Vitor Civita, Roberto Civita, and Mino Carta were part of the editorial direction and initial publication. From the 1970s onwards, Veja magazine consolidated its presentation and the sections became standard in all subsequent editions. One section is titled 'International' which, as the title makes clear, deals with the international affairs of the week, usually involving the theme of foreign policy, although the topic can also be found in the sections dealing with the government or the economy. There are also sections on humor, interviews, and editorials. Veja's reading public is mostly middle and upper classes (B and A) (VELASQUEZ; KUSHNIR, 2018). Most of its readers are male (about 51%) and their profile—according to the magazine itself—is of businessmen, entrepreneurs, representatives of public bodies, and opinion makers (VEJA MÍDIA KIT, 2018).

CartaCapital Magazine was created in 1994 by Mino Carta, Bob Fernandes, Nelson Letaif, and Wagner Careci. Initially, it was a monthly magazine. After some time, it became a biweekly and finally, a weekly publication. Its focus was initially on economic issues. Nevertheless, with the development of the magazine, political issues also became part of its coverage. It is important to report that the Editorial Council of CartaCapital declared support for Lula da Silva in the presidential elections of 2002, causing an intense debate regarding the ideological exemption of the media (POPINIGIS, 2018).

CartaCapital is divided into sections; the foreign policy theme is found in 'Our World'. Unlike Veja, foreign policy news is found exclusively in this section, inserted as an integral part of the magazine in the early years of the Lula da Silva government. Previously, such content could be found in the 'Economy' or 'Your Country' sections. Most of the readers of CartaCapital are also male (about 54%), over 35 years old, and have completed higher education. As with Veja, the majority of the readers are concentrated in classes A and B (about 88%) (CARTACAPITAL MIDIA KIT, 2018, 2016).

Having positioned the two-weekly magazine within the Brazilian media market, we will now present and analyze the data collected from their pages.

## **Data presentation and analysis**

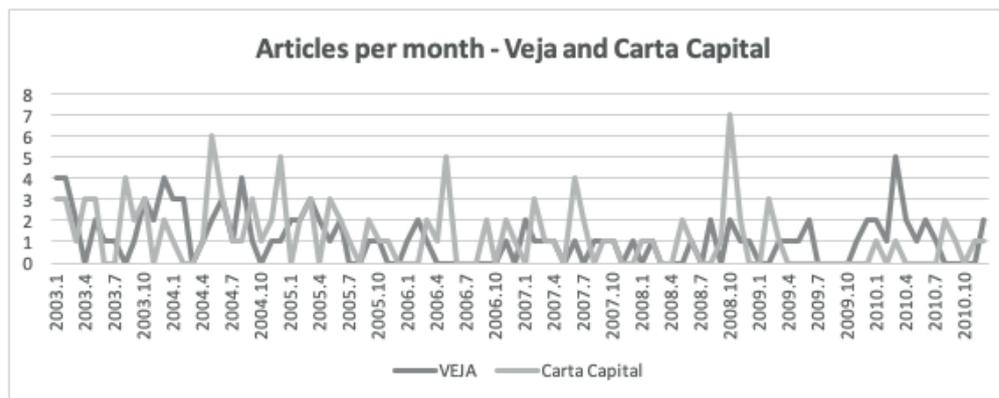
This section is reserved for the presentation of the data collected in Veja and CartaCapital editions from 2003 to 2010 (the first and second terms of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva). In total, 414 issues of Veja and 406 of CartaCapital were published (excluding special monothematic editions). From this compilation of 820 editions, articles and reports explicitly related to Brazil's foreign policy and international relations (including international economic themes, performance in international forums, and Brazilian diplomatic issues)

were selected through systematic reading. Using this selection bias, 105 articles were found in *Veja* and 115 in *CartaCapital*, making a total of 220 articles analyzed.

*Veja* had the highest number of publications in the years 2003, 2005, and 2010. The lowest incidence of publications occurred between mid-2005 and the end of 2009. This fact was due to the editorial decision of *Veja* to emphasize domestic corruption scandals (from 2005, there were ‘mensalão’, mensalão 2’, ‘máfia dos sanguessugas’, ‘máfia dos juízes’, and cases of anti-corruption operations).

In *CartaCapital*, the period of greatest publication intensity on the topic occurred in the first three years of the government (highlighting the interval between mid 2004 to mid 2005). In the last years of the government, mainly from March 2009 until December 2010, there was a decrease—and even absence—of publications, accounting for only eight articles during this period. Thus, there was a contrast between the high number of publications in the initial years of the government and the inconstant numbers of the final years. This fact is probably explained, as in the case of *Veja*, by the Brazilian domestic situation. However, there is a difference between the two magazines: *CartaCapital* reserved some editions to almost exclusive discussion of BFP. *Veja*, despite having some editions with special sessions on the theme, did not present the same volume and emphasis as *CartaCapital* in its approach and analysis of the formulation of BFP. This is why there are peaks in the number of articles published by *CartaCapital*, as shown in Graph 1.

**Graph 1** – Articles per month in *Veja* and *CartaCapital* magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

## The main topics of the news

### Veja

In 2003, *Veja* addressed topics such as: the appointment and performance of diplomats; the bilateral relationship between Brazil and Venezuela (negatively emphasizing

President Lula da Silva's friendship with Hugo Chávez); Lula's trips to international forums and meetings of world leaders (also with a negative tone); on Brazil's position on guerrillas in Latin America; paradiplomacy and the fact that some Brazilian cities are emerging in the world economy independently; the Brazilian and Brazilian intellectual elite's relationship with Cuba; Lula's 'failure' in Europe; the 'weak' performance at an FTAA meeting; the mistake of 'praising the dictatorship' at a UN meeting; and Lula da Silva's travels to Asia. It should be noted that all subjects treated have a negative bias.

In 2004, issues such as migration; diplomatic visa crises; embarrassing behaviors of diplomats; questionable decisions by the Foreign Ministry; and 'rhetorical' speeches by the president were very common. Lula da Silva's international visits and his friendship with 'dictators' were reported in an ironic and scolding tone.

In 2005, the first half of the year saw an increase in the number of reports on foreign policy. The subjects were practically the same as in 2004: the behavior of the diplomats and actions of the Itamaraty; the possible relationship of the PT with the FARC; problems with Argentina; and the role of Brazil in the UN in search of a permanent seat in the Security Council. This trend continued until 2009.

Finally, in 2010, in addition to emphasizing Brazil's relationship with Haiti (due to the earthquake) and Hillary Clinton's visit to the country, the reports still call attention to Lula da Silva's 'friendship' with 'dictators' and or 'communists', such as Hugo Chávez, and Raul and Fidel Castro. Lula da Silva's international travels and the opening of embassies and consulates in different countries continue to stand out in a negative way.

## **CartaCapital**

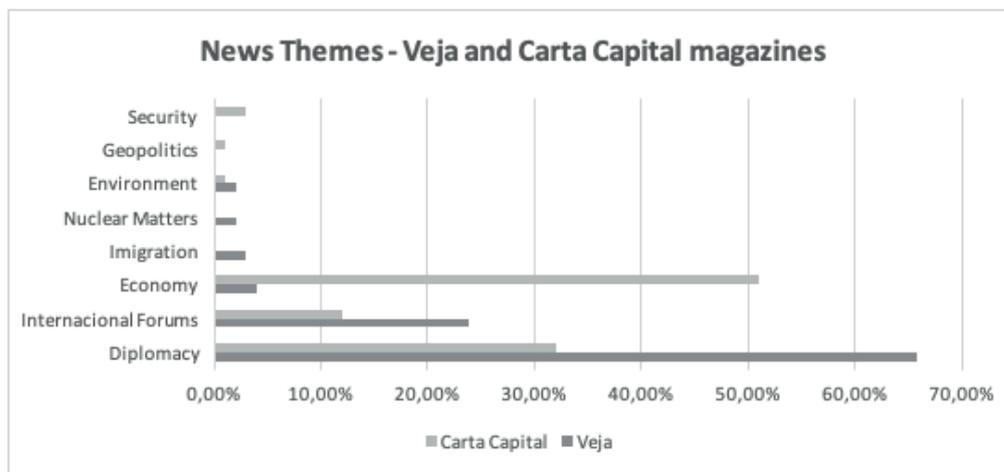
The articles in CartaCapital magazine, in 2003, mostly focus on the new form of presidential action; changes in the relationship with the USA; the 'good' presidential performance vis-à-vis Latin American countries (focus on the leadership role Brazilian diplomacy and meetings with the Venezuelan leader); and the role of Brazilian diplomacy in international forums (Davos, IMF, Mercosur, and FTAA). The most reported relations in the early years of the Lula da Silva mandate are those referring to the USA, China, and Venezuela (relations and trade agreements with the former two and diplomatic relations with the latter).

In other years, the subjects covered in the reports were similar to those of the 2003 reports, with additions made according to current affairs: events referring to the bilateral Brazil-USA relationship; relations with countries in the East (growth of trade relations with China); performance of Brazilian diplomacy (highlighting the role of the former president in international forums such as the UN, OAS, and the IMF). In addition, there is an emphasis on the relationship with Venezuela, emerging countries, and the formation of the BRICS.

## Comparison

In comparing the data (Graph 2), it is evident that *Veja* published more on diplomacy, often citing the actions of diplomats, the Foreign Ministry and, mainly, the ex-president and his travels (representing 65.7% of the total reports on BFP during the eight years of Lula's government). The second prominent issue was about Brazilian performance in international forums (representing 23.8% of the total *Veja* reports). On the contrary, the main theme in the *CartaCapital* magazine reports was about economics (about 51.3% of the total of the magazine's reports during the eight years) and the second major theme was diplomacy (32.7% of the total news). A difference in the focus of the reports is thus highlighted. While *Veja* favors diplomacy, *CartaCapital* focuses on the economy. *Veja* continually emphasized Lula da Silva's international travels during his term, while *CartaCapital* chose to emphasize economic relations (mainly with the USA and China).

**Graph 2** - News topics in *Veja* and *CartaCapital* magazines

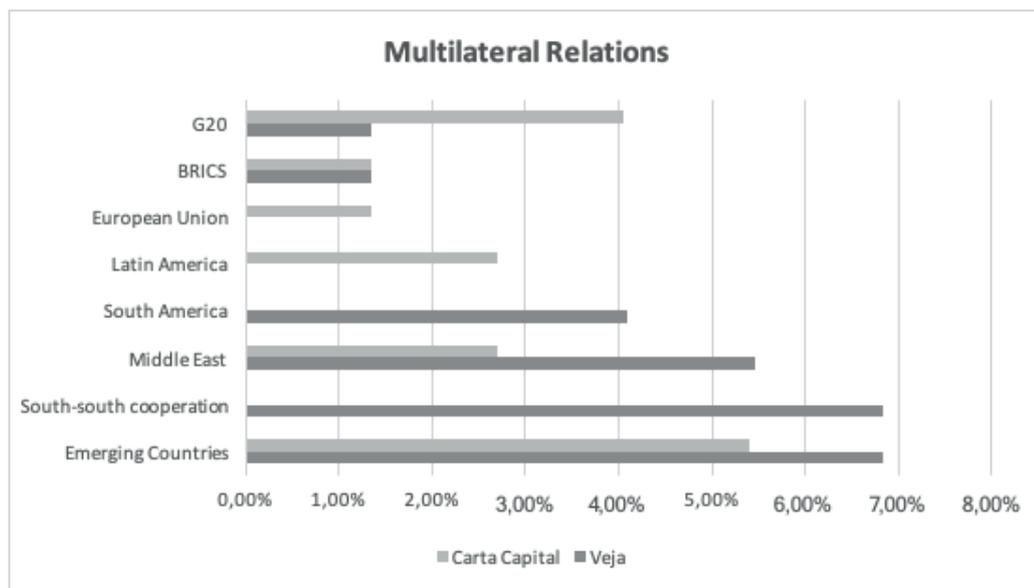


Source: prepared by the authors.

## Thematic segmentation of news

Analysis revealed that a great diversity of subjects was covered in the articles, which will now be compared. The themes were grouped, for analytical purposes, into three different categories: multilateral relations (Graph 3), international forums (Graph 4), and bilateral relations (Graph 5).

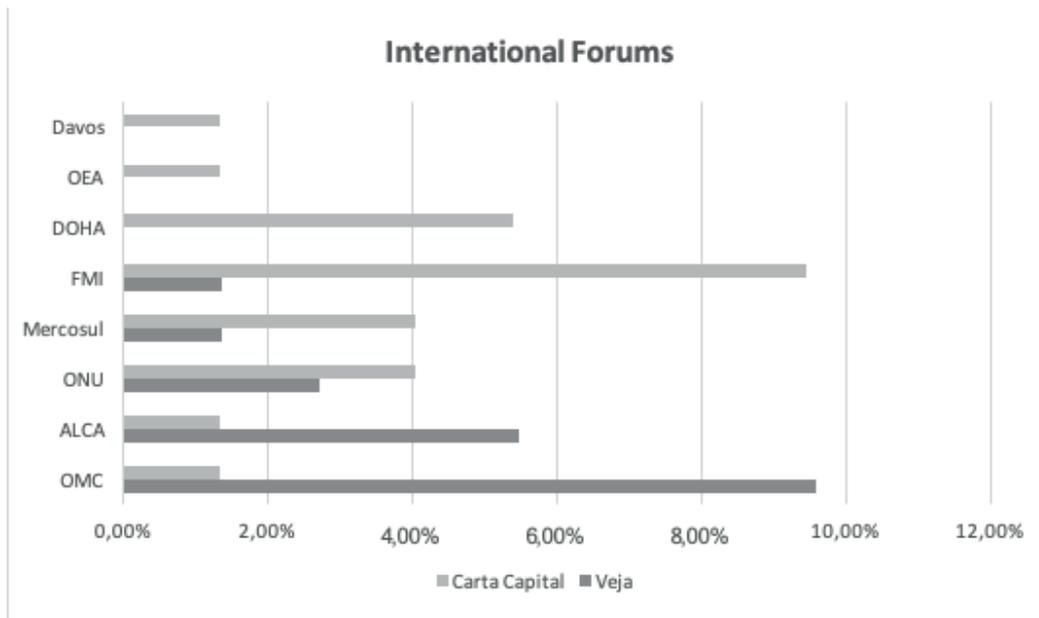
**Graph 3** - Focus of articles on the theme of multilateral relations involving Brazil in Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

From this comparison, it is evident that *Veja* focused more on multilateral relations than *CartaCapital*, prominently covering relations with emerging countries; south-south cooperation; relations with the Middle East; and relations in South America. The opposite occurs for international forums: *CartaCapital* published more on this subject than *Veja*. In addition to the WTO, Mercosur, FTAA, UN, and IMF, *CartaCapital* addressed—as did *Veja* during the period—Doha Round, OAS, and the Davos meeting. Notably, while *Veja* focused on events related to the WTO, *CartaCapital* focused on the IMF.

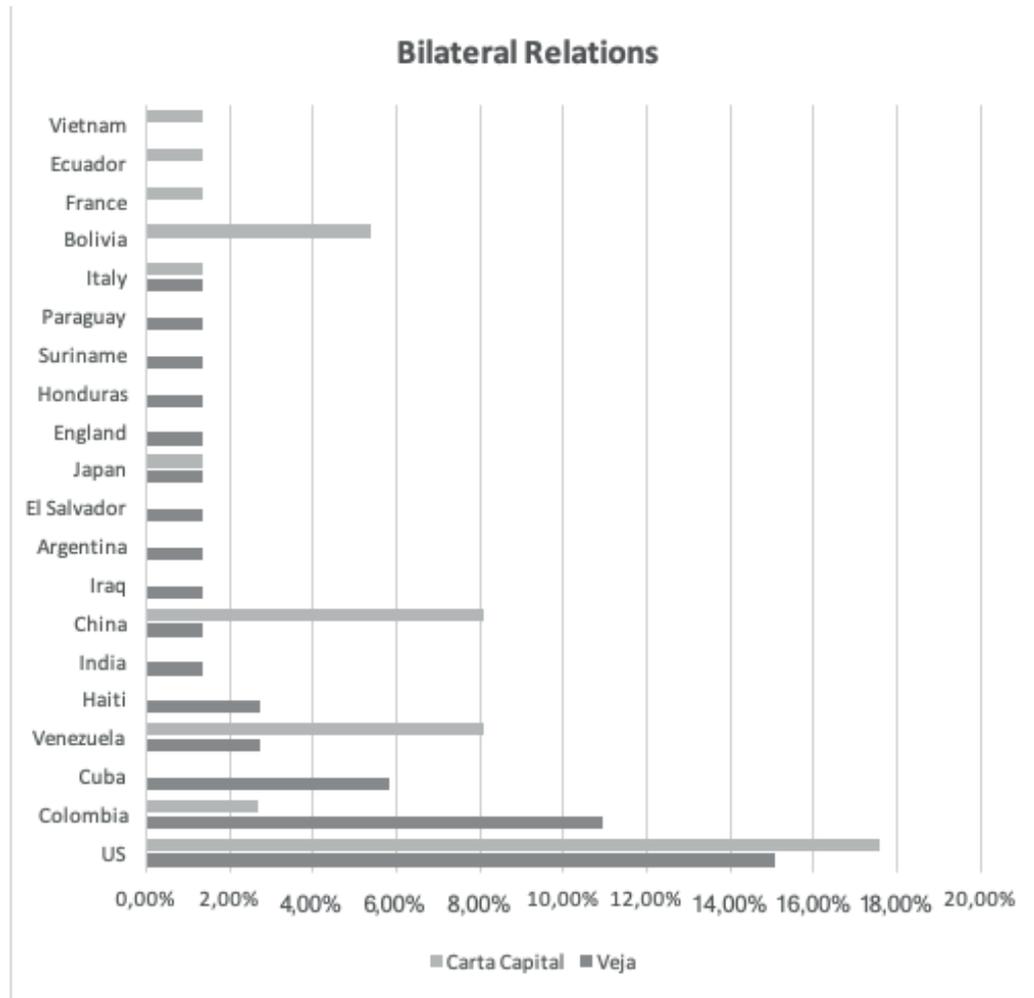
**Graph 4** - Focus of articles on the theme of Brazilian performance in international forums in Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

Regarding bilateral relations, *Veja* chose to discuss Brazil’s international relations by focusing on its relationships with specific countries, citing more countries individually than *CartaCapital*. It is also clear from Graph 5 that, even though *CartaCapital* did not opt for news that addressed more bilateral relations than the other models of relations categorized here, the largest number of articles published by both magazines focused on relations between Brazil and the United States.

**Graph 5** - Focus of articles on the topic of bilateral relations in Brazil in Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

### Publication bias

The publications were analyzed to determine whether their content was negative, positive, or neutral regarding BFP. Those considered negative clearly express negativity in relation to the actions and facts presented. Neutrals inform the actions of BFP or other countries that affect Brazil, making it impossible to explicitly note comments contrary or in favor of such actions. Positive content is those that, in some way, manifest favorable comments on actions or results of BFP.

## Veja

In practically all of its articles, *Veja* conveys a tone of disbelief in foreign policy and negativity regarding the taken actions. For example, Issue number 1833, of December 17, 2003, presents a text by Euripedes Alcântara that summarizes the content of the comments made about the Lula da Silva government (p. 43):

The Lula government has two bad things: the first is its social policy, which until today has not been seen. The other is diplomacy, which has already made it clear to see what Brasilia's political action in the foreign sector is made of is only insignificant, if not grotesque.

Other reports comment on the 'disastrous' foreign policy masked by corruption scandals; Lula da Silva's travels abroad; the 'weak' performance vis-à-vis other emerging countries in relation to foreign trade; conflicts within the Itamaraty regarding foreign policy and diplomatic activities; immigration issues; and Brazil's relationship with leaders being considered 'backward' or 'against freedom'.

Few reports were found with a neutral or positive tone. As examples there are visits to countries like the United Kingdom and the USA (treated by the weekly as 'more developed'). Even so, in reporting on some of these matters, a sarcastic or critical tone is evident (for example, regarding the ex-president's trips to China and Brazil's performance within the WTO).

## CartaCapital

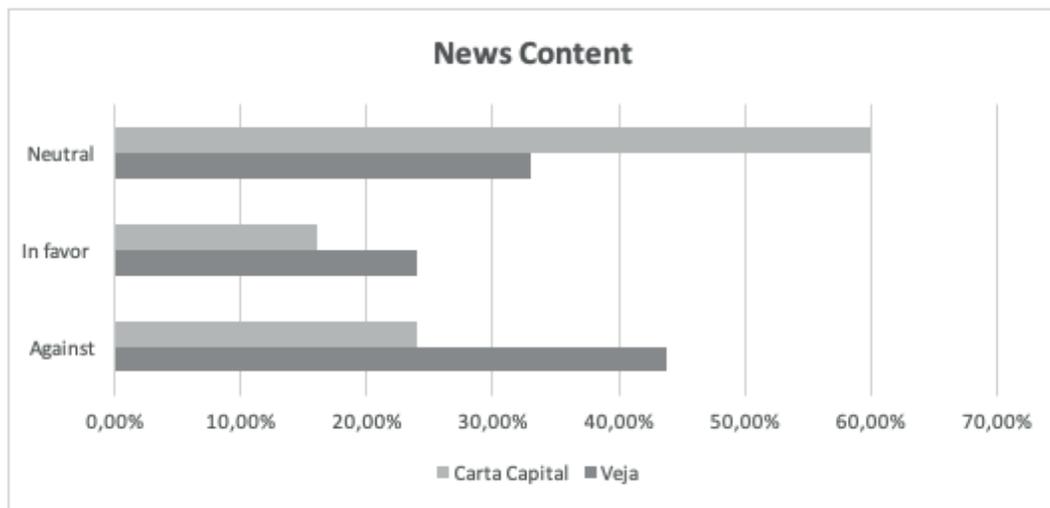
In *CartaCapital*, the reports initially appear to adopt a positive tone regarding BFP. The image of Lula da Silva's leadership is overwhelmingly positive. Articles tend to commence with historical contexts (sometimes extensive) about what is intended by policy actions. Such articles tend to report, in addition to BFP's actions, the facts concerning the other countries or forums in which Brazil is involved. Some of these deal with such topics comprehensively and point out details of the variables related to the BFP themes.

During the last period of Lula da Silva's government, the reports mainly dealt with relations with the USA, with an emphasis on Brazilian action in relation to the crisis that began in 2008. It also focuses on Bolivia, and the relationship between the ex-president and the PT with the FARC and the so-called 'emerging' countries. In recent years, the trend has been for reports to adopt a more negative tone, especially when it comes to Brazil's relationship with the USA and Brazil's performance in international forums, which in the magazine's view, had fallen and missed many opportunities.

## Comparison

Regarding the categorization of neutral, positive, or opposite content in the reports (Graph 6), the majority of the news CartaCapital presents is of a neutral nature (60%), followed by negative (24.3%), and positive (15.7%) news. Veja published mostly negative news (43.8%), followed by neutral (32.3%) and positive (23.8%) news.

**Graph 6** - Positive, negative or neutral content of news from Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

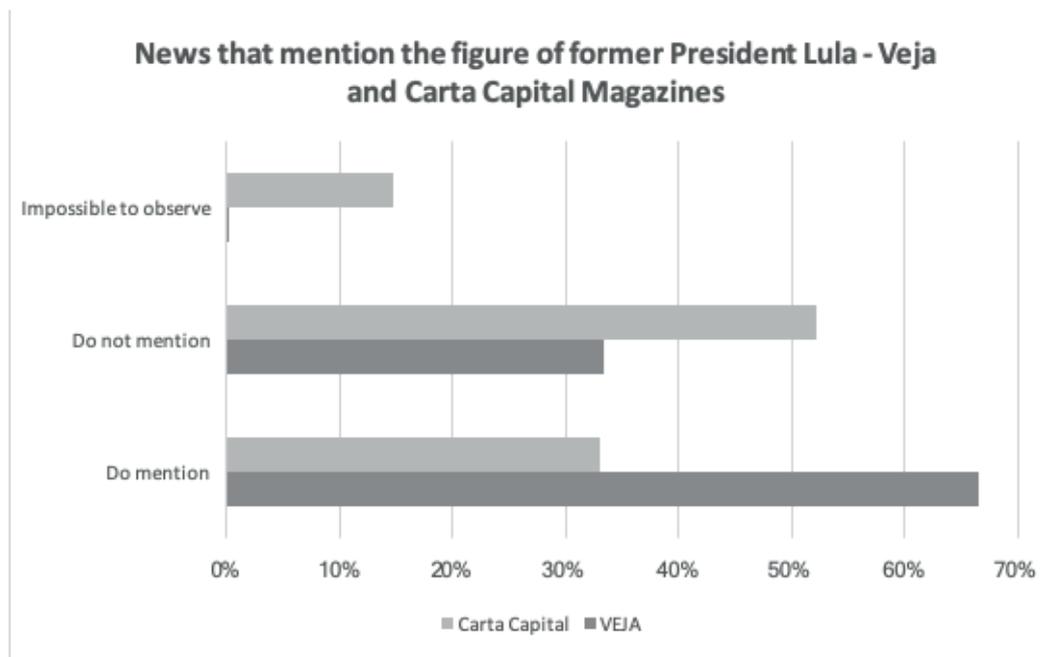
Two points must be highlighted from this comparison: first, both magazines had a small number of 'positive' articles, which may not have been a surprise given Veja's editorial position. However, it is more surprising in the case of CartaCapital given its explicit support for the candidate Lula da Silva; it was due to this support that the publication was perceived to be aligned with the political ideologies of the left. The data illustrates that CartaCapital, rather than being the mirror image of Veja, demonstrates a more complex editorial policy when dealing with the theme of BFP, and cannot be characterized by simplistic descriptions. Another point to be highlighted was the divergence between the number of "negative" and "neutral" articles: in Veja, negative comments were mainly related to government diplomatic actions, while in CartaCapital, the focus of negative comments refers, primarily, to bilateral relations with the USA, especially with regard to economic issues.

## The presidential figure

Direct quotes attributed to 'Lula da Silva' in the reports and his role as an exponent of the BFP were also analyzed, as presented in Graph 7. Such references occurred more

frequently in Veja than in CartaCapital. Veja presents Lula da Silva as the exponent in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, and credits him with the achievements of BFP. CartaCapital understands the formulation and execution of BFP as being led by a group, of which Lula da Silva takes part, but that also includes ministers, diplomats, and interest groups.

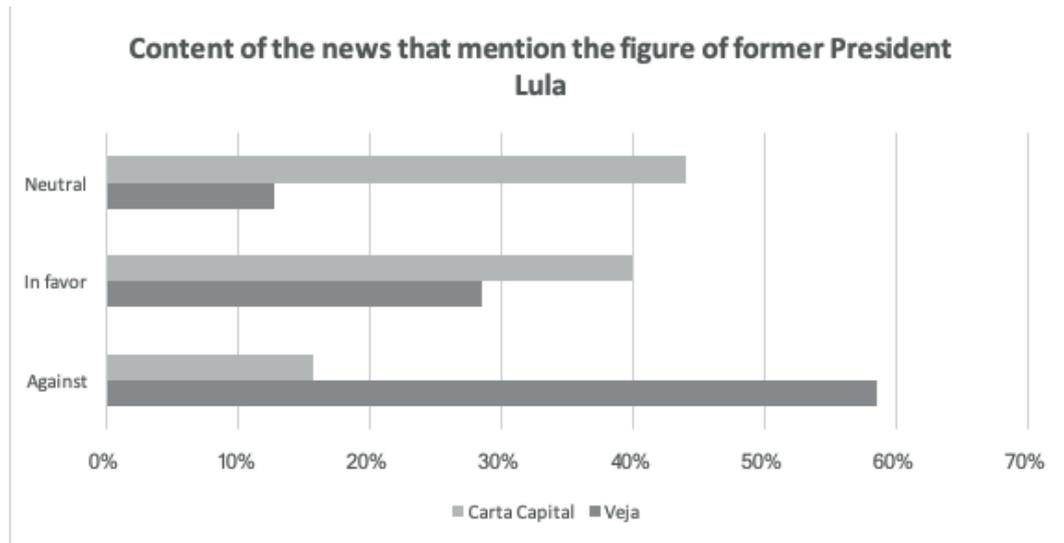
**Graph 7** - Number of news items that mention the figure of former President Lula in Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

When analyzing the subset of news that cites the presidential figure, it is noticed that Veja contains more news that is critical of the presidential performance, while in CartaCapital, neutral news predominates (Graph 8). In Veja, the negative comments were mainly related to the government’s diplomatic actions, while in CartaCapital, the focus of the negative comments was on the Brazilian relationship with the USA, mainly with regard to economic issues.

**Graph 8** - Content of the news that cites the figure of former President Lula in Veja and CartaCapital magazines



Source: prepared by the authors.

## Final considerations

The present work analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively the coverage of Lula da Silva's BFP (2003 to 2010) in two Brazilian weekly magazines: *Veja* and *CartaCapital*. In line with Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), it discussed how the media can be included in the set of variables that make up the complex political decision-making process. Clearly, the media can acquire some degree of influence in the political decision-making process, even if their intensity is a matter of debate.

It has also been demonstrated that different editorial lines express different political views. However, although this variable has not been further investigated in this study, it can be inferred that the communication groups—being companies linked to interest groups with specific agendas—tend to adopt editorial lines consistent with the values of the social segments they represent. In this sense, this study tests the hypothesis that, in the pages of *Veja* and *CartaCapital*, different editorial approaches are likely to exist on the BFP theme from 2003 to 2010. It was observed that, in Brazil, there is a tiny 'market' to 'consume' news related to foreign policy and that a small portion in segments A and B of the Brazilian population is the reading audience of the magazines analyzed. Nevertheless, the findings point out divergences in the treatment of the same theme, a fact that partially proves the general hypothesis raised.

Concerning the BFP theme, *Veja* published more on diplomacy, while *CartaCapital* focused on economic issues. More specifically, there was a contrast among the citations regarding former President Lula da Silva. *Veja* presented the former president as the most relevant actor in the formulation and execution of foreign policy, with the results of actions in this field of political action being linked and credited to him. *CartaCapital* understood the formulation and execution of BFP as a process led by a certain group, of which Lula da Silva is just one part, alongside ministers, diplomats, and other interest groups.

*Veja* mainly published negative news (58.5%) in relation to Lula da Silva. *CartaCapital*, in contrast, had a neutral majority (44.7%). This demonstrates that *CartaCapital* was not—at least in the historical context observed—totally opposite to *Veja* on the political spectrum in terms of the foreign policy approach. As for thematic segmentation, both magazines discussed BFP, mostly through bilateral relations, with the largest number of their published articles addressing the relations between Brazil and the United States (albeit from different approaches).

While not the main objective of this work, some final notes on the relationship between public opinion, the media, and foreign policy are necessary at this point. The objective is to present more recent literature on the subject and to identify some possible connections between the findings of this work and its consequences for BFP. According to Baum and Potter (2008, 2019), the neglect observed regarding the influence of public opinion in foreign policy studies is explained by the belief, on the part of decision makers and political actors, that this opinion was volatile and incoherent. However, in the 16th century, Machiavelli argued that opinion would be able to influence the government. It is in this way that power becomes interested in manipulating news for its own benefit (WATT, 1986). Therefore, in recent decades, studies that seek to feed the theoretical debate on this theme have increased.

Baum and Potter (2008) consider that public engagement in foreign policy matters would be proportional to the level of information retained. Also, we must consider that the possession of the means of communication mostly belongs to the elite. In this sense, we can think that they act in close alignment with public opinion, which—in liberal democratic societies—can legitimize political power and influence the conduct of foreign policy by governments. Following this logic, the media would be a discreet strategic actor whose information has the potential to cause public commotion through engagement in domestic and foreign policy issues. In this respect, the use of information operates in a double sense: it informs leaders about popular needs and can contribute to undermine the legitimacy of government officials (NAVEH, 2002). Moreover, the most recent literature has emphasized the interdependence between public opinion, the media, and foreign policy, since “giving exclusive attention to one or two of these actors could distort theoretical predictions and empirical findings” (BAUM; POTTER, 2008, p. 40).

Thus, the media, public opinion, and policy makers are in dialogue. Although schools of thought differ as to the degree and form, this interaction is and has been the subject of

empirical discussion and investigation. As already mentioned, the FPA subfield would be singularly more receptive to the responsiveness of decision makers when it comes to opinion (HUDSON, 2014). In agreement with such precepts, we believe that the findings of this research may indicate this mutual interaction of factors when inserting the media in the Brazilian political process to express feelings related to the governors who overflowed, and in interaction with public opinion, may influence the formulation of BFP. To explore that, we will briefly consider aspects of the formulation of this national policy.

In the Brazilian case, there are historical factors that led to a so-called ‘isolation’ of the BFP development process. Among them are structural elements such as the Constitution of Brazil 1988, introversion in political and economic processes, the non-conflictive character of the BFP, and the early professionalization of diplomatic corporations (CHEIBUB, 1985, FARIA, 2008). Such factors, combined with “coalition presidentialism”, reiterate the central role of the executive branch both in the discussions of foreign policy and in the acceptance by the Congress of international agreements (FIGUEIREDO; LIMONGI, 1999). However, a new political and social situation, manifested by the process of bringing civilians back to power (1985) and the establishment of the 1988 Federal Constitution has gradually increased the politicization of the BFP through the country’s greater participation in multilateral spaces, in the international process of globalization, encouraging economic liberalization and the media revolution. The increased participation of Brazilian society at the international level follows from this. Consequently, there is a contrast to the traditional bases in charge of decision-making in foreign affairs (FARIA, 2008).

Regarding the media system in Brazil, Azevedo (2006) argues that it still has historical characteristics with a concentration on family groups and a direction that prioritizes elites. In its taxonomy, such a system has characteristics of the polarized pluralist model. However, it is important to note that the influence of the media goes far beyond the disinterested public, having an impact on different actors such as government leaders and interest groups that demand policies. Thus, one can think of implicit causal mechanisms by which, in principle, the media pressures—directly or through public opinion—leaders to take a position on previously neglected problems. In addition, they could establish foreign policy agendas to be addressed by governments.

In this sense, the ‘debate’ expressed in the pages of *Veja* and *CartaCapital* reflects a political moment in Brazil in which the theme of BFP forms a framework for interrelation between public opinion, the media, and formulators of foreign policy. However, as demonstrating the causality of this relationship is not the objective of this work, we leave this as a suggestion for future developments of this important research agenda. Thus, this study also intends to be a modest incentive for future and deeper analysis of the influence of the media in political processes in general and for Foreign Policy in particular.

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