

The theme as a frame: an opportunity of synergy among Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations

El tema como marco: una oportunidad para la sinergia entre Inteligencia, Comunicación Social y Operaciones Psicológicas

Abstract: This research starts with an approximation of the idea of framing, as an activity developed by the soviet misinformation system over western societies, with the concept of framing as developed by ERWIN GOFFMAN (2012), to map how each one of the Information Related Capabilities (IRC) – Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations – relates with the frames of the Frame Analysis. It was observed that there are convergences between the Intelligence activity and the schemata of interpretation, the Social Communication and the keys, and the Psychological Operations and the fabrications. Lastly, it was proposed that the Theme, a concept from the Synchronized Communication of the United States Armed Forces, would be used as a Frame, to make easier to get the synergy of the capabilities (IRC).

Keywords: Framing. Misinformation. Intelligence. Social Communication. Psychological Operations.

Resumen: El presente estudio parte de la aproximación de la idea de marco, como actividad componente de la desinformación soviética sobre las sociedades occidentales, con el concepto de marco definido por ERWIN GOFFMAN (2012), para delinear cómo cada una de las Capacidades Relacionadas con la Información (CRI) productoras de discurso – Inteligencia, Comunicación Social y Operaciones Psicológicas – se relaciona con los marcos de la experiencia social. Observamos, pues, convergencias entre inteligencia y esquemas primarios, Comunicación Social y las tonalidades y Operaciones Psicológicas y las maquinaciones. Por último, se utiliza el concepto de Comunicación Sincronizada de las Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos para proponer que el tema sea considerado un Marco, que permitirá el logro de sinergias entre las CRI.

Palabras Clave: Marco. Desinformación. Inteligencia. Comunicación Social. Operaciones Psicológicas.

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1 Introduction¹

To think about the synergy between Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations within the Brazilian Armed Forces, it is necessary to define the concepts based on the ethos of these components, specific to the Brazilian Army, where Intelligence is defined as one of the six combat functions, because: "Its scope reaches the other combat functions, which are directly affected or are related to the products of Intelligence" (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 2-1). The Intelligence combat function is directly related to generating information, the latter taken in its broadest sense, since it comprises "the set of activities, tasks and interrelated systems employed to ensure understanding of the operational environment, threats (current and potential), opponents, terrain and civilian factors" (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 2-1).

Another combat support activity that also deals with Information is Social Communication. The manual defines it as "the process by which one seeks to improve the relationship between human beings, as individuals, or as members of a social group". It can also be understood as "a series of actions according to which ideas, feelings and information can be expressed aiming to establish relationships and pool experiences" (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 4-2).

Psychological Operations (PsyOps) are defined as:

Technical-specialized procedures, operated in a systematic manner to support the achievement of political or military objectives and undertaken before, during and after the use of force, aiming to motivate friendly, neutral or hostile target audiences to achieve desirable behaviors. (BRASIL, 2015b, p. 196/288).

Although, by themselves, they follow very different concepts, the three activities are among those identified as Information-Related Capabilities (CRI), among which one must seek opportunities for synergy, as well as, establish clearly defined limits, that help prevent "informational fratricide". All of this under the coordination of Information Operations, which consist of the:

integrated use of information-related capabilities (IRC) and other information-related resources, within the scope of the informational dimension, to influence, interrupt, corrupt or usurp the decision-making process of opponents and potential adversaries, while protecting our own (BRAZIL, 2019a, p. 3-1, 3-2).

However Military Terrestrial Doctrine (MTD) defends the use of modular capacity development to generate combat power:

1 Framing is a concept that refers to the principles of organization, observable by an individual, that govern events - at least social ones - and the subjective involvement in them, which allow the definition of situations. In short, the frame is a socially constructed system of perception that allows the individual, whenever faced with a new situation, to answer: what is happening here? (GOFFMAN, 2012).

[...] the Ground Force (GFor) seeks the development of capabilities, prioritizing the generation of sustainable modules with complete capabilities (doctrine, organization, training, material, education, personnel and infrastructure - DOAMEPI), with full combat capabilities, and in accordance with the demands of strategic areas and national interests (BRASIL, 2019b, p. 4-1).

Given this assumption, the development of the three IRC under study occurs independently. However, the same MTD indicates the need to pool capabilities under a single command:

For the generation of power, [...] the capacities required to counter the perceived threats must be taken into account. Its constitution must follow the following criteria:

- a) be based on pre-existing organizational structures;
- b) have a modular composition, according to the necessary operational capacities;
- c) have flexibility to adapt easily and economically to changes in mission and situation; and
- d) have a command unit, so that the responsibility for carrying out the mission rests with a single authority (BRASIL, 2019b, p. 4-3).

Thus, it is assumed that the IRC, Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations, can (and should) constitute modules to be assembled under a single command, if the situation analysis indicates such need so that the Force can counter the identified threats.

The development, however, of the IRC in a watertight manner means that each one is very focused on its own way of approaching military problems, on its particular information processing structure and on the specific solutions that they can provide separately.

Intelligence (Intel) organizes data to “ensure understanding of the operational environment, threats (current and potential), opponents, terrain and civilian considerations²” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 2-1). The Social Communication (SocCom) organizes data to produce a discourse that preserves and strengthens the Army’s image within the national and international communities (BRASIL, 2017). And Psychological Operations (PsyOps) organize data to produce narratives (and here the emphasis is on the plural) with “the objective of motivating friendly, neutral or hostile audiences to manifest desirable behaviors, with the final intention of supporting the achievement of established goals” (BRASIL, 2015b, p. 196/288).

The question, finally, that is presented to the General Staff that receives Intel, PsyOps and SocCom modules is: how to produce a common discourse among the three activities that produce narratives?

Given this question, the problem is formulated as follows: is there a sociological theory whose concepts allow the establishment of a logic within which one can think about the integrated use of Information-Related Capacities: Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations?

2 “[...] the influence of civilian institutions, the attitudes and activities of civilian leaders, the population, public opinion, the environment, man-made infrastructure, national and international agencies, whether governmental or non-governmental, with the capacity to influence and form opinions among nationals or internationals, in the battle space.” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. [44]).

The present study aimed, therefore, to identify a sociological theory whose concepts facilitated the synergistic use of Information-Related Capacities (IRC) Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations. In order to achieve the general purpose of the study, the following specific objectives were outlined:

a) To explain how the sociological theory of “social experience frameworks” can be related to the use of Soviet disinformation during the Cold War period;

b) describe how each of the Capacities Related to Information: Intelligence, Psychological Operations and Social Communication can be related to the concepts of frame analysis;

c) explain how the sociological theory concepts of “social experience frameworks” can contribute to a coordinated production of narratives that characterize a synergistic use of IRC.

There are undoubtedly risks in the concomitant use of Information-Related Capabilities: Intelligence, Psychological Operations and Social Communication, without coordinated planning. For example, there is the possibility of the disclosure of information that compromises counterintelligence on the part of the Social Communication, since it “competes to prevent the opposing force from having access to sensitive data and knowledge” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 3 -3). Another example of risk to be raised is the possibility of obtaining, through the means of searching for Intelligence, information contaminated by the reverberation of campaigns developed by Social Communication or Psychological Operations.

The lack of an institutionalized channel to achieve synergy between Information-Related Capacities increases risks and reduces opportunities for synergy with individual initiatives, as can be seen from the quote below, that reports on the structures that encompass the concomitant use of Social Communication and Psychological Operations in Federal Intervention in the State of Rio de Janeiro, in 2018:

There was a structure of PsyOps working supporting the operations, however the PsyOps were not directly subordinated to the Joint Command, as the SocCom section was, but to the Integrated Tactical Coordination Center (CCTI). That is, although the operations had both activities, they were not coordinated under the same command or rank. [...] The IRC worked in isolation for a good part of the time, except for some personal integration initiatives (PONTES, 2019, p. 28).

At the opposite end of this segmented performance of the IRC in the Brazilian Army, there is the activity of Disinformation, which was first used in a systematic manner in post-communist Russia in 1917, with the institution of the Cheka Disinformation Sector (secret police in Soviet Russia, during the 1917-1922 years), by Felix Edmundovich Dzerzhinsky (1877-1926). Disinformation emerged as a Psychological Operation, a fact that exemplified by the Operation Trust, launched between 1921 and 1926, whose aim was to

obtain two changes in the behavior of White Russians, opponents of the Bolshevik regime, who had emigrated from Russia during the revolution: neutralize their counterrevolutionary activities and capture or eliminate several of its leaders. In this case, Disinformation consisted of infiltrating the leadership of the emigrants with agents promoting the narrative of a fragile Soviet regime. This fact undermined the attempts to organize external pressures against the regime and ended up causing the return of these leaders to Russia and their subsequent arrests and executions (HARRIS, 1985).

Since its creation, the Disinformation Sector has been restructured as the Soviet Secret Service evolved to the NKVD (Popular Commissariat for Internal Affairs, from 1934 to 1953) and, subsequently, to the KGB (State Security Committee, which functioned between 1953 and 1991) during the Cold War (GONÇALVES, 2008, p. 73-74). Disinformation activity itself has evolved, reaching the definition shared by Lieutenant General Ion Mihai Pacepa of the Romanian Intelligence Service who defected on July 27, 1978: “Disinformation (ie dezinformatsiya) is a secret tool for Intelligence, aiming to obtain a western, non-governmental, seal of approval for the lies of the Soviet government”(PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 69). An example of what disinformation would be today, we can mention the following scenario:

Imagine that the FSB (the new KGB) manufactured some documents as alleged evidence that American military forces were following specific orders to target Muslim prayer houses in their bomb attacks on Libya in 2011. If a report on these documents were to be published on a Russian news channel, it would be bad information, and people in the West could rightly take it with a grain of salt and simply not give a damn, seeing it as routine Moscow propaganda. If, on the other hand, this material were made public in the Western media, it would be misinformation and the credibility of the news item significantly greater (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 69).

The same general officer firmly states that:

There is a widespread belief that the worst damage done by Russian / Soviet intelligence operations against the West was the theft of highly sensitive secrets, such as atomic bomb technology. It is not quite like that. The absolutely harmful and often irreparable damage inflicted on the Free World was caused by the Kremlin's disinformation operations, which were intended to modify the past (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 79).

The KGB is internationally known as the Intelligence Agency, but very little is said about its role as executor of disinformation activities. Integrated IRC performance, as understood by the Brazilian Army, can be inferred as the KGB work of building or destroying reputations: “it is easy to see that all this was the product of sophisticated dezinformatsiya and public relations specialist teams, that employed all its safe and deceptive framing techniques”(PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 50). Are specialists in dezinformatsiya the same as specialists

in Psychological Operations? And would Public Relations teams be the equivalent of Social Communication? Joining these two capacities, with the already known characteristic of the KGB of intelligence knowledge production, it can be inferred that the Soviet Union had, in its own way, a single Organ that coordinated and integrated what in the Ground Force are called Information Related Capacities.

It should be noted that disinformation and Information Operations have different objectives. Disinformation aims to destabilize, create and foster friction within target societies, Information Operations seek the opposite, to shape the operational environment to reduce friction in the combat and accelerate the stabilization of conflicted environments.

In accordance with the Military Terrestrial Doctrine, this paper does not advocate the creation of a single body to undertake Information Operations, but rather building synergy opportunities to guide the work of Information Operations units, when the modular structures of Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations capabilities are brought together to solve military problems.

The present study is limited to the theoretical foundation related to Information Operations, seeking the practical use of the frame concepts in order to achieve synergy between Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations, without sticking to specific cases of deployment of Information Operations modules, both in the Brazilian Army and abroad.

The relationships established between the IRC with the types of frames described in the “Frames of Social Experience” (GOFFMAN, 2012) were designed with the aim of finding a logic that would offer opportunities for synergy between them.

The other Information-Related Capacities (IRC) established in the doctrine were approached only by way of illustration or to extrapolate the conclusions obtained.

The bibliographic review was used to understand the concepts of framing, as well as its relationship with the activities of the Information-Related Capacities: Intelligence, Psychological Operations and Social Communication. Subsequently, we observed how the studied concept can contribute to establish a logic based on which one can think about the integrated use of the Information-Related Capacities mentioned. The research is, therefore, bibliographic and explanatory (VERGARA, 2008). Explanatory because it aims to clarify the relationships established between the subjects covered and the bibliography as its theoretical-methodological basis stems from the investigation of the subjects available in books, manuals, reports and articles open to the general public.

2 Theoretical foundation

2.1 Sociological Frame Concept and its Relationship with the KGB Disinformation Activities

The Frame can be understood as a common perception of the various individuals of a given social group. It is a way of interpreting social situations, shared by a culture, which

allows individuals who are components of that culture, to position themselves and react (GOFFMAN, 2012).

In the social construction of the frames, they are ordered according to their proximity to the Reality, taken as an original scene, devoid of meaning. Thus, the primary frameworks are those that convert the Real, meaningless, into something meaningful. The application of the primary framework is seen by those who apply it as not dependent on any previous interpretation. The primary framework works as a translation of the reality experienced (GOFFMAN, 2012).

Keing, in contrast, is a process based on a set of conventions, whereby an already significant event within a primary framework, is transformed into something that refers to the event, but is seen by the participants in the social interaction as very different from the event itself. The key is to apply this process of transformation of a fact previously interpreted by a primary framework or by a previous key, to a new frame accepted as something different from the previous frames. Each addition made by keying is called a layer or lamination (GOFFMAN, 2012).

Machination is a type of framing that represents an intentional effort by one or more individuals to modify the perception about a fact or an activity, so that one or more people are induced to have a false conviction about what is happening (GOFFMAN, 2012).

From the sociological concept of framing, one can understand the meaning of the “framings” attributed to KGB agents:

So what did Romanian and Soviet spies spend their time on in the Cold War years? Gen. Pacepa would say that “framing”, that is, rewriting history and manipulating records, documents etc., in order to cause events (WOOSLEY, 2015, p. 17).

It can be seen that Disinformation, originally aimed at changing behavior (which would serve to classify it, according to the Brazilian Army doctrine, as Psychological Operation) has evolved during the KGB years into a search, by various means, for a change in cultural perception of prominent figures, both from the West and from behind the Iron Curtain. This type of framing, considered in the light of the concepts just discussed, could be classified as a machination. This is even more clear in the following statement:

The Kremlin frameworks can be negative, to generate disrepute, or positive, to generate prestige; whether one way or another, they can directly affect the course of world history. Admirable people from the West were defamed or “framed” as criminals, while criminally unworthy characters belonging to the Soviet / Russian sphere of influence were portrayed or “framed” as saints (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 80).

The frames built by the KGB had, in their elaboration, a condition that the news should always be built around a “core of truth” that would lend credibility to it (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 73). This denotes knowledge, at least empirical, of the functioning of socially shared frames, because the effect obtained by the addition of significant “framing” layers is the existence of an internal layer, relative to what the fact means in a primary correspondence scheme, and an external edge, relative to the significant concessions provided by the situation or by the medium in which the fact was conveyed (GOFFMAN, 2012). In other words, the “core of truth” around which the KGB built its frameworks is nothing more than the inner layer, relative to what the fact means in a primary correspondence scheme. For example:

Thus, Shalepin and Kirichenko decided that Pius XII framework should be based on a fictional scenario supported by genuine, slightly modified documents from the Vatican (specifically related or not to Pius XII), the originals of which would never be released to the public. [...] The KGB knew what it had to do. It only needed a few Vatican documents to add an aura of authenticity to the operation - “a real heart” (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 163-164).

In addition to the applicability of the concept of framing, as defined by sociology, it can be seen, in the disinformation activity developed by the KGB, what the Information Operations doctrine, today, advocates as effects-based planning (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 3-4): “then the goal was to manipulate the future, not just learn about the past. In particular, the idea is to fabricate a new past [...] in order to change the way the world perceives them ”(PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 33). It is emphasized here that the effects sought are given in terms of perception, and not in terms of behavior change, which makes the activity of Disinformation something more complex and permanent than a Psychological Operation. However, the effort directed towards the machining of the past is directly related to the “manipulation of the future”.

3 DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Intelligence Combat Function and the Primary Framework

Military Intelligence, at any level of activity, has as its common denominator the “permanent identification of threats, minimizing uncertainties and seeking opportunities for the success of operations” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 1-1) For this, analysis and integration of data obtained by the various sensors are fundamental. “The identification of threats and opportunities is the first of the results that Military Intelligence must provide to commanders” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 1-2).

The conclusions on threats or opportunities are elaborated through a systematic process that allows a fusion of data in significant fractions, which, in turn, will be organized into knowledge. Thus,

knowledge is the data that has been processed, analyzed and deemed relevant. It must contribute to the understanding of the enemy's terrain, devices and intentions (opposing, hostile or adversary forces), weather conditions and civilian considerations (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 2-1).

The control of the situation in an Operational Environment and in the Battle Space can only be achieved based on situational awareness, a mental state reached by the decision maker that brings the perceived situation closer to the real situation. It is achieved through the “availability of knowledge and the ability to deal with information that, associated with an individual's professional experience, beliefs and values, puts them in an operational advantage in relation to their opponent” (BRASIL, 2015a, p. 2 -2).

This constant search for the approximation of the perceived situation with the real situation allows us to place the Intelligence search effort as the type of framework closest to the Real. In other words, it is fair to say that the Intelligence Combat Function is permanently working to provide primary frames, that is, the first frameworks that make it possible to transform something that would otherwise be meaningless into something meaningful.

The Intelligence work of Colonel Walter Nicolai starting in 1905, and more specifically in the structuring of the German Intelligence System starting in 1913 when he was appointed as Head of the Intelligence Service of the High Command as well as during the First World War (1914-1918) is an example of the effort to search for the first frameworks that explain the reality and, more than that, allow to prospect the decisions of the possible enemies. The scaling up of search methods with deeply infiltrated agents and the assessment of knowledge produced by the various sources, identifying the least reliable ones, allowed the concatenation of the data obtained in a significant whole, which enabled the prospecting of the lines of action of the Triple Entente (United Kingdom, France and Russia - enemies of Germany in the First World War) (CAMPBELL, 2009).

There was an enormous contrast between the result of this structure and the 1908 German manuals, which still maintained that Intelligence could be efficiently obtained through the observation of the battlefield, while the reconnaissance could be left entirely in the hands of the 10 (ten) cavalry divisions of the German Army (JOERGENSEN, 2004 apud CAMPBELL, 2009).

The discrepancy between the form of intelligence production by Colonel Walter Nicolai and the recommendations of the 1908 manuals, resides fundamentally in the priority given to planning the search effort and processing Intelligence to the detriment of simple data retrieval. This is because an in-depth data obtained at high levels of the enemy Armed Forces, most of the time, still takes time to impact the troops in contact, which

gives a fundamental time to carry it and make knowledge available to the decision makers in a timely fashion.

In this manner, it could be said that the data without processing does not yet make up the primary framework, but rather the isolated parts of it, whose significance has not yet been established. Thus, through the production of intelligence knowledge, there is a fusion of data into a significant whole, in which the data are processed, analyzed and those deemed relevant are selected in the search for the composition of the primary framework.

When there is a difficulty in obtaining Intelligence knowledge, the impossibility of answering the question “what is happening here?” established as a paradigm for the composition of the frame becomes evident. The failure stems precisely from the activity responsible for the establishment of the primary framework, as shown in the quote of an English general Rupert Smith below:

At the time, I was already working in London, at the Ministry of Defense, where news about these events came from four different sources. There were reports from the British contingent of UNPROFOR, drawn up on the basis of reports of their deployment in the Srebrenica area. They were timely and factual, but they suffered from the relatively narrow perspective of a small unit involved in major events. As troop providers, we had UNPROFOR HQ reports, but these were often less up-to-date than those of normal diplomatic channels, because they were drawn up more slowly and because UN communications were based on the civilian network and they were deficient compared to those provided by our military contingent. We received reports from various British embassies and missions, particularly those existing at the UN and NATO, and finally, we had the media, whose coverage, I came to consider essential: in addition to being sources of information, they offered me a context in which I acquired some understanding of how other people would interpret what was happening, hence the value of the other reports, most of which focused on completely different aspects of the same events (SMITH, 2008, p. 391).

Even so, the approximation established in the mind of the decision maker between the Intelligence reports and the reality of the facts, as opposed to the media narratives, is clear. When comparing the discursive constructions, the author takes Intelligence reports as a primary frame and uses the “media” narrative to understand how other people would interpret what was happening - a key?

3.2 Social Communication and keying

Social Communication, in the Brazilian Army, adopts the following communications model:

The communication between a sending source and a receiving recipient is established by a vehicle, channel or transmitting medium, subject to noise or interference, and continuous feedback. This flow of information is called the communications process (BRASIL, 2017b, p. 2-1).

The term Social Communication, in addition to referring to the instrument that enables and determines social interaction, also refers to an activity performed by one of the sections of the General Staff of Military Organizations, responsible for three aspects of the Institution's relationship with its various groups of interest: the Press Office, Institutional Communication and Public Relations (BRASIL, 2017b).

SocCom's, as an Information-Related Capacity, mission is to preserve and strengthen the Army's image within the national and international communities. To fulfill its mission, SocCom (of the Brazilian Army) bases its actions on some precepts, including: "to provide adequate and opportune answers to the questions of society, related to the Institution" (BRASIL, 2017b, p. 2-2). One of the principles of Social Communication (as an IRC) is the principle of truth, considered the "essence of SocCom's activity, since the reliability of the facts ensures coherence, credibility and trust" (BRASIL, 2017b, p. 2-4) .

The idea of providing answers comes close to the concept of "key", because an answer is information processed through a set of conventions by which the activity that originated the questioning, which "was already significant in terms of some primary frame, is transformed into something based on this activity, but seen by the participants as something very different "(GOFFMAN, 2012, p. 71).

A characteristic example of the functioning of the Army Social Communication as a supplier of toned information is the production of Press Releases. The Press Release is not the primary frame in itself, but the appropriation of already significant information about a fact, organized through a "conventional" process, to provide the media with the official word of the Force. Although it is based on the principle of truth, the recipients of the press release do not consider the fact itself, but something based on the fact, which is very different.

It is this requirement of reliability of the facts that allows to understand the mechanisms of the production of narratives by the IRC SocCom as a documentary key, in the sense that it seeks to use records that reproduce the events, with the purpose of demonstrating the occurrence of a fact, characterizing it as something that happened in the past. SocCom uses this form of frame production, because this is also, in general, the news composition process used by the media. The documentation (or the documentary key) uses real traces of something that previously appeared in the real world (in the sense of less transformed) (GOFFMAN, 2012). The pressing need for these real traces indicates the point of contact between IRC Social Communication and Combat Intelligence functions.

It is then necessary to observe the environment of Social Communication in order to understand the vicissitudes to which the IRC keying activity is subject. It could be said that IRC SocCom is directly involved with the Battle of Narrative, the latter defined as: the conflict between competing narratives, produced by the various actors involved. According to an American manual: "The goal of the battle of the narrative is to gain superiority over the adversary's narrative, to diminish its appeal and followership, and, when possible, to supplant it or make it irrelevant." (UNITED STATES, 2013, p. III-9).

In turn, the media promote agenda-setting, in which news from the press, even if they do not necessarily end up fostering people's thinking about a particular subject, at least make the public focus on a subject in detriment to others (HOLFELDT, 1997, p. 42-51). The press vehicles, then, seek the protagonism of the news, to guarantee priority in scheduling, which reflects their market characteristic. The holder of knowledge about the extraordinary event that will be the next "scoop" has a greater chance of obtaining a larger audience while his/her transmission lasts, because "only extraordinary events are news" (GOFFMAN, 2012, p. 38).

The routine acceleration of newsrooms, in the search for first information, opens loopholes for failures that can be exploited by experts in disinformation:

We were also very successful in filling the Western media with the image of Ceausescu (Romanian dictator). The truth is that Western media were very easily manipulated, as they often built their news from press releases and tended, in general, to be careless about the nature and reliability of their sources. Our information fell very well in the general climate of acceptance of Ceausescu by the West, as a Westernized communist. To Westerners, his position generally seemed as a historic and plausible breach in the Iron Curtain, and almost no one went out into the streets to check the facts and contradict us. (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 46).

While under constant pressure the media has become the stage for contemporary public debate. However and precisely for this reason, a subject exposed on this stage is not necessarily of public interest. It may have been thought of by marketers who intend to shape the taste of the public, while scheduling their debates (PENA, 2015). This is because "the power that the documentary key has to inhibit the original meanings is impressive" (GOFFMAN, 2012, p. 101). By using, in order to construct their narratives, the documentary key, using traces of real facts, the media gives their narrative construction sufficient credibility to overcome the original meanings of events, which allows the engagement of these marketing professionals, architecting the frameworks.

It should be noted that the framing carried out by a media outlet on the facts to be reported is the result of choices made within a systematized productive process. The news is prepared according to the format, and there is always a (re-)contextualization of its focus during the edition (TUCHMAN, 1978 apud PENA, 2015). In this sense, “to produce a framework is to select some aspects of the perceived reality and give them a greater prominence in the communicative text” (COLLING, 2001 apud CUNHA, 2005, p. 33).

It is possible, then, to identify at least three vectors that pressure the organized narrative of a communication vehicle and affect the news production process: the marketing intention of the vehicle itself; the interest of the public, taken as a concept prior to the discourse itself and shaped by earlier agendas; and the facts to be selected, organized, and converted into news.

If there is an ideological bias to be attributed to the media, it can permeate the entire process, either in the establishment of marketing objectives, in the definition of what is of interest to the public, or in the organization of facts in news, but, primarily, as a key, not as machination, due to the very characteristic of the structure of the construction of the narratives of these vehicles.

Thus, the problem that arises for the production of narratives of IRC Social Communication is how to produce keys, primarily adhering to the principle of truth, that is, relying on facts, and disseminating them to audiences, often through communication vehicles that have their marketing intentions, in an environment of constant search for the protagonism of the news, also considering the interest of the public, in order to obtain superiority over the opponent's narrative.

3.3 Psychological Operations and Machination

The main objective of Psychological Operations, as defined in the introduction to this article, is to change the behavior of certain target audiences. The focus on behavior inevitably leads to an approximation with the behavioral psychology, in which the stimulus, interacting with the organism will cause a global reaction manifested by a behavior (COUTINHO, 1997).

However, it should be noted that:

PsyOps focus on the cognitive perspective of the informational dimension of the operational environment, influencing the emotions, reasoning, motivations, objectives and behavior of Target Audiences (TA) [...] (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 4-3)

The stimuli will then be provided to influence the cognition of the individuals who make up a given audience. The tool, described in the Armed Forces Glossary for the “dissemination of any information, idea, doctrine or special appeal, aiming to influence opinions, generate emotions, provoke attitudes or direct the behavior of individuals or social

groups” is propaganda (BRASIL, 2015b, p. 226/288). Therefore, cognitive stimuli can be produced through advertising techniques.

In this case, although the objective is behavior, the structuring of IRC’s Psychological Operations narratives in propaganda pieces, aimed at the cognitive perspective, generates a discursive drag, in which the frames are distorted so that the cognition, as a result of them, generates the desired behavior.

In this sense, the established method of marketing, known as AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire and Action) is used. Edward Strong Jr was attributed the authorship of this model to St Elmo Lewis, due to his work leading several advertising agencies in the United States, from 1899 to 1909 (STRONG JUNIOR, 1925, p. 349). It aims to lead the consumer to make the purchase of a product, and represents, in summary, four phases or stages that the consumer needs to go through (not necessarily, but generally), progressively, to decide to carry out the acquisition. By substituting the consumer for the members of the Target Audience and considering the acquisition of a product as a change in behavior, it is possible to visualize the operation of the method as a way of using advertising in favor of the objectives of Psychological Operations.

The discursive construction of advertising would then act strongly in the first three stages, creating frames of interpretation capable of fostering attention, interest and arousing the desire for a particular action. When a situation fits into the framework constructed by advertising, the desire for action will become the behavior intended by the propagandist. Therefore, there is no responsibility for reality, since the stimulus to cognition aims exclusively at the intended behavior, although the appeal to reality is necessary for advertising to be credible. A characteristic example of this structure is the initiative of the Volkswagen company known as the “theory of fun”, which transformed a staircase, next to the escalator, into a piano, in the Stockholm subway, in 2009. The intentional modification of the painting (staircase- piano) was responsible for, at the same time, attracting attention, arousing interest and provoking desire. The video demonstrating the change in behavior of people, who started using the ladder instead of the escalator, is available on YouTube³.

Thus, the discursive drag caused by the use of advertising can be considered an effect that is close to the concept of machination, since machination is an intentional effort by one or more individuals, to modify the perception about a certain fact so that one or more people are induced to create a distorted conviction about what is really going on. Not for nothing, those who “plan a mistake can be called operators” (GOFFMAN, 2012, p. 118). Distorted conviction (which can be momentary or permanent) is the trigger for changing behavior, as in the example of Volkswagen: is it a ladder or a piano?

Machinations, as well as keying, require the use of a model, the use of something already significant in terms of primary framework - the appeal to reality, which also gives

3 Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SByymar3bds&t=13s>. Accessed on March 10, 2021.

credibility to advertising (GOFFMAN, 2012). The example of the machination of theater plays by Soviet misinformation is illuminating:

We, as revolutionary Marxists, cannot consider our task as fulfilled if we produce an uncritical copy of reality, perceiving the theater as a mirror of the times ... The work of revolutionary theater is to take reality as a starting point and widen the social discrepancy, making it an element of our accusation, our revolt, our new order (PISCATOR, 1929 apud PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015, p. 173).

There is, however, a fundamental difference between the activity of Psychological Operations (according to what the Brazilian Army manuals prescribe) and Disinformation, as defined by Lieutenant-General Ion Mihai Pacepa. Disinformation, although it appeared in Operation Trust, as a Psychological Operation, has evolved to become a strategic tool for changing perceptions, therefore, directly involved in machination stratagems. Psychological Operations, on the other hand, are geared towards changing behavior that through advertising can cause machinations to arise. Even so, its relationship with the frames of social experience, based on machinations, must be considered when it comes to seeking synergy with the Social Communication capacity and with the Intelligence Combat Function.

3.4 Synchronized Communication and the Theme as a Framework

The synchronization of communication, for the US Armed Forces, starts from the idea that each lethal or non-lethal action represents a part of the narrative that one wants to build superior to the opponent, representing an approach to military operations from a communications perspective. Thus, the IRC Social Communication participates, together with the use of lethal capabilities, such as troops and weapons, and other non-lethal means in synchronized communication (UNITED STATES, 2013).

For that, some key subordinate concepts were established, allowing to structure a communication that starts from a central idea and is disseminated to the diverse troops in operations, providing a unique meaning for the communications carried out. Are they:

narrative — Overarching expression of the context and desired results.

theme — Unifying idea(s) or intention(s) that supports the narrative and is/are designed to provide guidance and continuity for messaging and related products.

message — A tailored communication directed at a specific public, aligned with a specific theme, in support of a specific objective. (UNITED STATES, 2013, p. III-9)

The narrative can be constructed to portray a Military Operation as a whole, or it can be designed to correspond to each phase of the Operation, in order to more accurately encompass the movements of troops in the Human Terrain, defined as “an aggregate of sociocultural characteristics existing in a determined point in time and geographic space” (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 2-2).

The themes are aligned with the narrative and can even be part of it. They, at the same time, promote and limit the production of messages by lethal and non-lethal capacities involved in synchronized communication. The idea is to allow each commander or chief to address their audiences, on the specific themes of a particular operation or phase of it, addressing only matters relating to their level or activity. Therefore: “the themes at each level should be nested underneath the themes of the next higher level and support the strategic themes. Messages are subordinate to themes and deliver precise information to a specific public to create desired effects while supporting a specific theme. Themes are more enduring and should be synchronized up and down the chain of command.” (UNITED STATES, 2013, p. III-11). As they allow communication with audiences and, at the same time, delimit them, the narrative and themes must be elaborated with the active participation of counterintelligence professionals, capable of advising on possible security breaches and damaging repercussions to the Institution.

The messages are, in the framework of synchronized communication, what is emitted by the capacities and represent the use of freedom of action in the informational dimension obtained by the delimitation implemented by the themes. Thus,

Messages are subordinate to themes and deliver precise information to a specific public to create desired effects [...] Messages are tailored for a specific time, place, delivery mechanism, and public. [...] However, the more dynamic nature and leeway inherent in messages provide joint force communicators and planners the maneuver space in the cognitive dimension of the information environment to create more nuanced effects (UNITED STATES, 2013, p. III-12).

The construction of the arguments, themes and messages, is rooted in the reasons for the actions of the troops and in the direction to the desired results / outcomes of the conflict in terms understandable to the relevant public. Such reasons and results must be based on the reality of the situation (UNITED STATES, 2013).

From what was described in this article, it is clear that each of the non-lethal abilities mentioned (Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations) constructs narratives, and, consequently, perception frames in a very particular way. However, all three necessarily go through the framing as a structuring process for their messages. Based on the escalation of synchronized communication proposed by the United States Armed Forces and the assertion that the themes are more lasting and should be synchronized up and down the chain of command (UNITED STATES, 2013), it can be proposed that the themes of Synchronized Communication are considered frameworks, from which, the IRC will build their messages.

Thus, in order to synchronize the work of IRC, in the context of Information Operations, Intelligence would receive demands to direct its effort to search for data that would indicate the confirmation of certain themes of Synchronized Communication. These themes would be the primary frame of what is intended to achieve, a situational awareness. Synchronized communication must be planned to encompass the success indicators foreseen for the Military Operation itself. If Intelligence will seek the achievement of these indicators, it will end up seeking confirmation of the issues.

Moreover, Social Communication, following its principle of truth, will use the themes to guide the keying of the information obtained, in order to construct narratives. To exemplify, it can be said that the spokespersons will be able to comment only on the subjects covered by the themes foreseen for a given phase (and not on later phases) of the operation, at their level. This is very useful, when thinking about the technique “idea-force transition idea-force”, used for answers to interviews, in situations of image crisis management (BRASIL, 2013). The narrative for the operation phase and, more specifically, the themes that make up the respective narrative, for the media, start to function, at the same time, as a repository and limiter, from which the force-ideas and connections between them must be extracted, synchronizing the narratives at different levels and avoiding informational fratricide.

Finally, Psychological Operations can devise the frameworks, in their advertising, directing the Attention, Interest and Desire of the target audiences to the themes of synchronized communication. For example, let's say that in a Military Operation, a given area is already under the control of troops supported by Psychological Operations and is already receiving an influx of coordinated humanitarian actions between the troops and civilian agencies. In this same Operation, the themes of the synchronized communication for this phase are: the implementation of adequate security conditions and the humanitarian assistance provided. The Psychological Operations, then, can spread, for the areas not yet occupied by the troops, propaganda about the humanitarian assistance that is already being provided in the controlled territories, in order to cause the desire to receive this assistance, suggesting that for that to happen the Occupying Force needs to extend its actions over areas not yet occupied. The intended behavioral solution is to collaborate with the troops to implement adequate security conditions that will allow humanitarian assistance to be provided.

In this sense, the themes recommended in synchronized communication are the drivers of the desire of the members of the target audience, so that the behaviors obtained corroborate the success of Military Operations. In short, the framework proposed by the propaganda would be devised based on the theme with the latter extracted from the narrative elaborated for that particular phase of the Military Operation. As synchronized communication aims to portray the movement of troops in the Human Terrain, naturally, the behavioral changes intended by Psychological Operations will be consistent with the narrative and themes of this communication.

It is worth mentioning that each of the Information-Related Capacities covered by this paper has its own peculiar activities external to Information Operations, as, in fact, the differences between its definitions show. The idea of bringing together the themes of

synchronized communication with the way each of the IRCs produces their frameworks is only one of possibilities of creating synergies between them, in the context of the execution of Information Operations.

It should be noted that Synchronized Communication, in the US Armed Forces, is prepared by a specialized unit, composed of several military and civilian specialists (UNITED STATES, 2013). In the Brazilian Army, with leaner General Staff structures, we recommend that the responsibility for Synchronized Communication, in the planning phase, should be attributed to the Social Communication unit, in coordination with the Information Operations unit. We also suggest that the implementation of Synchronized Communication during the execution phase of the operation, disseminating messages throughout the Human Terrain, through the various channels of access to audiences - mapped by the other Capacities (Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, Cybernetics, Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs), with the exception of the media, should be the responsibility of the Information Operations unit, in coordination with SocCom, which would have the mission of conducting the Battle of the Narrative through the Press Releases, Institutional Communication and Public Relations (BRASIL, 2017, p. 1-2).

4 Conclusion

Although it was not brought up in this paper, there concept close to the Frames of Social Experience, that of Overton Window can not be omitted due to the questions that it raises. Known as a window of discourse, the concept was proposed by Joseph P. Overton “(1960– 2003), a former president of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a think tank” (AVILLEZ, 2014, p. 40). According to him, “public opinions can be gradually shaped, from intolerable to consecration in public policies, using a classification in six degrees of acceptance” (AVILLEZ, 2014, p. 40): impossible, radical, acceptable, sensible, popular and needed. Thus, the political viability of an idea depends mainly on where it falls within the window, between acceptable and necessary. This ability to transform what is admitted by a society, according to a gradation, is part of the controversial discussion on the acceptance of this concept (AVILLEZ, 2014, p. 40).

Regardless of the moral discussion that a possible practical application of this idea raises, the Overton Window, taken as a point of observation, would allow us to see, for example, which positions are considered acceptable in a given society at a given time. It could be said that the Overton Window is a type of frame or a condensation (by overlapping framing layers) of pictures, if it allows public policy makers, or even other discourse agents to position themselves vis-a-vis “of what is happening here” (GOFFMAN, 2012) in the society to which they belong.

Thus, when it becomes clear that the Overton Window has shifted its focus on figures whose re-framing was attributed by Lieutenant General Ion Mihai Pacepa to the KGB, we can argue that the Soviet misinformation on Western societies was successful. Examples abound: Che Guevara (who became an icon for student movements) and Pope

Pius XII (who, as protector of Jews during the war, became Hitler's Pope), among others (PACEPA; RYCHLAK, 2015).

Information operations are, without a doubt, not the same as Soviet misinformation. Disinformation aims to destabilize, create and foster friction within target societies, while Information Operations seek the opposite, to shape the operational environment to reduce friction in the combat and accelerate the stabilization of conflicted environments. However, the integrated action of IRC focused on achieving defined objectives can use the Soviet disinformation as an example of achieving the intended effects. The implementation of Information Operations itself can help combat these effects of disinformation in the Human and Informational Dimensions.

Responding to the questions posed in the introduction to this article, Synchronized Communication, as understood by the United States Armed Forces, encourages the convergence of the Information-Related Capabilities: Intelligence, Social Communication and Psychological Operations in developing narratives. However, the proposal here is not to purely and simply import an exogenous doctrine, but to apply it through the logic that can be deduced from the sociological theory of frame analysis (GOFFMAN, 2012), which makes it easier to think about the integrated use of the Capabilities in question.

Thus, the proposal to consider the Theme of Synchronized Communication, as a Framework corroborates an intentional overlapping of the frameworks, in order to allow a greater discursive density. In summary, Intelligence would look for data that would confirm or refute the occurrence of the Theme, taken as a primary frame. SocCom would key the information received in a way that converges with the Theme and disseminate it in the Battle of the Narrative, while the PsyOps would machinate propaganda that would direct the behavioral outcomes towards the proposed Themes and Narrative. The points of contact between the Capabilities, obviously, do not occur automatically. The situational awareness generated by the Intelligence, by the monitoring of the Military Operation in progress and by the deployment of the IRC must be processed by an integrated unit within the General Staff responsible for finding opportunities for synergy between the IRC, the unit of Information Operations.

Perhaps the greatest risk in not using IRC in a coordinated manner, in addition to those already mentioned in the introduction to this article and beyond the possible "informational fratricide", is the loss of opportunities. Considering the Overton Window as a condensation of frames circulating in a society at a certain moment, can Armed Forces in Operations, with all the risks and effort that involve them, afford to lose the possibility of acting forcefully with a powerful dense discourse on Human and Informational Dimensions? Not coordinating the IRC is roughly equivalent to a charge of hypomobile cavalry against armored formations in the Physical Dimension. Overkill? On the other side, is the disinformation.

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