

China Business: the relation between media and power in the Geisel Government Diplomacy (1974-1979)

Pricila Niches Müller*

Abstract: This paper deals with relations between the press and foreign policy in Brazil, focusing on the analysis of the position of press agencies regarding the foreign policy of the Geisel government (1974-1979), which sought to diversify partnerships with the employment of a so-called “pragmatic, responsible and ecumenical” policy, with emphasis on the initial establishment of the strategic partnership with the China Popular Republic, including at embassies level between both countries. Thus, the main objective of the study is to investigate how the formation of partnership between Brazil and China is portrayed in the mainstream Brazilian press in the context of the years that comprise the Geisel Government. This article deals specifically with the representation made by the press about Presidential Inauguration. Ernesto Geisel and the government's foreign policy, as well as an analysis of the issue involving the press and “public opinion”. The study was based on specialized literature and documentation analysis of two of the largest print media of the time: *The State of São Paulo* and *Jornal do Brasil*. It is important to emphasize that this study is part of a larger work on the subject, developed in my master's dissertation by PUCRS PPGH.

Keywords: Government Geisel. *Jornal do Brasil*. *O Estado de São Paulo*. "Public opinion". Brazil-China.

Introduction

In this article, considering the printed media as an important social vector, we tried to identify how it was built in newspapers and whether it was already possible to perceive the strategic¹ character, in the embryonic process of the partnership between Brazil and China through Brazilian foreign policy, such as the specialized bibliography usually uses to address the relationship between both in the 1990s². However, it is believed that the expression can be used to refer to agreements prior to this period, as studied in this research. This

* CNPq PhD student in History by the Postgraduate Program in History at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul. Contact: pricila.muller89@gmail.com

¹ A bilateral strategic relationship is understood as presenting a high standard of relevance for the achievement of medium and long-term objectives of a country's foreign policy, considering the hegemonic notion of national interest presented in it.

² On this, see the work of Henrique Altemani de Oliveira, Leticia Pinheiro and Danielly Becard.

hypothesis arose because it is a partnership signed during the period of the civil-military³ dictatorship (1964-1985) in Brazil, having as one of its characteristics the fight against communism in the country, as well as the intention of not letting such ideology spread through the Americas⁴, as was also the intention of the United States, a country through which Brazil has had an ideological alignment in much of its history.

In the mid-1960s, Brazilian foreign policy (PEB) underwent a paradigm shift and began to look for other political and economic partners. This insertion of Brazil in a more global context was also reflected in the academic environment. It is in this perspective that relations with Asian countries come into play; first, with Japan, in the 1960s and 1970s; later, with China, from the second half of the 1970s; and with other countries like South Korea, the relationship is even more recent.

In the mid-1980s, there was a crisis in diplomatic relations between Brazil and Asia, which resumed with greater flow in the 1990s (OLIVEIRA; MASIERO, 2005). In 1961, the then vice-president João Goulart was in China, making a diplomatic visit that was interrupted by the resignation of President Jânio Quadros. For the military, who made assumptions about ties between the vice president and the Communist Party, Jango was seen, in a way, as a threat to the country. In this sense, it is important to remember that, on the occasion of the 1964 Civil-Military Coup in Brazil, China represented communist danger and, therefore, Sino-Brazilian relations did not occur during the height of the civil-military dictatorship. According to Celso Lafer (2001), there was a nationalism of military inspiration in Brazil based on the development and integration of the national space, which sought to formulate its international identity, but without being nationalism with an expansionist characteristic.

³ According to Tatyana de Amaral Maia (2013) "As of 2000, with the publication of the book *Ditadura militar, lefts and society*, by Daniel Aarão Reis, research took on a new impetus and incorporated into its analysis the complex relations established between civilians and the military those tortuous years. In this perspective, the dictatorship would not be exclusively military, as a result of the brutality and authoritarianism generated in the barracks and imposed on the whole of society since 1964. On the contrary, several sectors of civil society applauded the coup that brought down President João Goulart; they promoted enthusiastic demonstrations in favor of military intervention and joined the state ranks to propose development projects for the nation. It is in this sense that the article incorporates the perspective that it is a civil-military regime. The dictatorship, composed and legitimized also by the participation of civilians, was guided by projects created by them even before the 1964 coup. During the process of redemocratization, started in 1974, a memory of resistance was created that presents civilians as undisputed defenders of democracy, but the relations of support, participation and legitimacy of various sectors of society were silenced during the 21 years of the regime." (p. 184-185). This characterized the civil-military character of the dictatorial regime, in which, despite the "last word" being of the dictator occupying the position of president, he did not govern the country alone, contrary to what FICO (2014) proposes by emphasizing that the coup had been civil-military, but the government was essentially military in character.

⁴ With the exception of Guyana, since the 1950s, all countries in South America have undergone dictatorial processes. The last to end was Chile, in 1990.

In addition, another characteristic that influenced the questioning in this research regarding the strategic character of the formation of a partnership was the adoption of a “pragmatic, responsible and ecumenical” foreign policy by the Geisel Government, in which a detachment from diplomatic practices carried out since the 1964 civil-military coup. This way of conducting foreign policy has also been analyzed by other authors⁵ through their congruence with the Independent Foreign Policy (PEI), practiced in the government that preceded the civil-military dictatorship. Considering studies on the theme, this investigation proposes an expansion of the approach by relating it to the way the press characterized government action in its foreign policy, since external engagements directly affect a country's internal plan, especially in the partnership between Brazil and China. Through this, we sought to present a comparison between the posture of the Geisel government in relation to the PEB and that of dictatorial governments prior to his and, for this, the observation of the press selected here for analysis was crucial regarding the narratives that the two newspapers used to announce the paths for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brazil and communist China. It is worth remembering that, at that time, Brazil was already a partner of the other China, the nationalist, and also that, shortly after the civil-military coup, arrests of Chinese from Communist China took place here in Brazil, accused of subversion, but that here they were for commercial reasons⁶.

China business

The popular expression “business in China” refers to this article in all its meaning as “an advantageous business”, an expression that was also used in advertisements for goods found on the pages of *Jornal do Brasil*⁷, in the period surveyed, but which, in most of them, preceded the establishment of diplomatic relations between Brazil and China, which is the focus of this article.

⁵ See LIGIÉRO (2011).

⁶ The troubled relationship between the “two Chinas” also fits in the context of the Cold War, as well as their relationship with the USSR and the USA. In the 1970s, the United States got closer to the PRC and intensified the friction between the USSR and communist China. As a matter of knowledge, these situations were also present in the discussions of the international editorials of the journals analyzed in this research, but it is not the objective of this work to analyze them. As for the bibliography see: DOMINGOS (2010), HOBBSAWM (1995), OLIVEIRA (2006) and PINTO (2000).

⁷ In the newspaper O Estado de São Paulo, during the collection of material for the research, we did not identify advertisements that mentioned products being sold and that made reference to China. In *Jornal do Brasil*, on the other hand, there are a series of advertisements and advertisements, from products that have nothing to do with China, but use the expression “Business from China”, as travel packages to that country, advertisements that intensify as relations between the two countries advance.

If a quick search is carried out, it is related to the origin of the expression since the time of Marco Polo's travels, which, when describing the places, he visited, attracted the interest of Europeans, for example, who were looking for ways to enrich the trade. In this article, what we noticed is similar, since the events selected for analysis in the journals, have precisely the purpose of expanding international trade.

Our interest is to deepen the narrative construction that the press, represented here by *Jornal do Brasil* and *O Estado de São Paulo*, made about the partnership announced at the beginning of the Geisel Government, having as key research events the inauguration of the General President. We consider the formation and defense of a “public opinion”⁸ by the periodicals, now in common agreement with the government, now questioning. The differences appear not only between the two newspaper companies, as can be seen, but also the individual approach of the newspapers has oscillated.

As the Habermasian molds present, it is of great importance to the reader to know that the concept of opinion is about reputation, of considering what is put and what is in the opinion of the other. According to the dictionary, it is a feminine noun that means the way of thinking, seeing and judging.

Habermas⁹ also discusses the issue of a structural change in the public sphere, worrying about the dilemma of interventionism. If the State intervenes, it passes through the public sphere. However, companies are also a threat, because when they control the economy, they will try to control the public sphere and also interfere in the political sphere. In this context, there is a change between producer and consumer, with an expansion occurring in the latter, mainly in relation to culture. Habermas talks about advertising,

⁸ Although the expression seems to mean something great, referring to the masses, we defend in this work that this influence came from smaller groups. According to Champagne “[...] until the early 1960s, the studies on opinion that were carried out by political science specialists started in some way from the definition - dominant, at the time, from a social point of view - of public opinion: largely focused on “pressure groups” and consisted of studying the strategies of these active and organized minorities (lobbies) that tried to influence political bodies (parliament and government) by manufacturing, in particular, through press campaigns, “opinion” movements, more or less artificial.” (CHAMPAGNE, 1998, p. 81)

⁹ Habermas exposes the view of those intellectuals mentioned in the first chapter, on the question of public opinion, each with their own point of view. Kant considers that philosophers are the most qualified to be spokespersons for public opinion, and this presupposes a public use of reason, a rational need for the acts of power to be public. Hegel and Marx disagree with Kant's view, because for them this is not public opinion, but only the opinion of a public, without constituting unity. Mill and Tocqueville question the explanation of the previous three, in favor of a more realistic common sense, expanded through the press, with public opinion being only a force among other forces and the masses without being heard. Finally, Habermas concludes that the public sphere expands as a sphere, emptying the private sector (HABERMAS, 1984, p. 168).

propaganda and cultural manipulation used by the political and economic sectors to involve individuals.

Public opinion comes from educated people and expands “mainly among those classes that, when they act en masse, constitute what prevails” /50/. Certainly there, “the lower classes of the people” do not belong, the sans-culottes, because, under the pressure of necessity and work, they have no disposition or opportunity “to worry about things that do not immediately concern their well-being. to be corporeal” /51/. (HABERMAS, 1984, p. 125-126)

For twenty-one years, Brazil was under an authoritarian regime, ruled by the military. It is traditional to think of an influence that politics has in relation to the press in this period, due to the military coup that took place in 1964, while the press suffered severe retaliation about what was published by the media in general. In view of the meaning of the public as a group of individuals, with their private lives and belonging to a society, relating economically and politically under the constant influence of business and state sectors with power, the reality of a “public opinion” it is still something to be questioned. And, considering that it exists, it would still have to be investigated what individuals it is made up of, as, as evidenced in the passage quoted from Habermas, some citizens do not have time to deal with matters that do not concern exclusively their well-being, while at the same time that not everyone is interested in what is going on around the world, worrying only about their social circle. Since the events published on the public scene are meticulously chosen according to private interests, we will analyze here their repercussion in the selected print media.

Based on the article by Bourdieu (1982), we can reflect broadly on the role of each individual in society, from his individual representation and the role he plays in economics and politics, to the reverse, of how institutions policies, the state and also companies can interfere in man's private life. In the midst of these aspects, we also have the role of the press and, with it, also the expression “public opinion”. It is a press that has been conquering its space, building a captive reading public and with it sponsors interested in that audience. And it is still a public sphere that has been expanded and its public character has been mixed between sectors of society, reducing the private. The question that remains is the following: how to think of a “public opinion” in the midst of so many demonstrations of political, social and economic power?

Was it really possible to have an opinion that truly represents something unified? We can say that these powers are widespread in the various media, trying to captivate the individual, just as the newspaper did to build its readership. We can say that these powers

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The media and the ownership of responsible and ecumenical pragmatism

Since General Ernesto Geisel started preparations for his government, it was hoped that with him, many transformations would come, mainly in the political area. His inaugural speech¹⁰ is comparable to that of President General Garrastazu Médici, who preceded him, but both differ considerably from the first two military presidents of the civil-military dictatorship established in 1964. The question of the appeal to God, the Nation¹¹ and the unity of the Brazilian people was unanimous in all. The third and fourth military president of the civil-military dictatorship were at odds with the aspect of emphasizing a greater interest in relating economically on a worldwide basis and on the ideological factor¹² not being a reason for hindrance in these relations.

This stance was evidenced, mainly, with Geisel and the foreign minister Azeredo da Silveira, who named their foreign policy as pragmatic, responsible and ecumenical. What made it a policy supposedly free from ideological commitment, but responsible for controlling who its agents were (PINHEIRO, 1993). Just as it was announced in the speech and as it is approached by the specialized bibliography, the newspapers showed on their pages the signs of a transformation in the way of the government that was taking power, even if in an uncertain and speculative way, as there was no date marked for changes to take place.

In the OESP newspaper, an opinion¹³ piece was published among the editorials¹⁴, entitled “The time has come for definitions”, the day after Geisel's inauguration, March 16, 1974. The text states that

¹⁰ Speeches by Ex-President General Ernesto Geisel are available in the Presidency's online library: <http://www.biblioteca.presidencia.gov.br/presidencia/ex-presidentes/ernesto-geisel> Access at: 12/1/2017.

¹¹ The term Nation has its beginnings in the French Revolution, at the end of the 18th century. It is not appropriate to extend the discussion for the purposes of this work. About this see: ANDERSON, Benedict; FICHTE, Johann G.; RENAN, Ernest; SMITH, Antony; and others.

¹² It is not appropriate to extend the discussion for the purposes of this research.

¹³ “The time has come for definitions”, O Estado de São Paulo, March 16, 1974, p. 3, editorial.

¹⁴ As KRILOW (2018) analyzes, mentioning the definitions of journalistic jargon made by Aguiar, it is considered “editorial as the privileged space, but not the only one, to express what should be considered the official point of view of the newspaper and / or writing, is an analytical text that has no signature”. AGUIAR, Rafe. Journalistic Dictionary: understand all jargon. Journalist Stuff, 2016. *apud* KRILOW, L. S. W. Paper cities: representations of favelas in the Rio de Janeiro press during the second Vargas government (1951-1954). Masters dissertation. Porto Alegre: PUCRS, 2018.

[..] A government that assumes itself always has a blank space to occupy, an entire area of power to be exercised. And in the changes, not only men are changed, but also styles. Now, all indications coincide that we are on the eve of a profound transformation, of dimensions that cannot be precisely evaluated and that will demand time for them to be analyzed.¹⁵

The newspaper also highlights in the same text, in the sequence, the demonstration of a strong posture on the part of the newly installed president, who would command the government without delegating its decisions to other government representatives.

While *OESP* was manifesting itself, *Jornal do Brasil* chose to highlight the speech of Foreign Minister Azeredo da Silveira, on the same day, in a news¹⁶ item composed of a photo above the title “Silveira wants to strengthen relations with A. Latina”, in the section dealing with presidential succession. Although the title is highlighting Latin America, in the news, it is mentioned only in the first and last paragraph. The essence of the content turns to the theme of the necessary changes in the direction of foreign policy, also exploring aspects of the transformations expected from the new government. The narrative of the writing points out, regarding the Minister's speech, that, at that moment (1974), Brazil could not remain oblivious to other nations, and its intention was to develop and acquire greater representation at the international level¹⁷.

For Geisel, national development was directly connected to energy capacity¹⁸, and this was a recurring topic in his government, and it was even one of the reasons for the impasse between Brazil and the United States at the time when the Agreement between Brazil and Germany on nuclear energy occurred. Shigeaki Ueki¹⁹ was the responsible person chosen by the then president for the Ministry of Mines and Energy. In this context, a project that was already under negotiation before Geisel's mandate was the construction of the Itaipu Hydroelectric Plant, located on the Paraná River and which borders Brazil and Paraguay, the

¹⁵ “The time has come for definitions”, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 16, 1974, p. 3, editorial.

¹⁶ “Silveira wants to strengthen relations with A. Latina”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 16, 1974, p. 13, 1st notebook.

¹⁷ In an interview, Geisel spoke about the foreign policy of previous governments, which, in his opinion, served too much to the interests of the United States. This was an act that Geisel wished to change, according to his interview, to seek more independence, projecting himself to other countries and, as far as possible, treating the USA as an equal. (D'ARAÚJO&CASTRO, 1997, p. 335-336).

¹⁸ In the same interview, Geisel, when asked about how a country's development is projected, among other aspects, mentions that “[...] Another priority sector was electricity. A country that does not have electricity cannot grow, cannot develop, even in rural areas. Electricity is an industrial but also a social input.”. (D'ARAÚJO&CASTRO, 1997, p. 302)

¹⁹ After President Geisel's term in which Ueki was Minister of Mines and Energy, in Figueiredo's term, Shigeaki Ueki was President of Petrobrás.

result of a partnership between the two countries. The construction of the plant started in the second year of the Geisel Government, but its inauguration took place only at the end of the following government.

Another source of energy, however non-renewable, and which generates crises that reverberate worldwide is oil. One of the crises occurred in 1973 and had an impact during the period of the Government under analysis here, which also reflected at the end of the “economic miracle²⁰”, with rising inflation and reduced investments. Although we had Petrobrás²¹ created in the 1950s, when Brazil was governed by Getúlio Vargas and it was one of the companies that has the greatest global distinction, only in the 2000s did Brazil achieve oil self-sufficiency, being necessary for its import in that period to meet national needs.

The explanation made about the principle of the Geisel Government and also about the energy issue, which is very interesting for the understanding of the emphasis given by the press to the partnership between Brazil and China. Recalling that the information that reached the press came mostly from official government sources, as the periodicals usually point out; however, their subjects were still inspected by the censors who worked for the government at that time. Although none of the Acts, Treaties and Agreements between Brazil and the PRC used in this research deal with issues related to oil, in the press there was a lot of repercussion on the possible negotiation of the purchase of this product by the Brazilian government. However, the approach taken by the journals analyzed here differs from one another, which is common, considering that the public - apart from the government's own official sources - is not usually the same, although it was not possible to specify who the readers of these were. newspapers in this article. But we do not mean that the information was manipulated, in the perverse feeling that is commonly attributed to the word, because according to Champagne,

It would be naive to believe that the press produces, by itself, in a totally arbitrary and manipulative way, the “events”. In reality, it is a collective production: journalists are only their most visible agents and, at the same time, the most hidden. Whatever the way, positive or negative, as they talk about it, there are “events” that cannot be left unreported by journalists under the risk of squandering their credible capital; nor can they invent whatever it is as an “event” under penalty of losing precisely their own

²⁰ It was the name given to the period of the Médici Government (1969-1973) when the economy grew rapidly.

²¹ Before being president of the Republic, Geisel was president of Petrobras. His political career record also includes the Cubatão refinery and the Petroleum Council.

power to create events. It is in the relationship between the press field²² and the different social fields that “events” are engendered. (CHAMPAGNE, 1996, p. 224)

Therefore, the way in which the newspaper produces the material to be transmitted is that it will, over time, form its informative credibility. What can be said, in relation to the public, is that each journal has captive readers²³, whether they are interested in news about politics, sport, culture or other topics. Based on this idea and taking into account that the newspapers claim to be representatives of the so-called “Public Opinion”²⁴, a point that guided this researcher's thinking during the “floating reading” in the selected journals was that the reality of this “public opinion”²⁵ is something to be questioned, because, through its narrative, it can be perceived that there is a determined position regarding the negotiations that were emerging between Brazil and the People's Republic of China at that time, which can be identified through the use of adverbs and adjectives, for example, in the narrative of journalists who use this strategy in an attempt to create a specific image for the reader. Therefore, the idea that there is no single representation by the press that defends “public opinion” is defended. So, who are they referring to as “public opinion”?

To begin this discussion, let us reflect on what was conveyed about the relationship between Brazil and communist China in the period when Geisel was just taking over the administration of the country. His inauguration took place in the middle of March 1974, as we mentioned earlier, and since the beginning of that month the two newspapers have already commented on the contact between the countries. On March 7, OESP published a note²⁶ with information that, in the following month, a Brazilian trade mission would go to China, with the aim of “increasing sales” to that country, which would be considered by the Association of Foreign Trade in Brazil (hereinafter, AEB) a “strong potential” market. The note above this informs about a speech by Minister Delfim Netto²⁷ that took place at AEB, in

²² An author who addresses the notions of field is Pierre Bourdieu, but we will not go into this concept further in the course of this work.

²³ See: CHARADEAU, Patrick; 2013.

²⁴ CHAMPAGNE (1996) comments on this issue of the media and “public opinion”, emphasizing that “By profession, journalists will become “opinion leaders”: they express their opinion that they think is also the opinion of their readers and this opinion pre-adjusted to the public, read by readers, tends to become the opinion of readers and, consequently, an important component of what is perceived as “public opinion.” p. 71

²⁵ Own stage of Content Analysis, in which this research is inspired.

²⁶ “Economy - Mission”, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 7, 1974, p. 3.

²⁷ Delfim Netto held several positions during the period of the civil-military dictatorship, being Minister of Finance (1967-1974) - period in which the AI-5 took place and having the minister's name as one of his subscribers -, Ambassador of Brazil in France (1974-1978), Minister of Agriculture (1979) and Minister of Planning (1979-1985).

which the highlight was the “decisive role of exports in strengthening national power”. Both notes are complementary and refer to news that discuss them inside the newspaper, relating a need for development, according to the minister's presentation, to a possible preventive solution that demonstrates the fact that exporters are already aware of the importance of question, although it is already customary for a trader to explore his possibilities for improving business.

The news²⁸ referred to in the note and with a title in bold letters at the top of the page, indicated China as being “the best alternative to increase Brazilian exports”, in the words of the AEB president himself. In the text, it is emphasized that Giuliete Coutinho “did nothing about the possibility” of a government representative joining the mission, together with the exporters who would go on this commercial trip, on an evaluative basis. *Estadão* points out that the mission's central objective is to “continue the understandings” of the previous year. This was the second trade mission organized by the AEB to China, the first of which occurred in October 1972, a year after China had joined the UN, with Brazil voting against²⁹.

On the day before these *Estadão* texts, *Jornal do Brasil* had already published news³⁰ in an editorial dealing with politics and government, and in this text the focus was on the visitations of greetings to the General President that were taking place by government officials and, mainly, about the ministers who would be part of the Geisel Government and were already in direct contact with the president. Minister Azeredo da Silveira was highlighted in this news in two moments, on the same subject. First, there was the report of everyone who had been with Geisel the previous day, mentioning Silveira and, at the end of this first part, according to the report, when asked by a reporter about the resumption of the relationship between Brazil and China, the minister replied that “it is too early to think about it”. After talking about the other visitors and also informing that none of the ministers would give information about the future of the Government, the newspaper returns to addressing foreign policy issues, emphasizing adjectives, such as “delicate”, in the figurative sense, referring to something that demands caution / prudence, and “complicated” that has one of its senses used in a pejorative tone. Such expressions were used in the text about a short dialogue

²⁸ “Mission will assess Chinese potential”, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 7, 1974, p. 46.

²⁹ Oscar Araripe is the author of the book “China Hoje - O Pragmatismo Possível”, published in 1974. The book has a chronology at the end of it with all the history of relations between Brazil and China, in a timeline format, and this part also contains this information about the first AEB trip and the vote against China's entry into the UN by part of the Brazilian Government. Araripe was a journalist and was present at the mission headed by Coutinho, who went to China in April 1974, a fact that was better analyzed in my master's dissertation.

³⁰ “General Geisel receives a visit from eight more in Largo da Misericórdia”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 6, 1974, p. 3, 1st notebook.

with Silveira on March 5, which "also only wants to speak after the 15th". It is important to mention here that the first adjective mentioned was expressed in the words of the minister, the second being in the newspaper's own narrative on the subject. The news ends again with the allusion to the resumption between Brazil and China, using the word "dryly", which is an adverb of way, to define the way Silveira responded to journalists on the issue, saying that "it is too early to think about it", as I said before.

In analyzing the texts of the newspapers, we found that there were two different approaches given to the diplomatic issue. The newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* highlighted civilians engaged in their private businesses that would also bring an excellent international return to Brazil, without discarding at the same time that there was still no public confirmation of government participation in the Brazilian mission, at the beginning of March. *Jornal do Brasil* bet on publishing information directly from the government's bases on the resumption of the partnership between the two countries and on which we can see that, regardless of the issue, all the ministers mentioned in the report were not making public the discussions that were already taking place. with General Geisel about the government. AEB published interviews with some members of the mission that went to China in April 1974, on the occasion of the celebration of 40 years of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Brazil and China. Oscar Araripe³¹ was one of the members who granted an interview and, when asked how they would have obtained authorization to enter China without having diplomatic relations between the two countries at that time, Araripe replied that officially there was no, but that the two countries were dating".

After this news³² published at the beginning of March, JB did not expose, in its agendas throughout the month, the subject about the partnership between Brazil and China, as well as about the exporters' trip that would take place in April. However, China itself was not left out of the newspaper's publications. The communist country was mentioned, almost every day of the month, in the section dealing with international issues. Despite containing several texts on the problems between the Chinese and the Soviets - a problem that appears in both

³¹ Araripe says that the preparations for the trip were "intense and tense" and that the trip was something widely publicized by the media; he also points out that his book about the trip was only published after the editor added a statement by General Ernesto Geisel that dates from March 19, 1974. It is interesting to note that Oscar Araripe, despite having gone on the mission as a "newspaper owner" for being one of the owners of the English newspaper *The Brazilian Gazette*, worked for *Jornal do Brasil* and provided all his shares to JB. Available at: <http://www.aeb.org.br/aeb45/noticia.asp?Id=124>, access in: 01/20/2019. After searching for information about the period in which he was connected to JB and not finding the information on the networks, I tried to contact the author, who returned to me via email with the information that he worked at JB from 1970 to 1975.

³² "General Geisel receives a visit from eight more in Largo da Misericórdia", *Jornal do Brasil*, March 6, 1974, p. 3, 1st notebook.

newspapers throughout 1974 -, it is interesting to note that there were reports in which the narrative employed placed China in a prominent position in the international and positively, when talking about its oil production, as well as its power as an exporting country³³. Still on this subject, a signed article was written³⁴ by Theodoro Shabad, a columnist for The New York Times in which he analyzes who would be profiting from the “world energy crisis”, pointing out the Chinese and Soviet investments to develop exports. It is also informed about the possibility of traveling by plane from Canada to China³⁵, as well as several advertisements about tourist travel³⁶ packages from Brazil to the PRC. Another curiosity is the appearance of the expression “business in china”³⁷ used to refer to some product that would be being marketed. Regarding the relations between Brazil and China, the newspaper returned to the subject only on March 25, 1974, in a short note³⁸ in Notebook B, recording that, if the trade mission really went to China in April, the former the administrator of the Delfim Neto farm would also be present due to having assumed a new position with the National Association of Exporters.

Unlike the Rio de Janeiro newspaper, *Estadão* published a news³⁹ story before March 15, discussing the new style of Brazilian foreign policy and characterizing Azeredo da Silveira as someone who has “the experience of a negotiator”. Although the central theme of the text was related to the new diplomacy in general, the title that occupied the top of the page referred to the Itamaraty's acceptance of going to China, but already in the first paragraph, there is the information that “may contain a government observer”, the decision has not yet been confirmed. He also stresses that, according to Silveira, the possible approximation of the two countries would be based on serving national interests, while defending that, if this were to happen, it would be marking a new course within the foreign trade policy employed by Itamaraty, signaling once again the enthusiastic character, in this period, with the partnership between Brazil and RPC. With the exception of this news, the *OESP* newspaper would only return to the question of a possible resumption of relations, as well as regarding the Brazilian trade mission, at the end of March, just as *JB* had done. Other than that, there were articles in the international editorial about China and its relationship with other countries, in the same way that the Rio newspaper had also published.

³³ “USA speaks of China as a major exporter”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 16, 1974, p. 7, 1st notebook.

³⁴ “Those who profit from the energy crisis”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 18, 1974, p. 2, 1st notebook, article by Theodoro Shabad, from The New York Times.

³⁵ “Flights will connect Canada to China”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 16, 1974, p. 8, 1st notebook.

³⁶ “CHINA”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 21, 1974, p.2, 1st section.

³⁷ “Business in China”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 11, 1974, p. 3, notebook B.

³⁸ *Jornal do Brasil*, March 25, 1974, p. 3, notebook B, shuttle column.

³⁹ “Itamaraty accepts going to China”, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 14, 1974, p. 25.

Jornal do Brasil commented in the March 29 in the *Informe JB*⁴⁰ on the trade mission, when “soon” Brazil and communist China would increase their trade relations with a “serious” and “high level” character, this may result in “diplomatic relations between Beijing and Brasilia”⁴¹. The following day, on the cover of *JB*⁴², there was information from the Brasilia branch, according to which the Foreign Ministry had decided to send a Government representative, integrating Coutinho's commercial mission and emphasized that this was the first time that this had happened since in China. implanted the “communist regime”. What causes strangeness is the fact that the newspaper has published this news on the cover, but does not contain anything inside the newspaper that would continue the matter, considering that the cover of a periodical is his showcase, the place where he invites the reader to flip through its pages and check the content.

Bourdieu (1982), who defends the non-existence of the so-called “public opinion”, when talking about the ineffectiveness of opinion polls for having insufficient issues to actually generate a “public opinion”, because, according to him, it must be taken taking into account who orders a survey and the non-responses by the interviewees. Considering the author's point of view, the question of the newspaper's lack of development regarding diplomacy involving Brazil and China leads to these questions: would there be anyone behind this question who ordered the news? Or the opposite, who did not want its publication and had enough power to achieve this? It is a time when the interference of the federal government surpassed the public sphere, due to censorship, as we have already seen, just as we mentioned the fact that the information was already filtered for journalists and, when there is silence in the newspaper, issues like these are noteworthy. In March, there was no further publication in the *JB* on the relationship between Brazil and China.

Like the Rio de Janeiro newspaper, *Estadão* also published on the cover⁴³ of the 30th about the officialization of the Brazilian mission that was due to embark for China in the days that would follow. The call refers to “details” in the editorial⁴⁴ on international affairs, a text from the Brasília branch, with the title of the article, as usual seen until then with the articles involving the theme of this research, occupying the entire length of the top of the

⁴⁰ “Brasil- China”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 29, 1974, p.10, 1st notebook, column *Informe JB*.

⁴¹ *Idem*.

⁴² “Brazil sends diplomat for the first time on a mission to China”, *Jornal do Brasil*, March 30, 1974, cover.

⁴³ “Mission to Beijing is made official”, *O Estado de São Paulo*, March 30, 1974, cover.

page. The article exalts the innovative character of this decision, which is part of a policy “without ideological concern” that aimed to increase trade with “communist China”, and may bring “for the first time” an “official report” about the receptivity that the Chinese would give for the gesture of “commercial approximation” of Brazil. After a somewhat praiseworthy start to Itamaraty’s decision to send three “high ranking” employees in the company of businessmen, the newspaper comments on the mystery surrounding this decision-making, saying that

In the last few weeks, diplomatic and economic areas have stated, on several occasions, that the Brazilian mission would have a private character, would be integrated only by businessmen and that no government official would be part of it, although they stressed that this absolutely did not mean that the Itamaraty was not interested Chinese economic potential.⁴⁵

Then to conclude in the same text that this would be the reason, according to “sources linked to the two areas”, to believe that the Government would be interested in accelerating the process of rapprochement between the two countries. From what can be interpreted, the newspaper is referring specifically to the diplomatic relationship between the two, because, the next day, *Estadão* published a news story, praising the importance of recognizing Chinese power. In this news⁴⁶, the newspaper expresses with all the letters that “in the medium term” Brazil will be diplomatically recognizing China, making use of what was said by Geisel and Silveira about the new government guidelines at the time of the inauguration to justify this impression. In the sequence, *OESP* introduced the diplomat Carlos Antônio Bettencourt Bueno, one of the three members selected by the government to participate in the mission, as being an “expert in communist China” and making use of some of his speeches about China on other occasions that preceded his knowledge that he would be part of the mission, to describe to the reader that recognizing the Chinese market is part of the new political game, being a necessity for the country that does not want to “abdicate any pretensions in world terms”.

Through the analysis of these texts, it can be seen that, fifteen days before and after the inauguration of General Ernesto Geisel in the presidency of Brazil, in the selected

newspapers, there was an investigative posture of both in the public sphere before the statements and information that came from the sectors government. This posture was in turn presented in a subtle way, probably in order to avoid the censors' action, but it also managed to add tone to the narrative employed. In addition, it was possible to see that objectivity under the influence of American journalism did not overlap with the performance of the French opinion model. It will be possible to observe that the emphasis of the publications remains on the same path, however it fluctuates in relation to the interests that each journal will defend in the name of the so-called “public opinion”.

Final considerations

Based on the notes made throughout this article, it was possible to achieve the objective of identifying, through the analyzed journals, the principle of framing they performed before the diplomatic partnership that was outlined in Brazil under the Geisel government (1974-1979) and, still, understand the intention of the Brazilian Government when establishing diplomatic relations with communist China in that period. In fact, as seen in the journalistic texts and it was thought from the beginning of this research, the embryonic character of the relationship between Brazil and communist China in 1974 proved to be more than just a commercial relationship within the foreign policy agenda. It is also considered that the term of strategy related to the partnership in the 1990s could be a reference of its embryonic period.

Such a proposition is constructed and defended based on what was mentioned as the definition of strategy, which deals with the effective application of what is available as a resource, exploring the possible favorable conditions of enjoyment, aiming to achieve certain objectives. As exposed throughout the master's thesis defended by this author in early 2019, which is part of the subject addressed in this article, the central purpose of external relations was national development. Through an examination of the newspaper publications, which showed the progress of the negotiations, it is noted that communist China was properly inserted in the process of consolidating the partnership, as it had such an expensive item for sale in Brazil, oil. In addition, he was very interested in buying Brazilian sugar, an interesting situation for Brazil due to the great need that Brazilian exporters had in conquering new markets. Still, the intention was to develop Brazilian industrial exports as a whole.

So, it is known, in relation to the public sphere, that there was interference on the part of the Government, in view of the practice of censorship, for example, but also controlling what would go to the press, in addition to what would go from it to the public. However, there was also interference from the business sector, in the form of interviews and lectures that were mentioned on the pages of newspapers, giving scope for their interests to be disseminated through the press, renewing the power contained in the media as a social vector and as a possible responsible in dictating an agenda.

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