Revista Ibero-Americana de Estratégia
Iberoamerican Journal of Strategic Management

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INFLUENCE STRATEGY IN THE JBS AND ODEBRECHT GROUPS: SCOPE OF ACTION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Rui Fernando Correia Ferreira[1]   Felipe Fróes Couto[2]   Lívia Almada[3]

Bruno Almeida Vilela[4]

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study was to identify and categorize influence strategy objectives pursued by JBS and Odebrecht in order to gain a competitive advantage in their relationship with the State.

Theoretical framework: Beyond the theoretical perspective of the non-market strategy, and based on economic sociology, the concept of influence strategy was used to analyze social, political, and economic relations between the State and corporations.

Method: We employed a 'structure analysis' for the identified events, based on over 35 hours of video recordings with 27 executives from the aforementioned companies.

Results: We identified 23 cases of influence strategies, in which private actors used complex actions in Company-State relations in search of gains from sources of competitive advantages.

Conclusion: Three common strategic goals were identified: i) contract winning; ii) regulation/exemption; iii) influence on the public bureaucracy at the municipal, state, and federal levels.

Keywords: influence strategy, non-market strategy, JBS, Odebrecht, lobbying

[1] PhD in Administration. Federal University of Minas Gerais – UFMG. Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais – Brazil.
[2] PhD in Administration. State University of Montes Claros – UNIMONTES. Montes Claros, Minas Gerais - Brazil.
[3] PhD in Administration. Federal University of Juiz de Fora – UFJF. Juiz de Fora, Minas Gerais - Brazil.
[4] PhD in Administration. Federal University of Espírito Santo – UFES. Vitória, Espírito Santo - Brazil.

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Estratégia de Influência nos grupos JBS e Odebrecht: âmbito de atuação e objetivos estratégicos

Resumo

Objetivo: Este estudo teve como objetivo identificar e categorizar os objetivos de estratégia de influência realizados pela JBS e Odebrecht para obter ganhos de vantagem competitiva na relação com o Estado.

Marco teórico: Para além da perspectiva teórica da estratégia de não-mercado, e com base na sociologia econômica, propôs-se o conceito de estratégia de influência para analisar relações sociais políticas e econômicas entre Estado e corporações.

Método: Utilizamos a análise da estrutura de eventos, identificados ao longo de mais de 35 horas de vídeo com 27 executivos das referidas empresas.

Resultados: Foram identificados 23 casos de estratégias de influência, em que atores privados se utilizaram de complexas ações nas relações Empresa-Estado em busca de ganhos de fontes de vantagens competitivas.

Conclusão: Três objetivos estratégicos comuns foram identificados: i) ganhos de contratos; ii) regulação/desoneração; iii) influência na burocracia pública nos âmbitos municipal, estadual e federal.

Palavras-chave: estratégia de influência, estratégia de não-mercado, JBS, Odebrecht, *lobbying*

Estrategia de influencia en los grupos JBS y ODebrecht: alcance de actuación y objetivos estratégicos

Resumen

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio fue identificar y categorizar los objetivos de la estrategia de influencia llevadas a cabo por JBS y Odebrecht para obtener ventajas competitivas en su relación con el Estado.

Marco teórico: Más allá de la perspectiva teórica de la estrategia de no mercado, y con base en la sociología económica, se propuso el concepto de estrategia de influencia para analizar las relaciones sociales, políticas y económicas entre el Estado y las corporaciones.

Método: Utilizamos el análisis de estructura de eventos identificados durante más de 35 horas de video con 27 ejecutivos de las empresas antes mencionadas.

Resultados: Identificamos 23 casos de estrategias de influencia, en las que actores privados utilizaron acciones complejas en las relaciones Empresa-Estado en busca de ganancias a partir de fuentes de ventajas competitivas.

Conclusión: Fue posible identificar tres objetivos estratégicos comunes: i) adjudicación de contratos; ii) regulación/exención; iii) influencia en la burocracia pública a nivel municipal, estatal y federal.

Palabras clave: estrategia de influencia, estrategia no de mercado, JBS, Odebrecht, *lobbying*

1 Introduction

The relationship between corporations and the state has always been the target of extensive research across various fields of social sciences (Salisbury, 1975; Peltzman, 1976; Berry, 1989; Olson, 1989; Porter, 1990; Fligstein, 1996; Baumgartner, 1996; Norburn, 1997; Fligstein, 2001; Truman, 2003; Skocpol, 2008; Stigler, 2021; among others). This relationship

Ferreira, R. F. C., Couto, F. F., Almada, L. & Vilela, B. A. (2024, Mayo/Aug.). Influence strategy in the JBS and Odebrecht groups: scope of action and strategic objectives

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has been the subject of several theoretical propositions, each with specific worldviews and premises in pursuit of understanding and analyzing related emergent phenomena.

One aspect of these studies is linked to the observation of actions and mechanisms (devices) tied to the pursuit of interests in the Corporation-State relationship. These actions are interpreted by strategy theories based on two ideological stances: on the one hand, there is the premise that strategic actions are imbued with subjective intentionality (evolutionary approach to the firm); on the other hand, such actions would be charged with totally disinterested and impartial rationality (neoclassical view of the firm). This paper opts for a stance closer to the evolutionary approach, understanding that economic agents are not merely passive individuals endowed with an 'inevitable rationality'; rather, they are active subjects, ingrained with subjectivity, who proactively (or reactively) seek personal benefits.

The theoretical perspective of this study stems from the concept of non-market strategies proposed by Baron (1995a) to reach the concept of influence strategy proposed by Ferreira (2018). As Baron (1995a, 1995b) presents, the concept of "non-market strategy" widely disseminated in the field of Strategic Management (SM) represents a generic demarcation for actions exercised among firms beyond suppliers, customers, and competitors. Companies either adopt market strategies or 'outside the market' strategies (with governments, for example) to influence the legal, political, and social context (Baron, 2016).

Seeking to go beyond non-market strategies (and neoclassical views), this study uses the concept of influence strategy (Ferreira, 2018), hereby understood as a complex action that can be carried out through campaign contributions, lobbying, influence on party political platforms and/or corrupt practices. These actions are part of the Company-State relationship to influence the decision-making process and obtain competitive advantages in regulatory, economic, and/or legislative aspects, favoring oligopolies, monopolies, or the creation of markets for certain interest groups. Hence, based on the actions of JBS and Odebrecht in their relationship with the State, our premise is that there is an influence strategy process in place, with characteristics that can be interpreted and categorized.

The theoretical-conceptual gap explored in this study pertains to the absence of a comprehensive approach that specifically elucidates the objectives and mechanisms of influence strategies used by companies in their interactions with the State. Furthermore, this work aims to explore a critical need that surpasses the superficial analyses of non-market strategies, which often ignore or oversimplify more complex theorizations. This gap, still scarcely explored, becomes evident when considering the contributions of various authors (e.g., Faria & Abdalla, 2014; Finger, 2019; Ferreira, Vilela, Muniz & Gonçalves, 2020; Silva &

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Abdalla, 2020; Faria, Abdalla & Guedes, 2021), who have stressed the importance of recognizing and integrating these alternative dimensions into discussions on corporate strategies and their implications on policies and state structures.

This paper aims to answer the following research question: *with what purpose did the JBS and Odebrecht groups use influence strategies in their interactions with the State?* The objectives and strategies used by these companies can serve as a basis for proposing a theoretical framework for future studies. Based on this research problem, our goal was to identify and categorize the purposes of the JBS and Odebrecht groups' influence strategy in their pursuit of a competitive advantage in the State. Specifically, the study aims to a) identify the relationships between the JBS and Odebrecht groups and State entities in their pursuit of competitive advantage; b) analyze the Event Structure, based on (1989); c) analyze the intentionality of the agents and the purposes of their initiatives with public actors.

Case selection was based on relevance. The corporate groups JBS and Odebrecht were two of the largest financiers of electoral campaigns in Brazil before the ban on corporate campaign financing. According to de Lima, Prazeres, Araújo e Lagioia (2016), in the elections of 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2014, JBS donated about 463 million Brazilian reais to various political parties and candidates; in the 2014 elections, Odebrecht donated about 111 million Brazilian reais to various parties and politicians; both were the largest campaign donors in the 2014 elections. As Lazzarini (2007, 2011, 2015) points out, both Odebrecht and JBS are well-versed in crony capitalism and state capitalism. JBS received various financings from the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES) after 2005. In return, the BNDES became one of its main shareholders. Odebrecht controls Braskem, the main petrochemical company in the Americas, and became a partner of Petrobras in 2006 through a significant merger.

The paper is organized as follows: after this introduction, the theoretical framework is presented, addressing both the limitations of the non-market strategy and the appropriateness of the influence strategy and establishing comparisons between both views. The methodology section describes the research type and design, the sample, the unit of analysis, the unit of observation, the data collection process, and the data analysis. Finally, the results section presents the analysis and the main conclusions about the study, along with the research limitations and suggestions for future studies.

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2 Theoretical framework

2.1 The Theoretical Limitations of Non-Market Strategy

The distinction between market and non-market pertains to the strategic action environment of the firm, that is, "market strategy focuses on choices in markets and the firm's performance in those markets" (Baron, 2016, p. 3). In contrast, non-market strategy occurs through choices among strategic alternatives in contexts of public and private policies, in the legal, political, and social environment, based on an external analysis of the factors of strategic management (Baron, 2016). As Faria and Abdalla (2014) argue, Baron's concept divides a potential 'market' from a potential 'non-market' and overlooks the established bases of Economic Sociology and Political Economy (Fligstein & Dauter, 2007; Fligstein, 2018; 2001b; Polanyi, 2001) to ultimately present a proposal for the integration of these concepts.

Since the popularization of the definition of 'non-market strategy' by Baron (1995a, 1995b, 1999), the term has been consolidated not just as a concept or a theme, but as a subfield of strategy. As Baron (2016) assesses in his review article on the field, this maturation is evident in the significant works published in the last decade, such as *The Routledge Companion to Nonmarket Strategy* (Lawton & Rajwani, 2015), *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Social Responsibility* (McWilliams, 2019), *The Oxford Handbook on Business and the Natural Environment* (Bansal & Hoffman, 2012), and *the Academy of Management Perspectives Symposium on Non-Market Strategy* (Doh, Lawton & Rajwani, 2012; Henisz & Zelner, 2012), among more than fourteen annual conferences. In Brazil, some examples of work on non-market strategy have gained prominence in the form of area reviews (Loch & Günther, 2015), critiques and debates (Faria & Abdalla, 2014), and applied works (Passos et al., 2021; Coelho & Barros, 2021).

More recent works indicate evolutions in the original view of non-market strategy and address the complexity of these relationships. Ismayil and Tunçalp (2023) discuss the importance of non-market strategies, including the construction of legitimacy and sociopolitical networks, which may involve interactions with the State and other regulatory entities. For Sun, Doh, Rajwani, and Siegel (2021), non-market strategies can be understood as a concerted action carried out by a company to improve its competitive position and performance by actively managing the institutional or social contexts of the business competition in which it operates.

Winkler and Krzeminska (2024) see several limitations in the discussions about non-market strategies, such as the predominance of Western perspectives, which do not take into

account other contexts, especially in emerging economies. Moreover, the diversity of ethical-normative and instrumental paradigms in the literature on non-market strategies complicates the application and understanding of strategies. Another issue addressed by Winkler and Krzeminska (2024) is the lack of epistemological and methodological transparency in research, which creates a preference for quantitative methods that may neglect the ethical nuances of strategies. Finally, the authors raise ethical and moral questions about the use of political strategies to cover up questionable business practices.

Ferreira, Vilela, Muniz, and Gonçalves (2020) reflect that, from the mainstream perspective of strategic management, non-market institutions use market institutions to facilitate the promotion of their power objectives. In other words, the non-market is subordinate to the market because it represents the pursuit of economic profits through the negation of competition by political means. Based on this view, large corporations use a non-market strategy to capture State agencies, communities, and governments. For the authors, the conceptual denial of the non-market itself is a limiting factor in the development of markets and in recognizing what can be considered a market and what cannot.

Silva and Abdalla (2020) argue that, in understanding these strategic relationships between institutions, one must recognize that companies and governments act by transcending the conceptual limits of this 'market' or 'non-market' rationale. For instance, Bucheli and DeBerge (2023) present a critical view on what they call the "dark side" of non-market strategy, including direct support for repressive regimes in 'third-world' countries, delegitimization of protests against human rights abuses, exploitation of tensions between nations, and building coalitions to promote the overthrow of democratically elected governments.

Hence, a concept of 'non-market' that considers corruption merely as a market dysfunction presents contradictions within the field of political economy itself. Some researchers have argued that public sector corruption in countries with low levels of public governance maturity is beneficial for economic growth, as it reduces transaction costs (*it greases the wheel*, as commonly stated in the literature) and contributes to the expansion of production (Sarte, 2000; Méon & Sekkat, 2005; Houston, 2007; Aidt, Dutta, & Sena, 2008; Dutt & Traca, 2010; Méon & Weill, 2010; Vaal & Ebben, 2011). It becomes evident that in referring to countries with 'immature governance' many authors are referring to 'third-world' countries (former colonies), where corruption constitutes a fundamental element for the 'civilizing exercise' of the nation and the constitution of capitalism in the molds imposed by 'developed countries'.

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In this regard, the historical and geopolitical argument defended by Faria and Abdalla (2014) suggests the incorporation of significant political, social, and historical perspectives from each nation into the field of Strategic Management. Faria and Abdalla (2014) advocate for a conceptual revision aimed at not disregarding dimensions of the geopolitics of knowledge. In pursuit of a theoretical proposal that goes beyond the generic concept of non-market strategy, we reach the notion of 'strategy of influence', characterized by the explicit intentionality of the agent in their desire for gains.

2.2 Influence Strategy

From reflections on the phenomena arising from the Company-State relationship, Ferreira (2018) proposed a multidisciplinary concept based on different fields of knowledge, namely: a) strategy as practice, by Whittington (1992), on intentional actions performed in social structures to achieve competitive advantages; b) economic theories, to understand the regulatory aspects and capture of the State by private agents seeking to maintain market balance and the creation or maintenance of oligopolies and monopolies by certain interest groups (McChesney, 1997; Stigler, 1971; Peltzman , 1976; Olson, 1965); c) economic sociology, by understanding the influence strategy as a complex action to be carried out by individuals with limited rationality, with scattered and sometimes conflicting interests, intertwined in overlapping socioeconomic structures that transform over time (Mennell, 1998; Smelse & Swedberg, 2010; Fligstein, 2018; Swedberg, 2021); and d) political science, through a deep understanding of actions such as campaign contributions, lobbying, influence on political party platforms, corrupt practices and other ways of influencing the decision-making process in different spheres of the State (Przeworski, 2011).

According to King and Jasper (2022), from the mainstream perspective, the involvement of organizations with 'non-market' environments aims to transform political resources into market value. For the authors, this instrumentalist view of strategic management is subject to criticism from sociology. However, sociology, organizational theory, and political science contribute to 'strategy of influence' as a new object of study. Beyond the view of profit maximization, King and Jasper (2022) argue that executives in control of companies aim to accumulate personal power, social distinction, wealth, and the ability to influence the world according to their ideological views. Hence, a concept that can capture this complexity is needed.

The concepts of 'market' and 'strategy', capable of understanding this multiplicity of markets and actors that influence and are influenced by the State, must be incorporated,

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contested, and plural (Massot, 2021). As Massot (2021) argues, concepts from traditional political economy literature can limit a richer and more comprehensive conceptual development. The author criticizes the State-Market dichotomy as a rigid representation that makes developed economies transition from being State economies to being market economies. This view would be a limitation to understanding the development of important markets in the global economy, such as China. Massot (2021) contends that a view from classical political economy and economic sociology is required to interpret phenomena.

In Ferreira's (2018) proposal, the 'influence strategy' is a complex and intentional action of the agent (now central to the theoretical model), carried out through: a) campaign contributions; b) lobbying; c) influence on party political platforms; and or d) corrupt practices, among others. The subject's agency occurs in Company-State relations to influence the decision-making process in its different spheres of the State to gain competitive advantages in regulatory and/or legislative aspects. In this sense, the desired purpose would be to maintain market balance in oligopolies, monopolies, or the creation of new markets for certain interest groups.

When transposing the generic concept of 'non-market' to 'influence strategy', a character of voluntariness and protagonism of the agent in the situation is revealed. While the first concept assumes an 'impersonal dysfunction at a theoretical level derived from the economic rationality existing in markets', the 'influence strategy' characterizes influence and capture in governments as an active strategy, conscious action directed towards transgression, sabotage, and co-option of legal-political systems by private agents with the explicit purpose of obtaining advantages contrary to the Social Contract. 'Personalizing agents' and situating them historically is, therefore, an act of resistance to the advances of the private sphere over the public, excluding a large mass of citizens who find themselves harmed by deviations in purpose and eventual corruption.

The concept of organizational strategy presumes the active search for competitive advantage, that is, as a set of critical success factors capable of promoting performance above the average of competitors, in a sustainable, plural, and lasting way. When talking about strategies carried out by economic actors (embedded in social structures), it is necessary to establish which factors (tangible or intangible) are used for competitive differentiation. It is also necessary to establish what the competitive field is, who the competitors are, and why these factors provide superior, plural, and lasting performance (Ferreira et al., 2020).

The concept of 'influence strategy' defended in this work only exists through the creation of competitive markets, which presuppose the existence of economic organizations,

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social institutions, and voluntary and historical agents that compete for it through complex and diverse relationships embedded in numerous formal and informal spheres (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005; Fligstein, 2018; Maurer, 2020).

The 'influence strategy' is also based on New Economic Sociology, which seeks to analyze political and historical socioeconomic structures and interactions. This means that to understand a given actor, it is necessary to observe these structures (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005; Fligstein, 2018; Maurer, 2020). For example, pressure and interest groups that practice the 'influence strategy' are the result of a structure that allows such a practice in a permissive way. As defended by New Economic Sociology, the individual acts within the possibilities of social structures and interactions, which go beyond the simple Company-State division. There are situations in which State institutions act as economic actors and there are situations in which economic actors act as State regulators (Mennell, 1998).

In short, it is not difficult to see actors with economic interests acting alongside the State. The Public Sector, in this view, loses its character as a disinterested regulatory entity and becomes an arena for competing interests between the most diverse sectors and groups in society. Thus, on the one hand, there are groupings by State (or state actors), and, on the other, there are Interest Groups and Private Pressure Groups, which are the implementers of the 'influence strategy' (Ferreira, 2020). In this way, we see a concept of strategy that seeks to analyze the subject's practices carried out in the Corporations-State relationship, to expand the theoretical understanding of business practices.

Finally, the proposed concept needs to be articulated with observed empirical mechanisms. One possibility would be to observe cases such as 'Operation Car Wash', which could illustrate and deepen the mechanisms of 'influence strategy'. The operation's initial objective was to break the confidentiality of a gas station in Brasília, in search of information about money launderers associated with money laundering in the state of Paraná. This operation evolved into 47 phases, involving several companies, political parties, and public agents, with developments in all spheres of government. It is often seen as the most important political fact of the 2010s, also due to the challenges in its subsequent legal processes (Junior, 2020).

3 Methodology

Given the various possibilities highlighted in the studies presented, and considering the complexity of the phenomenon in question, a methodological design was necessary to make the research viable and demonstrate the active agency of the actors in specific cases. This research is qualitative-descriptive in nature and involves multiple cases. The multi-case approach made

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it possible to collect relevant and more reliable evidence when compared to single case studies (Yin, 2015). The method was used with a descriptive and interpretative approach. Interpretive research has at its foundation the basic recognition of the interpretative and cognitive processes inherent to social life (Lowenberg, 1993). For these purposes, every concrete influence strategy action is considered a 'case'.

3.1 Sample, Unit of Analysis, and Unit of Observation

We understand the unit of observation of the cases in question to be companies that have a relationship with State entities in search of competitive advantage. As units of analysis, the narratives of individual members of business institutions that have relationships with various state entities in the practice of influence strategy were used.

For this study, the research data refers to video material and texts produced by business institutions, containing some narrative or information about influence strategy cases. Cases are chronologies of structured events that detail an influence strategy action.

To address the research problem, the following general objective was established: *Identify the main purposes in the adoption of the influence strategy carried out by the JBS and Odebrecht groups in their interactions with the State.* This objective is based on the premise that the process of influence strategy has characteristics that can be interpreted and categorized, enabling the proposal of a theoretical framework for new studies.

The data used for conducting the research were of secondary origin, produced by 'Operation Car Wash' through leniency agreements and plea bargains made by executives from JBS and Odebrecht. Such agreements were widely publicized by the media and became an important and influential fact in Brazil's history, involving evidence of 'schemes' and amounts diverted from the State in a controversial and contentious action by legal agents (Junior, 2020).

As Bell and Leonard (2018) argue, despite the limitations of digital organizational history, there is potential for dialogue and co-creation. The more widespread the story is, the larger its audience will be, which makes controlling the creation of meanings more complex. This process causes stories to be read through different interpretations, including antagonistic ones. Moreover, when this process involves several 'storytellers' from the same organization, conflicts may arise, enabling the "dialogical construction of meanings" in search of (re)affirming some prominent value (Bell & Leonard, 2018, p. 11).

The difficulty of researching this type of empirical object using primary data collection is well-known. Relevant social actors are sometimes inaccessible to researchers. Therefore, one

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strategy employed is the use of fully recorded videos and descriptions of videos with whistleblowers from the two companies. Even though the data were not produced for this work, it is recognized as a rich material that is underexplored for academic ends.

In this study, we consider the executives' testimonies as narratives and the act of testifying as interviews, with the aim of recreating the historical facts of each case. This material available on video was used as a corpus for a structuralist analysis. According to Bauer and Gaskell (2017), narrative is an act of telling a story, composed of actions, experiences and characters organized in a sequence, in situations that evolve and change with chronological and non-chronological dimensions to configure a plot. The ways in which social groups construct stories, even with different perspectives, contribute to the sequence of events (Bauer & Gaskell, 2017).

3.2 Data Collection

The material used from the Odebrecht Group amounts to 23 hours, 49 minutes, and 10 seconds, totaling 67 videos. We analyzed the testimonies made by the company's twenty main executives, who had their material publicly disclosed. All videos are available in full on YouTube. The material was organized and made available for consultation[5]. Table 1 lists the names of the executives, the roles they held, and the video length.

Table 1

List of Odebrecht Executives

Code	Name	Role	Video Length	Video Number	Video Codes
D01	Alexandre José Lopes Barradas	Director at Foz do Brasil (sanitation branch of the group). He also has experience in Odebrecht Infrastructure. Residing in São Paulo.	01:27:45	3	1_1, 1_2, 1_3
D02	Alexandrino Alencar	Former Director of Institutional Relations at Odebrecht.	01:12:29	3	2_1, 2_2, 2_3
D03	André Vital Pessoa de Melo	An executive at the construction company, subordinate to Benedicto Junior, aka BJ.	00:06:42	1	3_1
D04	Ariel Parente Costa	Former executive.	00:06:31	1	4_1
D05	Benedicto Barbosa da Silva Junior, o BJ	Former President of Odebrecht Infrastructure. The Federal Public Ministry (MPF) assigns him the role of head of the construction company's "Bribery Department"	02:26:40	9	5_1, 5_2, 5_3, 5_4, 5_5, 5_6, 5_7,

continues on the next page

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[5] https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8ke4y6cSFPETzgxM1F2dzJobTg

Code	Name	Role	Video Length	Video Number	Video Codes
					5_8, 5_9
D06	Carlos Armando Guedes Pachoal	Former Director of Odebrecht in São Paulo, aka "CAP".	00:12:32	3	6_1, 6_2, 6_3
D07	Carlos Fadigas	Engineer and former Director of Braskem, Odebrecht's petrochemical arm.	01:49:20	3	7_1, 7_2, 7_3
D08	César Ramos Rocha	Former Manager of the construction company's finance area. Worked directly under Márcio Faria da Silva from 2008.	00:47:09	1	8_1
D09	Claudio Melo Filho	Director of Institutional Relations of the construction company in Brasília. He was Odebrecht's main lobbyist in Congress.	04:07:00	11	9_1, 9_2, 9_3, 9_4, 9_5, 9_6, 9_7, 9_8, 9_9, 9_10, 9_11
D10	Fernando Luiz Ayres da Cunha Santos Reis	Former President and one of the founders of Odebrecht Environmental.	00:19:22	3	10_1, 10_2, 10_3
D11	Henrique Serrano do Prado Valladares	Former Director of Odebrecht in Salvador. The MPF labels him as one of the members of Odebrecht's "Bribery Department"	03:40:04	6	11_1, 11_2, 11_3, 11_4, 11_5, 11_6
D12	Hilberto Mascarenhas Alves da Silva Filho	Former Director of Odebrecht in Salvador. He was the direct head of Odebrecht's "Bribery Department"	01:56:03	5	12_1, 12_2, 12_3, 12_4, 12_5
D13	João Antônio Pacífico Ferreira	Engineer and Director of Norberto Odebrecht Construction Company in the North, Northeast, and Central-West regions.	00:06:31	2	13_1, 13_2
D14	José de Carvalho Filho	Former employee, subordinate to Claudio Melo Filho.	00:46:19	5	14_1, 14_2, 14_3, 14_4, 14_5
D15	Luiz Eduardo da Rocha Soares	Executive of the construction company in Salvador, responsible for offshore companies and the financial operation of Odebrecht's "Bribery Department" abroad. Subordinate to Hilberto Silva.	00:30:01	2	15_1, 15_2
D16	Marcelo Odebrecht	Son of Emílio Odebrecht and heir to the company that bears his surname. Led the construction company's Board of Directors.	00:45:15	4	16_1, 16_2, 16_3, 16_4
D17	Márcio Faria	Became CEO of Norberto Odebrecht Construction Company, the main company of the Odebrecht group, in 2009.	00:40:52	1	17_1

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D18	Paulo Henyan Yue Cesena	Former President of Odebrecht TransPort, the group's logistics and urban mobility company.	00:33:58	1	18_1
D19	Rogério Santos de Araújo	Former Odebrecht employee. Worked in the Industrial Engineering area, subordinate to Márcio Faria da Silva.	01:55:42	2	19_1, 19_2
D20	Valter Luis Arruda Lana	Engineer and former Director of Norberto Odebrecht Construction Company (CNO).	00:18:55	1	20_1

Note: Organized by the authors from the data made available by Operation Car Wash.

The material used from the JBS Group amounts to nine hours, 56 minutes, and 10 seconds, across 41 videos. For this work, the testimonies of the seven main executives of the company were analyzed. The videos are available in full on YouTube. For this research, the material was organized and made available for consultation[6]. Table 2 lists the names of the executives, the roles they held, and the video length.

Table 2

List of JBS Executives

Code	Name	Role	Video Length	Video Number	Video Codes
D21	Demilton Antonio de Castro	Executive responsible for controlling the payment spreadsheet	00:30:59	2	21_1, 21_2
D22	Florisvaldo Caetano de Oliveira	Former advisor to JBS	01:05:36	2	22_1, 22_2
D23	Francisco de Assis e Silva	Lawyer for the JBS group	00:39:22	2	23_1, 23_2
D24	Joesley Batista	Heir and chief executive of the group	01:38:53	8	24_1, 24_2, 24_3, 24_4, 24_5, 24_6, 24_7, 24_8
D25	Ricardo Saud	Main lobbyist for JBS	03:34:47	16	25_1, 25_2, 25_3, 25_4, 25_5, 25_6, 25_7, 25_8, 25_9, 25_10, 25_11, 25_12, 25_13, 25_14, 25_15, 25_16
D26	Valdir Aparecido Boni	Former director of JBS	00:57:52	5	26_1, 26_2, 26_3, 26_4, 26_5
D27	Wesley Batista	Heir and executive of JBS	01:28:41	6	27_1, 27_2, 27_3, 27_4, 27_5, 27_6

Note: Organized by the authors from the data made available by Operation Car Wash.

In total, there are 35 hours, 32 minutes, and 45 seconds of video recordings, covering 27 key agents in the institutional relationship of Odebrecht and JBS, agents who maintained some relationship with actors within the State structure. To identify the cases of influence

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[6] https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B8ke4y6cSFPETzgxM1F2dzJobTg

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strategy reported in these videos, the following section presents the method of analysis, the results, and the data analysis.

3.3 Analysis Method

Based on the work of Freitas (2014) for structuring the data (videos) into record units (cf. Moraes, 1999), this research relied on causal cognitive mapping (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2008; Eden, 2004), along with event structure analysis (Heise, 1989; Heise & During, 1997).

The analysis of event structures (Heise, 1989) aims to develop a methodology for qualitative modeling of logical structures that guide human action in concrete situations. Furthermore, we opted for an in-depth intra-case study, carrying out an internal analysis of the case studied, aiming to map the unfolding of its events over time (Mahoney, 2000). This type of analysis is considered the most appropriate when the objective of the research is centered around the procedural aspect of the phenomenon in question. In search of understanding the procedural aspect of the phenomenon, a systematic process analysis was carried out (Hall, 2008). The method used can be classified as 'historical', as it aimed to explain a phenomenon by tracking the process that preceded its occurrence (Mahoney, 2004; Mahoney, Kimball & Koivu, 2009).

According to Freitas (2014), an event can be structured based on the following categories: a) agent: the one who promotes or induces the event; b) action: the verb that merges elements into an event; c) object: the entity that is modified, so that the repetition of the event requires replacement of the entity; d) instrument: the entity used by the agent to casually advance the event, without being significantly changed by the event; e) product: the entity that sees existence as a result of an event and that enables or disables subsequent events; and f) affected: agent of an event that is intentionally enabled or disabled by the agent of the focal event.

As an example of the application of event structure in narrative, a segment from the description by Alexandre Barradas (D01) is presented:

> In 2011, knowing of the interest of the then-elected Governor Ricardo Coutinho, Alexandre Barradas arranged a meeting with Coutinho at the government headquarters to present some initial technical studies on water supply, particularly on sanitary sewage. The Governor then accepted the implementation of a PMI – Public Expression of Interest procedure, which did not entail an initial cost for the government. However, Alexandre himself stated that Ricardo Coutinho, holding a more statist profile, did not show much interest in the proposal of a Public-Private Partnership – PPP. (D05, Video: 1_1)

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The structuring of the data allowed for the identification of the first event: *In 2011, knowing of the interest of the then-elected Governor Ricardo Coutinho, Alexandre Barradas arranged a meeting with Coutinho at the government headquarters to present some initial technical studies on water supply, particularly on sanitary sewage.* The event's structure is presented in the form of Table 3:

Table 3

First Example of Structured Event

CASE 1	Agent	Action	Instrument	Object	Product	Affected
EVENT 1	ALEXANDRE JOSÉ LOPES BARRADAS	MEETING	GOVERNOR OF PARAÍBA (RICARDO COUTINHO)	SECURE SANITATION WORKS CONTRACT	SANITATION WORKS PROJECT	GOVERNOR OF PARAÍBA (RICARDO COUTINHO)

Note: Structured by the authors, based on Heise (1989) and Heise and During (1997)

The second event: *Then, the governor agreed to the implementation of a PMI – Public Expression of Interest procedure, which did not entail an initial cost for the government.* Its structure is presented in Table 4:

Table 4

Second Example of Structured Event

CASE 2	Agent	Action	Instrument	Object	Product	Affected
EVENTO 2	GOVERNOR OF PARAÍBA (RICARDO COUTINHO)	AGREES TO CARRY OUT TECHNICAL PROJECT	ALEXANDRE JOSÉ LOPES BARRADAS	SANITATION WORKS	SANITATION WORKS PROJECT	ODEBRECHT ENVIRONMENTAL

Note: Structured by the authors, based on Heise (1989) and Heise and During (1997)

All constructions of event chronologies were carried out in this stage. By way of example, the first case is composed of 11 chronologically sequenced events that represent a case of influence strategy. After analyzing the videos, 272 events were structured across 23 cases.

4 Results and Data Analysis

The structure presented in the methodology enabled a deep analysis of the micro-process of the influence strategy, identifying its agents, actions, instrumentalization, and objectives, as well as the relationships between individuals and institutions. From this perspective, the

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complexity of these cases and their different development contexts could be discerned. Table 5 provides a summary of all the cases. Some cases were reported by more than one agent, which allowed for a richness of details and corroborated the facts. These cases were prominently identified. Some actors participated in more cases, as they performed functions that were closer to the public entity. To better understand the cases, we present some categorizations and investigations, before describing the cases.

Table 5

Summary and Identification: Cases / Sources / Scope of Occurrence / Objective

Case	Case Description	Objective Type	Scope	Code	Whistleblower	Video Code	Events
Case 1	Sanitation works / Cássio Cunha Lima's candidacy	Contract	Municipal	D01	Alexandre José Lopes Barradas	1_1	11
Case 1B				D10	Fernando Luiz Ares da Cunha Santos Reis	10_1	
Case 2	Sanitation works / Isaac de Carvalho Juazeiro's candidacy	Contract	Municipal	D01	Alexandre José Lopes Barradas	1_3	8
Case 3	Sanitation works / Mauá	Contract	Municipal	D02	Alexandrino Alencar	2_3	8
Case 4	Braskem ICMS reduction / Yeda Crusius	Regulation	State	D02	Alexandrino Alencar	2_2	8
Case 5	Infraero	Contract	Federal	D05	Benedicto Barbosa da Silva Junior Bj	5_1	7
Case 6	Administrative City of Minas Gerais	Contract	State	D05	Benedicto Barbosa da Silva Junior Bj	5_4	6
Case 7	Sale of Propen by Braskem	Contract	Federal	D07	Carlos Fadigas	7_1	11
Case 8	Port wars	Regulation	Federal	D07	Carlos Fadigas	7_2	26
Case 8ª	Port wars			D09	Cláudio Melo Filho	9_3	
Case 8B	Port wars			D09	Cláudio Melo Filho	9_4	
Case 8C	Port wars			D16	Marcelo Odebrecht	16_3	
Case 9	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract	Contract	Federal	D08	Cesar Ramos Rocha	8_1	26
Case 9	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract			D08	Cesar Ramos Rocha	8_2	
Case 9B	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract			D15	Luiz Eduardo da Rocha Soares	15_2	
Case 9C	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract			D16	Marcelo Odebrecht	16_4	
Case 9D	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract			D17	Márcio Faria	17_1	
Case 9E	PAC SMS PETROBRAS contract			D19	Rogério Santos de Araújo	19_1	
Case 10	Madeira Complex	Contract	Federal	D09	Cláudio Melo Filho	9_4	37
Case 10B	Madeira Complex			D09	Cláudio Melo Filho	9_8	

Case	Case Description	Objective Type	Scope	Code	Whistleblower	Video Code	Events
Case 10C	Madeira Complex			D11	Henrique Serrano Do Prado Valladares	11_1	
Case 10D	Madeira Complex			D11	Henrique Serrano Do Prado Valladares	11_1	
Case 11	Northeast energy crisis	Contract	Federal	D09	Cláudio Melo Filho	9_5	12
Case 12	Ministry of Cities	Contract	Federal	D18	Paulo Henyan Ye Cesena	18_1	6
Case 13	JBS MP case	Bureaucracy	Federal	D23	Francisco de Assis Silva	23_2	19
Case 14	CADE – CVM – Revenue Service	Bureaucracy	Federal	D24	Joesley Batista	24_7	14
Case 15	FI FGTS Eldorado Factory	Bureaucracy	Federal	D25	Ricardo Saud	25_8	6
Case 16	Blocking the auction of Santos port terminals	Bureaucracy	Federal	D25	Ricardo Saud	25_3	11
Case 17	Inspection by the Ministry of Labor of slaughterhouses	Bureaucracy	Federal	D25	Ricardo Saud	25_14	8
Case 18	Dairy sector regulation	Regulation	Federal	D25	Ricardo Saud	25_13	10
Case 19	Concession/purchase of Seara	Contract	State	D25	Ricardo Saud	25_11	9
Case 20	Purchase of presumed credits	Regulation	State	D26	Valdir Aparecido Boni	26_1	6
Case 21	Expedited recognition of presumed credits	Bureaucracy	State	D26	Valdir Aparecido Boni	26_2	6
Case 22	Tax credits in Mato Grosso do Sul	Regulation	State	D26	Valdir Aparecido Boni	26_4	9
Case 23	Tax credits in Mato Grosso	Regulation	State	D26	Valdir Aparecido Boni	26_5	9
Case 23B				D27	Wesley Batista	27_5	

Note: Organized by the authors based on the structured data

Upon observing the frequency of executives in each case, three agents stand out: Cláudio Melo Filho (D09), Ricardo Saud (D25), and Valdir Aparecido Boni (D26). Cláudio Melo Filho and Ricardo Saud were the main institutional representatives of their respective companies in Brasília-DF. Cláudio Melo Filho and Ricardo Saud acted directly to defend interests in the National Congress, that is, they executed lobbying activities and maintained intense relationships with politicians. Valdir Aparecido Boni held the position of Tax Director at JBS, meaning he was directly involved in negotiating tax relief for the company.

After compiling the cases presented, the next step was to categorize them based on their strategic objectives. As seen in Table 5, the cases were classified as:

- *Regulation*: cases that aimed at economic regulation or tax benefits. In other words, those who sought the regulation of specific economic sectors in search of protectionism,

fiscal adjustment or regulatory benefits.

- *Bureaucracy*: cases that sought 'influence in public processes', that is, those seeking to influence bureaucratic processes through politicians, access to public officials, agility or co-option of decisions and inspection processes.

- *Contract*: cases that sought a public contract, that is, those seeking to influence bidding processes to win concession contracts, public-private partnerships, supply contracts, works execution contracts and contracts with state-owned companies, among others in different levels of government.

When observing the frequency of cases in terms of objective, it is clear that the majority of cases are in search of public contracts (11 cases), followed by cases of influence on public processes and economic regulation and tax benefits, each with six cases. After analyzing the cases in terms of objective, we also analyzed the scope in which these cases occur, that is, what is the context in which influence strategy processes seek their competitive advantages. For this, the bureaucratic organizational structure of the Brazilian State was used.

Based on Table 5, the following is noted: 'Federal' for the federal government, 'State' for the state government, and 'Municipal' for the municipal government. There is a strong predominance of federal cases, which was expected, given the size of the companies analyzed, as both Odebrecht and JBS are considered multinationals. When examining the description of the cases, it is clear that there is a correlated structure of influence in which politicians and public agents interfere at different levels of government.

To identify how the cases of influence strategy in this study are concentrated, a cross-referencing process was conducted between the classification of the scope in which these strategies occur and the main strategic objectives. Figure 1 illustrates the influence of the governmental structure on the agendas of interest of the business groups. The size of the circle surrounding the number of cases is related to the number of events that each case comprises. Objectively, the more events there are, the more detailed or complex the case is manifested.

In the second row of the first column, actions related to economic regulation and tax benefits at the state level are observed. These actions are concentrated around the Tax on Circulation of Goods and Services (ICMS) credits in state governments. The first line of the first column contains very broad actions, involving economic sectors, and well-structured actions in the National Congress and the Executive branch.

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The cases highlighted in the second column, first row, are actions that seek to influence public bureaucracy processes to expedite documents and influence regulatory bodies and decision-making processes through bureaucratic agents of the Federal Government.

Figure 1

Number of Cases by Governmental Sphere and Objective of Influence Strategy
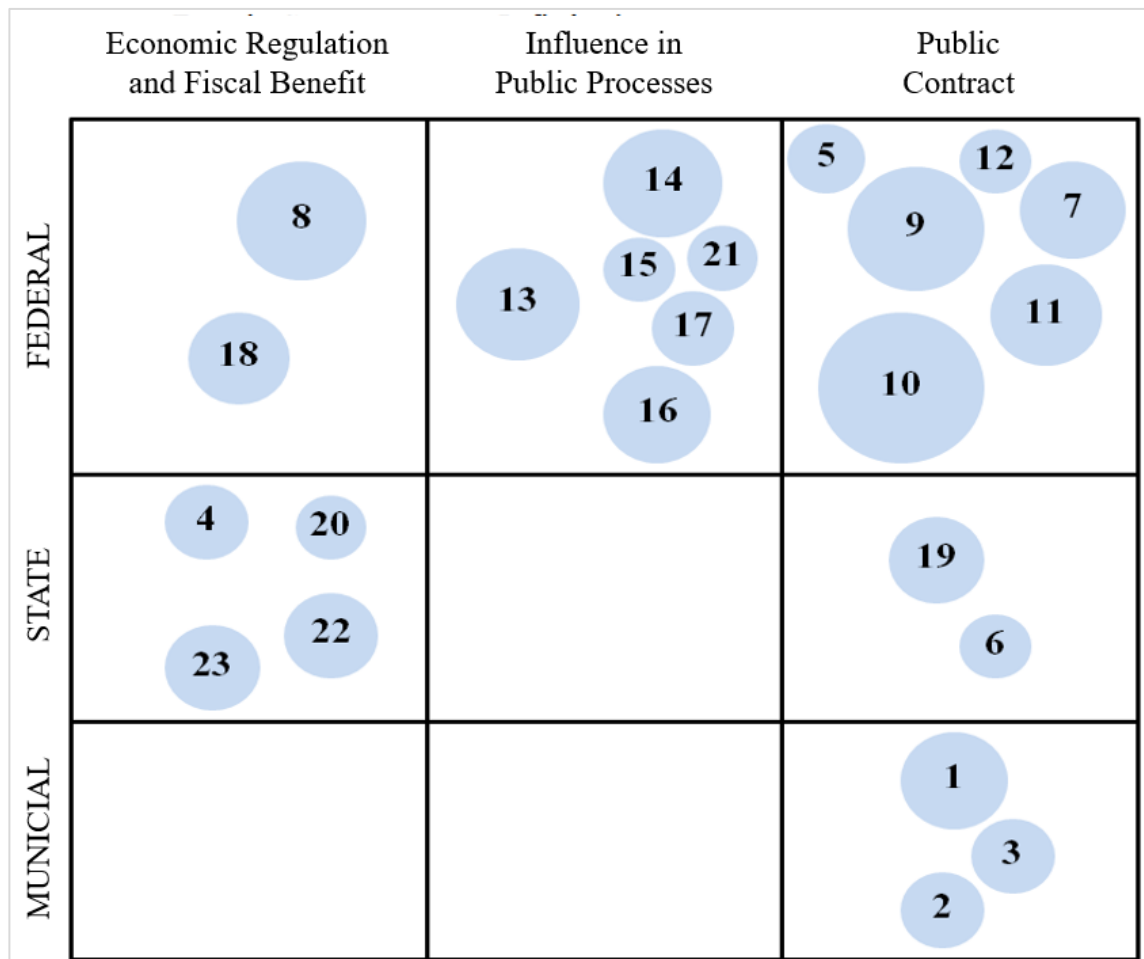
Note: Organized by the authors, based on structured data

The cases located in the third row of the last column are actions seeking contracts for concessions and sanitation works in municipalities, through campaign contributions and relationships with local politicians. The cases located in the second row of the third column involve seeking concessions in sanitation companies and large constructions of the governmental structure, carried out through campaign financing and articulation with other companies. The cases located in the first row of the third column are large contracts at the federal level involving concessions made by ministries to large State-owned enterprises and supply contracts.

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An important observation concerns the characteristics of the interests expressed in the results. The dynamics of influence for economic regulation and tax benefits being concentrated among the federal and state governments may indicate a greater impact regarding taxation levied by these federative entities, while the municipality would have limited offering power (since the taxes mainly concern Urban Property Tax – IPTU and Service Tax – ISS), the States and the Union could offer much more significant concessions, making them more attractive for influence (e.g., ICMS, Tax on industrialized products – IPI and Tax on corporate income – IRPJ).

Conversely, the influence on bureaucratic processes may be associated with the need for the clearance of authorization processes, which, in the analyzed events, concern the federal government. Finally, regarding the dimension of public contracts, all federative entities (the Union, States, and Municipalities) were subjects of influence, as public procurements were identified as an opportunity to gain profits in business activities (by supplying goods and services directly to governments).

In general terms, regulatory interventions and the distribution of decision-making power among various governmental levels establish the framework within which the strategy of influence unfolds, shaping its practices and procedures through the actions of various agents and the multiple actions they carry out. Additionally, situations at the federal level tend to present greater complexity and richness of detail, which can be attributed to the intricate bureaucratic configuration of the Executive and Legislative powers at the federal level, and the intense and fragmented competition for influence among the different interest groups operating at this level.

5 Final Considerations

In this work, we sought to redefine the notion of 'influence strategy' (Ferreira et al. 2020). We see corruption not as a market or non-market phenomenon (Finger, 2019), impersonal or depersonalized, but rather as an active action with rational purposes within the complexity of intertwined markets (Fligstein, 2018). The tangible gains sought were not aimed merely at the illicit enrichment of shareholders of the JBS and Odebrecht groups, but rather at the rational acquisition of competitive advantages (Massot, 2021; Yi Hong, Chung Hsu, & Wang, 2017).

This study aimed to identify and categorize the influence strategy objectives carried out by business groups to obtain competitive advantage gains in their relationship with the State. It is important to highlight the conceptual adherence to the influence strategy proposed by Ferreira

(2018, 2020) for identifying and categorizing cases. After analyzing more than 35 hours of video recordings, with reports from the main executives of JBS and Odebrecht, 23 cases of influence strategy were identified, with different objectives and scopes of action. From the categorization of objectives and scope of action, some inferences can be made.

We noticed that the cases that sought aspects of regulation or tax relief at the state level were centered on presumed credits and ICMS relief (an under-researched topic). The cases focused on aspects of regulation and exemption at the federal level presented a sequence of broad actions, organized in such a way as to mobilize the entire economic sector involved, in an attempt to change the structures of economic regulation, such as the proposal of Provisional Measures. The cases that sought to influence public bureaucracy at the federal level were related to inspection processes, release of specific documents or influence of decisions at the government's second tier.

Cases seeking public contracts permeated all areas. When the investment was at the municipal level, the actions aimed to obtain gains from concession contracts and sanitation works in municipalities, through campaign contributions and relationships with local politicians. The search for public contracts at the state level was characterized by concessions in sanitation companies and large constructions of the government structure, carried out through campaign financing and coordination with companies. Contracts at the federal level involved concessions made by ministries, through large State-owned companies and supply contracts from State-owned companies.

Our proposal is to overcome a generic concept of 'non-market' (Massot, 2021; Ferreira et al., 2020) to adopt a notion of influence strategy. In the present case, it opens up opportunities for the assessment of: a) effective responsibility of agents in the subversion of the political-legal order; b) implications of their actions on the political, economic and social legitimacy of a Nation-State; c) market confidence in the fair play of the competitive game, among other implications derived from the notion that private agents actively act in capturing the public sector.

As limitations of this work, we point out the need to deepen the qualification of the cases analyzed. Furthermore, reliance on secondary data may not cover all the nuances of influence strategies, and the difficulty in accessing key social actors for collecting primary data is also a factor that constrains the research. Moreover, the analysis may be limited by the complexity of the phenomenon studied. The qualitative-descriptive approach, despite being rich in details, may not allow broad generalizations, which could be consolidated by replicating the methodological structure in other cases, with new actors and contexts.

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Therefore, it is important to highlight the potential for future work to qualitatively and systematically analyze the *modus operandi* of the influence strategy cases analyzed. As a suggestion for new studies, the use of Discursive Textual Analysis (DTA) (Galiazzi & Sousa, 2019) would enable the identification of new categories of analysis. Another possibility for new research is the in-depth study of a single case, seeking to detail the structures and objectives of the influence strategy.

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