

Strategic communication and its systematization in the Brazilian Army: a proposal

La comunicación estratégica y su sistematización en el ejército brasileño: una propuesta


Abstract: In today's world, societies and individuals are increasingly interconnected. The environment in which events thrive is constantly changing, making it difficult to build scenarios and adjust forecasts. This reality affects not only people, but also companies and institutions. This environment represents challenges and opportunities to be explored by organizations, as information has become a determining strategic element. In this sense, Strategic Communication has been presented as the most suitable tool for institutions and companies. Seeking to expand the reach of its communication, the Brazilian Army, through the Army General Staff, determined that the 34th class of the Army's Politics, Strategy and High Administration Course should carry out a study on Strategic Communication. In this sense, the objective was to verify the suitability of this tool as a vector for achieving the Strategic Objectives of the Brazilian Army, systematizing and conducting this activity in the Institution. This article presents some of the concepts covered in the scope of work, in order to clarify the topic. Subsequently, the proposal for systematization of the Strategic Communication sent to the Army General Staff will be presented.

Keywords: Brazil. Communication. System. Strategic. Aligned. Synchronized. Integrated. Strategy.

Resumen: En el mundo actual, las sociedades y los individuos están cada vez más interconectados. El entorno en el que prosperan los eventos cambia constantemente, lo que dificulta el desarrollo de escenarios y el ajuste de pronósticos. Esta realidad afecta no solo a las personas, sino también a las empresas e instituciones. Este entorno representa desafíos y oportunidades que pueden ser explorados por las organizaciones, a medida que la información se ha convertido en un elemento estratégico determinante. En este sentido, la Comunicación Estratégica se ha presentado como la herramienta más adecuada para instituciones y empresas. Buscando ampliar el alcance de su comunicación, el Ejército Brasileño, a través del Estado Mayor del Ejército, determinó que la 34ª clase del Curso de Política, Estrategia y Alta Administración del Ejército realizase un estudio sobre Comunicación Estratégica. En ese sentido, el objetivo fue verificar la adecuación de esta herramienta como vector para la consecución de los Objetivos Estratégicos del Ejército Brasileño, sistematizando y realizando esa actividad en la Institución. En este artículo se presentan algunos de los conceptos abordados en el ámbito del trabajo del CPEAEx, con el fin de aclarar el tema. Posteriormente, se presentará la propuesta de sistematización de la Comunicación Estratégica enviada al EME.

Palabras-clave: Brasil. Comunicación. Sistema. Estratégica. Alineada. Sincronizada. Integrada. Estrategia.

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1 Introduction

In today's world, societies and individuals are increasingly interconnected. The environment in which events thrive is constantly changing, making it difficult to build scenarios and adjust forecasts. This reality affects not only people, but also companies and institutions. In order to define this new reality, the US Army War College created the acronym VUCA to designate this volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world (UNITED STATES, 2019).

This environment represents challenges and opportunities to be explored by organizations, as information has become a determining strategic element. For this, there was a need to establish connections with society, formed by different stakeholders, creating impressions that generate credibility and legitimacy, contributing so that the organization's strategic objectives are achieved (KUNSCH, 2020; REBELO; SOUSA; FAUSTINO, 2020). In this sense, Strategic Communication has been presented as the most appropriate tool by institutions and companies.

Seeking to expand the reach of its communication, the Brazilian Army (EB), through the Army General Staff (EME), determined that the 34th class of the Army Policy, Strategy and High Administration Course (CPEAEx) conduct a study of the Strategic Communication (Com Estrt). In this sense, the objective was to verify the adequacy of this tool as a vector for achieving the Brazilian Army's Strategic Objectives, systematizing and conducting this activity in the Institution.

For the purpose of this article, some of the concepts covered in the scope of the CPEAEx work will be presented, in order to clarify the topic. Subsequently, the proposal for systematization of the Strategic Communication sent to the EME will be presented.

It should be noted, initially, that the theme "Strategic Communication" is incipient not only in the EB, but also in Brazilian academic and business environments. Therefore, despite the fact that the concepts presented here involve knowledge and studies of the highest civil and military authorities on the subject, it can be considered that its reach has limitations in scope because the existing literature is based on a small number of scholars.

2 Methodology used

The data and information collected and analyzed by CPEAEx was used in this article, focusing on the presentation of the theoretical basis that supported the proposal for systematization of Strategic Communication in the Brazilian Army. For this, the Institution's singularity was considered, in order for this tool to be effective in contributing to the achievement of its fifteen strategic objectives, provided for in the Army Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (BRASIL, 2019).

The bibliographic research was carried out in sources of academic knowledge (books, journals and articles). At the same time, the documentary research used sources from the Ministry of Defense and the Brazilian Army, cited as references in the EME Basic Project on the subject, and

documentation from the other Brazilian Armed Forces and from other countries and international organizations. In addition, documents used in the business environment for the planning of its own strategic communication were consulted.

The field research had a qualitative approach, through the interview technique, in order to understand the Strategic Communication in the business sector. Furthermore, military officials were interviewed to observe the reach of the topic within the Institution.

3 Conceptos de comunicación estratégica en los entornos académico y organizacional

In general, Strategic Communication, from the academic and organizational perspectives, presents a bias of hierarchization of its planning, directly influencing the flow of information of this system. For this, the planning would be organized in 03 (three) levels: strategic, tactical and operational¹, each with a different temporal objective (BRASIL, 2021c).

Despite the organization in levels, they are not isolated and incommunicable; on the contrary, they act with a constant exchange of data and information, both in a top-down and bottom-up sense². Thereby, this communication aims to act in an integrated, aligned and synchronized way.

The understanding of the hierarchy and synchrony of actions is aligned with the best theory present, as observed through Self (2014) and United States, 2013. For them, the search for support and the achievement of the organization's objectives shall involve all levels, starting its planning at the highest decision-making level of the institution that adopts Strategic Communication as a tool.

In this sense, the strategic level is what is found at the top of the structure, with the so-called Senior Management of the organization. For this, it shall provide the subordinate levels of information that will serve as a basis for its planning. The highlight, in this case, is the propagation of the core of institutional thinking, through the mission, the vision of the future, the strategic objectives, the strategies and the goals to be achieved. In order for this information to effectively reach the other levels, integration and synchronization, within the entire structure, are essential.

At this level, the proper selection of stakeholders (or audiences of interest/interested parties). Each in its own way, Freeman (1984) and Ladeira (2009) highlight that there is a strong connection and interdependence between institutions and these audiences. At the same time that they support each other, insofar as they understand and reinforce each other's processes, the organization is responsible for mapping the relationship networks, giving it a global vision and guiding its competences. Still regarding the stakeholders, MOREIRA (2021) states that:

1 Business terminology is reversed in relation to military, with regard to tactical and operational levels. However, this does not influence the understanding of how planning shall work.

2 The flow of information in a top-down direction means that it comes, within the hierarchy, from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. In turn, the bottom-up direction comes from the bottom to the top.

An institution must relate to a wide spectrum of stakeholders, whether in the public sector or in the private sector [...] it is necessary to list and identify all the Institution's audiences of interest. Subsequently, and according to the strategic objectives of this Institution [...] the audiences must be gathered in an Interest Group for which the defined actions will be determined. (MOREIRA, 2021, p. 135).

Following the link of hierarchization, tactical planning, focused on the medium term, refers to the company's marketing, so that it uses its instruments in order to achieve its goals with the organization's target market (LIMA, 2007). In this direction, marketing is umbilically linked to the value of the brand and the products that the organization offers to society. It is noteworthy that, despite the term "marketing" being initially aimed at companies dedicated to the market and focused on profits, its tools can be used by the Brazilian Army (EB), especially with regard to the Strategic Objectives of the Army (OEE), listed in the Land Military Policy (PMT) (BRASIL, 2021c).

Aligned with this perspective, it can be stated that the "Brazilian Army" brand is consolidated with the National Society, recognized for its efficiency and deliveries. This package includes its motto ("Strong Arm, Friendly Hand"), as well as the services offered with strong added value, such as Homeland Defense, Support for Subsidiary Actions, Law and Order Guarantee Operations and Military Service, just to name a few. In addition, communicative actions, which are of social interest, are also widely used by the EB and, with this, strengthen the brand even more.

Further to the planning levels, following the academic and business perspective, there is the operational. For profit-oriented companies, these would involve their short-term actions, which can be represented by promotional plans. For institutions whose measure occurs without the search for profitability, this occurs through deliveries to society in immediate needs. In this context, for the EB, the operations themselves would be framed, involving the engagement of its stakeholders in the actions of the Ground Force (F Ter).

Despite the fact that the division into levels is relatively peaceful, the definition of Strategic Communication is not. Despite this, some ideas are repeated, especially with regard to the relevance of integration, social accountability and the fact that ComEstrt shall be understood as a result of the participation of participatory internal communication with managed and shared knowledge management; defining and applying resources in order to achieve previously established objectives (MOREIRA, 2021) With this, it appears that Com Estrt shall not only communicate the institution's strategic objectives, but also create an environment that favors their achievement.

4 Definition, premises and demands

Given the concepts studied in the Interdisciplinary Project, it is proposed that the definition of Strategic Communication in the EB is:

the unit of **actions, words and images** in line with its **Mission, Vision, Values and its Strategic Objectives, in peace or in operations**, in an **aligned, integrated and synchronized way**, aiming to achieve its **stakeholders**, producing **long-term effects** (MOREIRA, 2021)

The following premises were listed for the systematization of Com Strt (table 1):

Table 1 – Premises for Com Estrt in the EB

PREMISES FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE EB	
1	Strengthen and preserve the Force's image
2	Be guided by alignment, integration and synchronization, with centralized planning at the highest decision-making level
3	Contribute to the Transformation Process
4	All EB actions shall be supported by the pillars of credibility, transparency and opportunity
5	Information Operations in line and coordination with Com Estrt
6	Do not foresee the increase in staff to meet the demand for Strategic Communication
7	Prospective vision, with timely action
8	Com Estrt shall be dynamic and integrated
9	The EB is an unique organizational force
10	Com Strt shall be conducted since peacetime

Source: Moreira, 2021.

Table 2 highlights the demands for the systematization of Com Strt:

Table 2 – Demands for the systematization of Com Estrt in the EB

DEMANDS FOR THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN THE EB	
1	Need for systematization
2	Integration with the Army Strategic Plan (PEEx)
3	Gradual deployment
4	Need for specialized staff
5	Conceptual and technical standardization
6	Use of the EB's organizational structure
7	Execution at all levels
8	Proposal at the political and strategic levels
9	Need for measurement and feedback

Source: Moreira, 2021.

It is also necessary to consider the guiding aspects of communication strategies and actions at the Institutional level: the **values** rooted in more than 370 years of existence and which are the Institution's support; the **guidelines** emanating from the **Force Commander** that will guide all Strategic Communication efforts within the Brazilian Army; as well as the **alignment**, the **integration** and the **synchronization** of this effort with the PEEEx to achieve the Army's Strategic Objectives (OEE).

5 The strategic communication plan

The Strategic Communication Plan, developed at the Force's highest level, aims to guide the planning and execution of Strategic Communication activities, contributing to the achievement of the OEE.

The Army's Strategic Communication Plan (PCEEEx) shall be based on the Army Commander's General Strategic Communication Guidelines (BRASIL, 2021b), defining institutional themes of interest to the EB, as well as the stakeholders to the Force, in addition to the respective strategic approach actions.

The General Strategic Communication Guideline will reference the preparation of the PCEEEx, in line with the OEE established in the SIPEEx, as well as the particular orders and guidelines issued by the Force Commander, as shown in Figure 1.

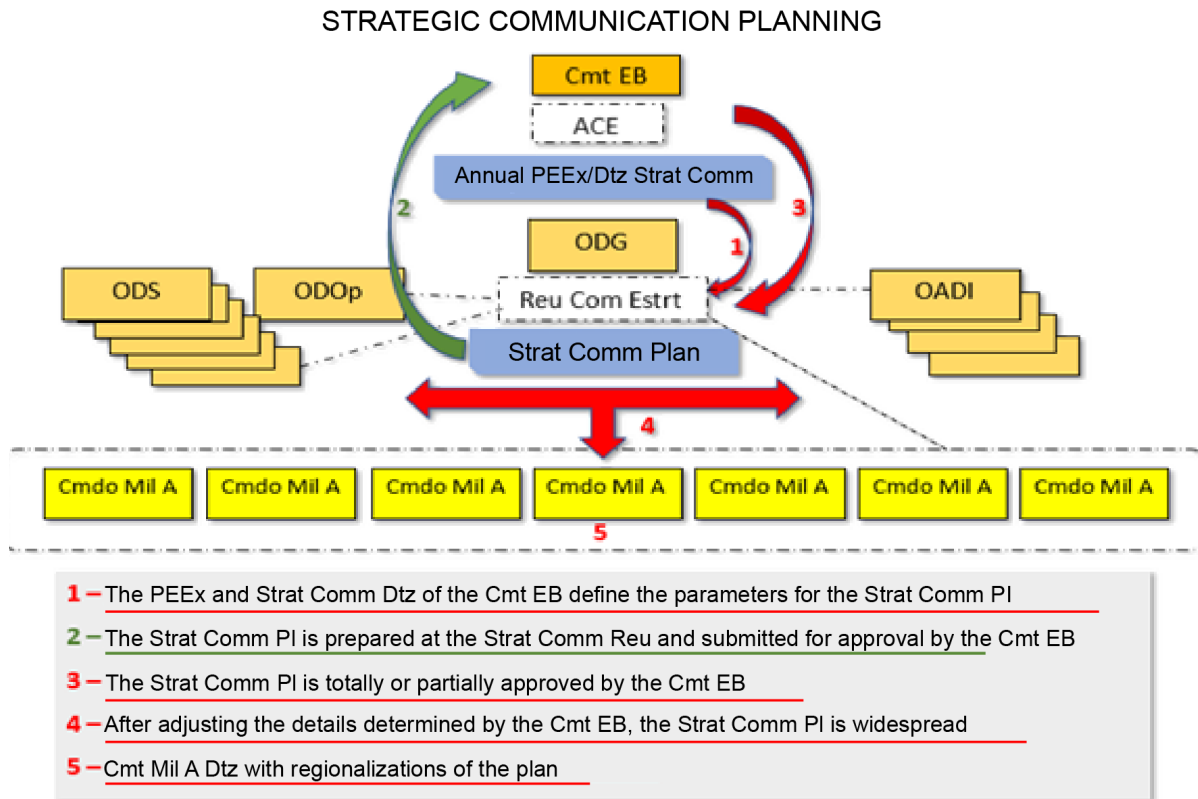
The Army General Staff (EME) will coordinate a meeting, in which representatives of all ODS, ODOP, C Mil A and OADI³ will participate, with the purpose of preparing the PCEEEx. The Plan will be distributed to the aforementioned bodies, as soon as it is approved by the Brazilian Army's Commander (Cmt EB).

Upon receiving the PCEEEx, each Cmdo Mil A will be able to prepare its Strategic Area Communication Guideline for its subordinate levels, delimiting the Force's regional objectives in the region, at a detailed level.

Developments in the context and priorities listed annually in the PEEEx review may lead to adjustments in the Com Strt. In this case, the Cmt will be able to issue a new Strategic Communication Guideline, for the alignment of activities developed in the PCEEEx with the SIPEEx.

3 Sectoral Management Bodies, Operational Direction Bodies, Area Military Commands and Direct and Immediate Assistance Bodies (especially the Army's Social Communication Center [CComSEx] and the Army's Intelligence Center [CIE]).

Figure 1 – Strategic Communication Planning⁴



Source: Moreira (2021).

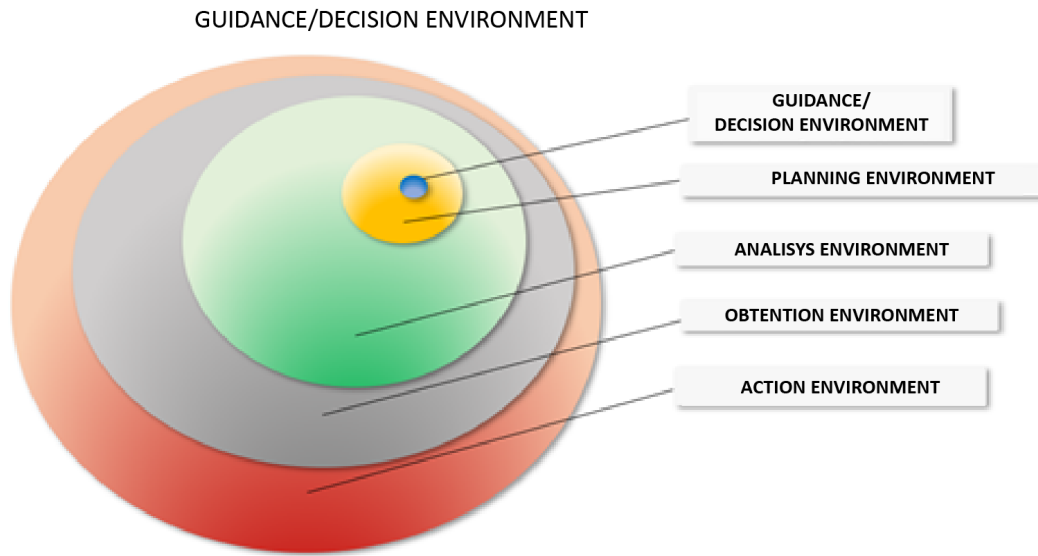
6 Strategic communication environments and cycles

The didactic way for the initial understanding of the systematization of Com Estrt was its division into **Strategic Communication environments** (figure 2). These comprise:

the sets of individuals, agencies and systems that are used to collect, process, disseminate and act in accordance with the data and knowledge received, as well as the plans and decisions made, in order to meet the established Strategic Communication Needs (NCE) (MOREIRA, 2021, p. 370).

⁴ Abbreviations shown in the figure: ACE (Army High Command); Dtz (Guideline); ODG (General Management Body [EME]); Reu (meeting).

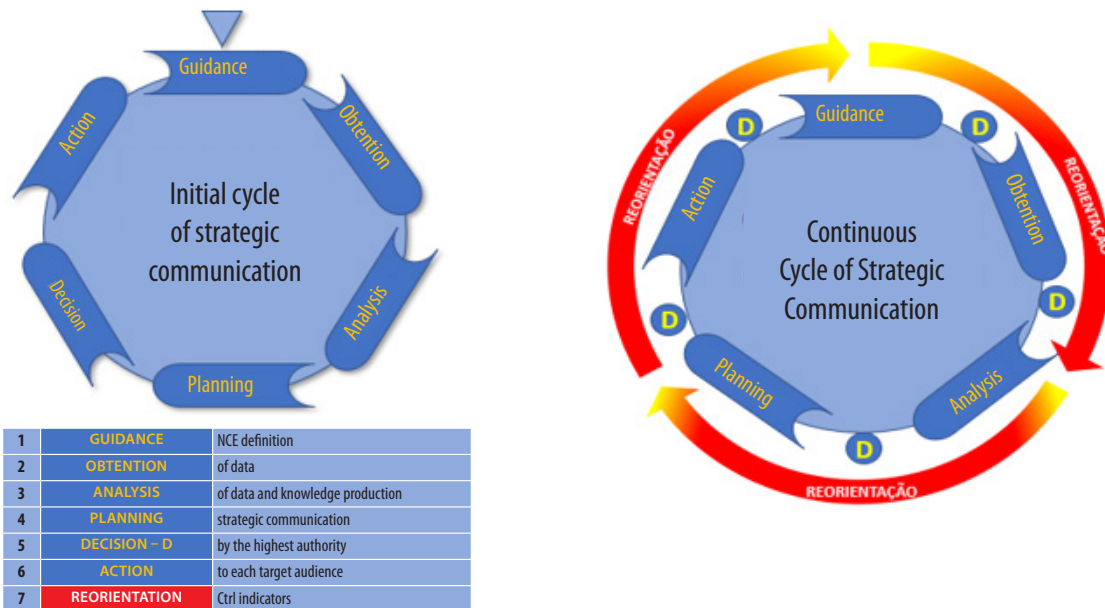
Figure 2 – Strategic Communication Environments



Source: Moreira (2021).

Strategic Communication shall be carried out after the due decision-making process, concluding about its processes and products. For this, two cycles of Strategic Communication are considered (figure 3):

Figure 3 – Com Estrt Cycles

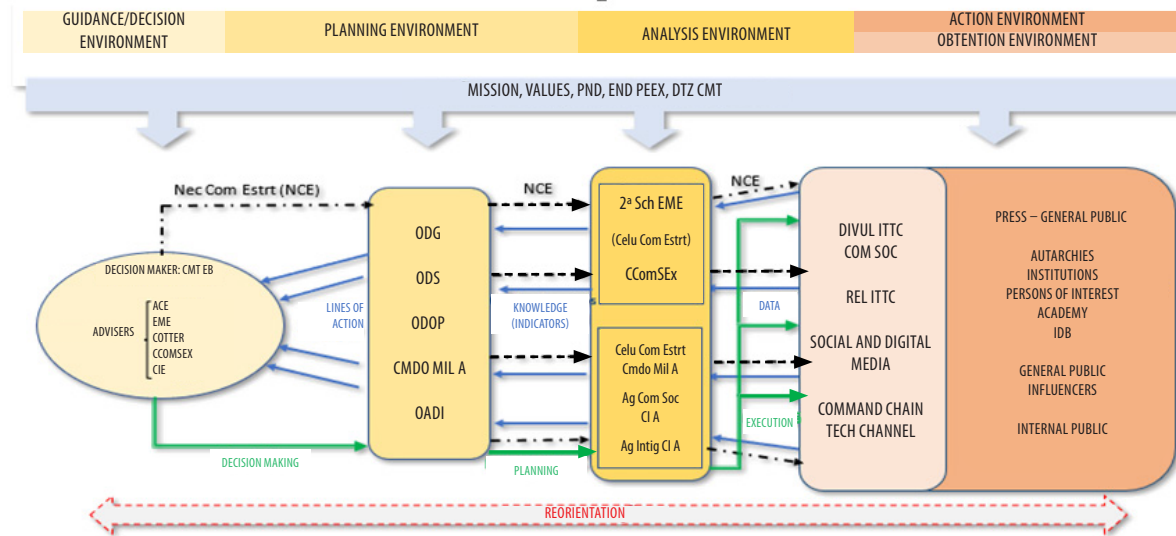


Source: Moreira (2021).

In the Initial Cycle, the Strategic Communication Plan will be deployed, while the Continuous Cycle indicates feedback and correction of the system's directions.

From the dissemination of PCEEx, the Com Estrática actions will take place, with due control and corrective actions deemed necessary. Figure 4 summarizes schematically the Systematization of Com Strt in the EB.

Figure 4 – Systematization of Com Estrt. Environments X Cycles X Actors.

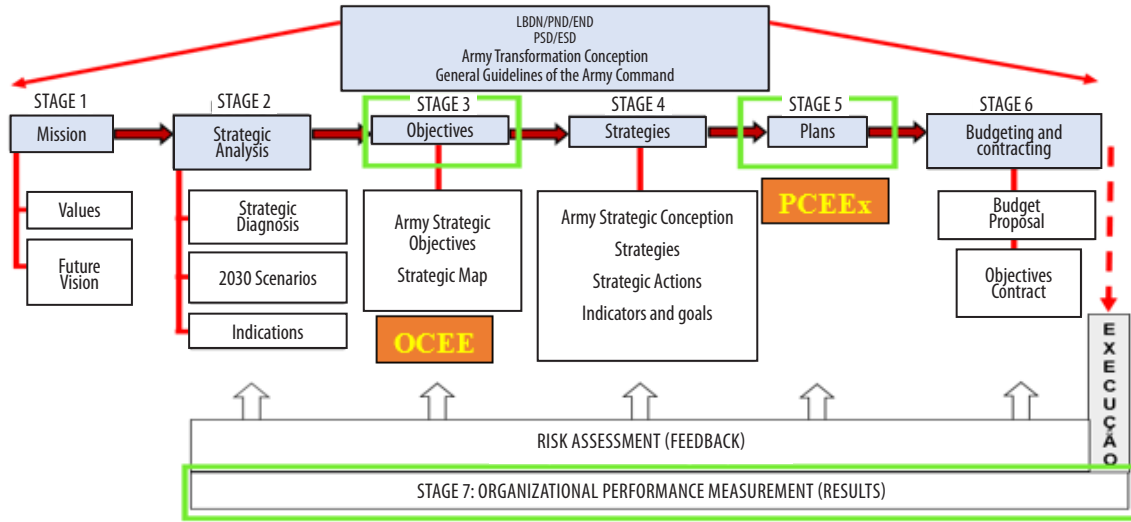


Source: Moreira (2021).

7 Strategic communication in the army planning system (siplex)

In order to be aligned with the Army's Strategic Objectives since its preparation, the PCEEx will coincide with the SIPLEX. Special emphasis shall be given to phase 3, in which the Army's Strategic Communication Objectives (OCEE) will be raised, in phase 5, in which the PCEEx will be prepared, and in phase 7, when the performance indicators will be monitored (figure 5).

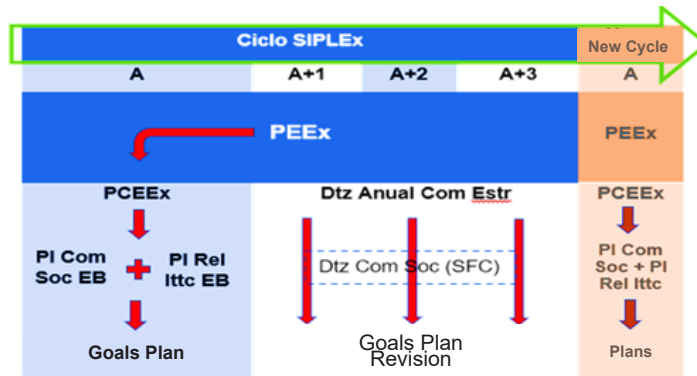
Figure 5 – Insertion of Com Estrt in the SIPLEX⁵



Source: Moreira (2021).

The PCEEx will be unique, deriving from it the other communication plans at the different levels of the Army. Figure 6 shows the insertion of PCEEx and Social Communication (Com Soc) and Institutional Relations (RelIttc) plans in the SIPEX.

Figure 6 – Preparation of the PCEEx and the annual Com Estrt guideline in the SIPEX calendar.



Source: Moreira (2021).

5 Abbreviations in the figure: LBDN (National Defense White Paper), PND (National Defense Policy), END (National Defense Strategy); PSD (Sectoral Defense Policy); ESD (Sectoral Defense Strategy).

8 Essential components of strategic communication

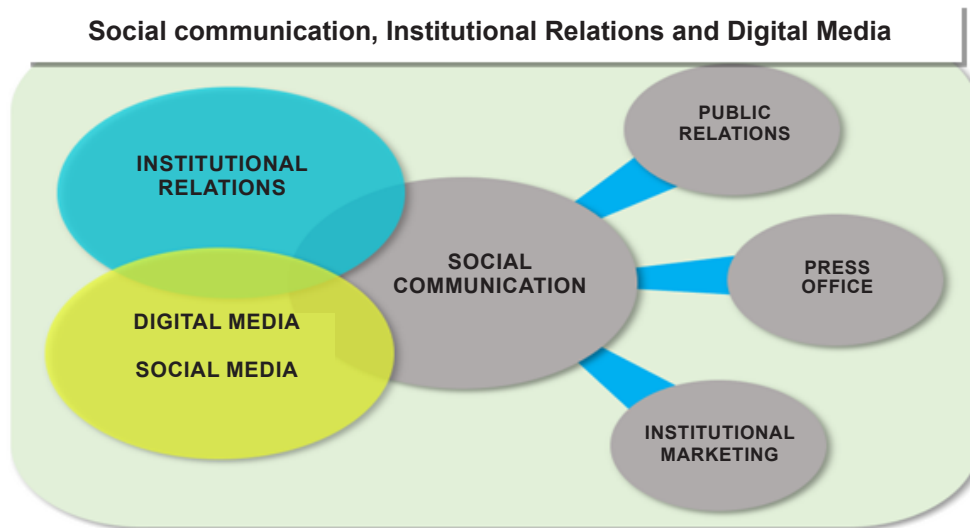
8.1 Chain of command and technical channels

In order to meet the perspective of alignment, integration and synchronization of Strategic Communication actions, the main responsibility falls on the active military personnel. These are part of the initial target audience of PCEEx, a group that also includes veterans, civil servants, military dependents and students from Military Schools. This heterogeneous group forms the so-called internal public.

The traditional channels existing in the Army's organizational structure can be considered the most effective in reaching this target audience. Through the Chain of Command and Technical Channels, the transmission of determinations and the control of the results achieved will be supported, in addition, by all existing corporate tools, including bulletins, plans and digital control systems.

8.2 Social communication, institutional relations and digital media

Figure 7 – Social Communication, Institutional Relations and Digital Media



Source: Os autores (2021).

For Com Estrt to present itself in a systematic and effective way, the organization's internal and external communication channels shall be aligned and integrated. Thus, as seen in the previous figure, aiming to achieve its goals, the Institution employs the means that the communications revolution has brought to the current world, influencing the physical, human and informational dimensions and which go beyond the reach of classical Social Communication.

8.3 Intelligence

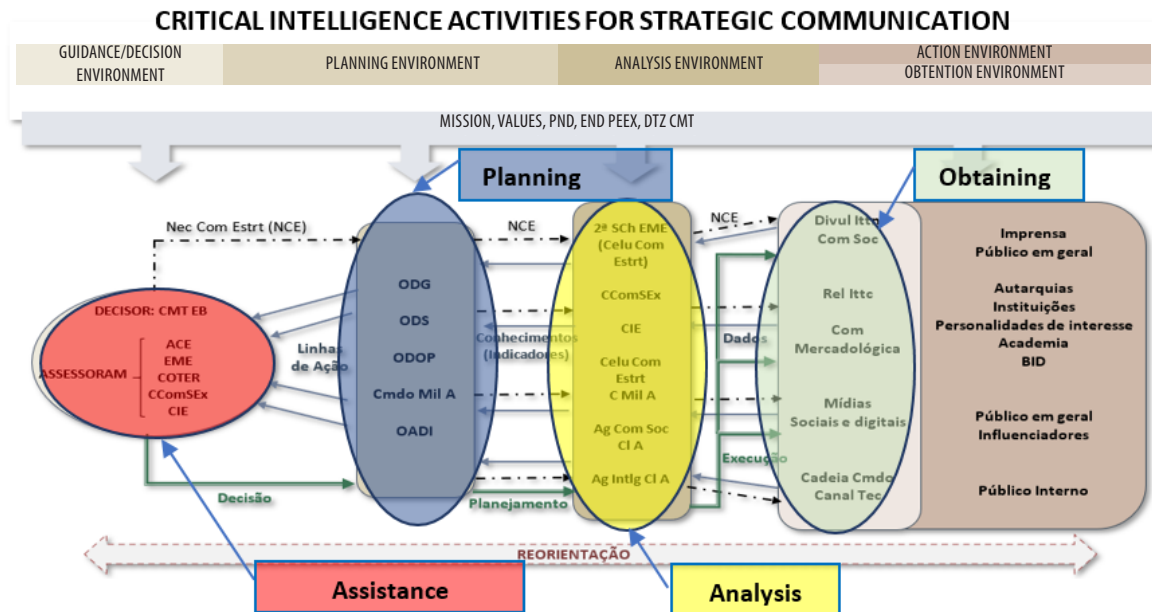
Com Estrt does not act in isolation, as seen. To speed up the flow of information, constant intelligence support at all stages is essential. This relationship starts from the orientation phase and supports the decision-making process. At this time, actors such as CIE, OADI/CmtEx⁶, and the second sections of the Cmdo Mil A, are participants in the process.

The Intelligence Agencies (CIE and 2^a Seç) are also relevant in the planning actions of the PCEEx, the guidelines and fragmentary orders. The preparation of the Obtaining and Integration Plan with the acquired knowledge complements this work, with the Central (CIE), Class A (Cmdo Mil A) and Special (ODS and ODOP) agencies being responsible for the correct analysis of the data that will convert into the necessary knowledge for the planning phase.

It should be noted that, because most of the intelligence data is ostentatious, there is no need for specialized personnel for data collection actions, which expands the range of advisors who can support Strategic Communication. Even so, there may be information that, due to its sensitivity or difficulty in obtaining, are classified among the critical intelligence activities for the Com Estrt, as shown in Figure 8.

In this sense, the so-called **Critical Entry Vulnerability Points (PVCE)** shall be given special attention during the processing between the analysis structures (Ag Cl A from Com Soc, Ag Cl A from Intlg, Intelligence Centers, Celu Com Estrt) and structures intended for planning (as in the Army General Staff and in the EM Cmdo Mil A).

Figure 8 – Critical Intelligence Activities for Strategic Communication.



Source: Moreira (2021).

6 Army Commander.

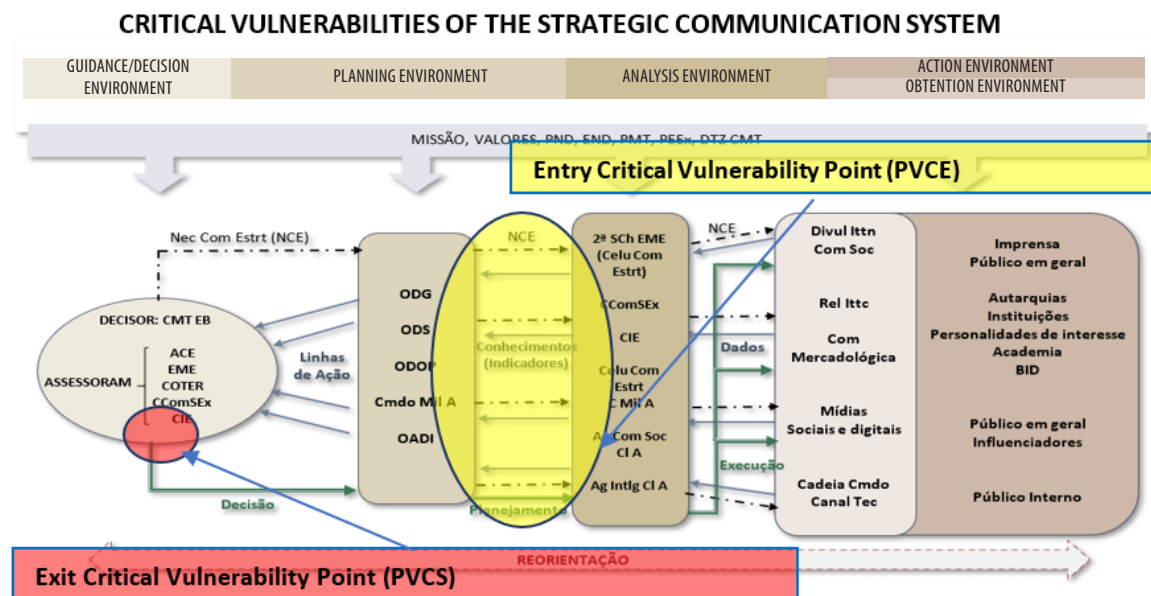
Data that is not processed by the correct analysis process can lead to serious planning errors, which will lead to incorrect decisions. The best measures for the protection of the PVCE are the hiring of trained, specialized and efficient analysts and the exchange of data and information.

The **Exit Critical Vulnerability Points (PVCS)** guide the dissemination of orders and plans that will involve the Strategic Communication actions to be adopted by the entire Force. In this case, the principles of Confidentiality, Integrity, Availability and Inviolability of Information shall be ensured. In this way, the messages sent reach the correct recipients and no leaks occur in the Com Estrt execution process.

To this end, Cmt EB will use the direct assistance of its advisory bodies, which will select the target audiences for messages and actions, as well as indicate the necessary measures to safeguard the information produced in the decision-making process. The Cmt Mil A will be advised by their EM and specialized cells, reflecting the structure of the Force's highest level.

Figure 9 illustrates the locations in the Strategic Communication flow where the main PVCE and PVCS occur.

Figure 9 – Critical Vulnerabilities of the Strategic Communication System.



Source: Moreira (2021).

9 Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to provide the reader with an atmosphere regarding the proposed systematization of Strategic Communication within the Brazilian Army. Therefore, the methodology employed by the CPEAEx 2021 Interdisciplinary Project (PI) was clarified, in which doctrines, experiences and best practices were sought in the scope of institutions and companies, both in Brazil and abroad. The collected data, added to the EME's recommendations, were translated into the main concepts and fundamentals applied to the work.

The systematization itself was addressed in five topics of this work, in which the definitions, premises and demands of Strategic Communication in the EB were highlighted; the deployment and execution of the Strategic Communication Plan; the environments, cycles and main actors in the process; and also the essential components for the planning and execution of the Com Estrt in the EB.

Among the main observations of the PI design process, it was found that the structures necessary for the proper functioning of Strategic Communication in the Force practically already exist. However, the functioning of internal and external Communication channels does not always work synergistically.

It is, therefore, in this sense that the systematization of Com Estrt finds a wide space to organize and methodize the procedures between the chain of command and the technical channels, as well as the Social Communication and Institutional Relations systems. It was also observed the great need for the involvement of the Intelligence system, both to obtain reliable communication inputs, and to safeguard the flow of information.

For the good progress of Strategic Communication, the systematization of the process will be based on two main ideas: Com Estrt, to be effective, shall be **Integrated, Aligned and Synchronized**, at all levels; and for this to occur, it shall be centrally **planned at the highest decision-making level** and executed in a decentralized manner.

Therefore, this article is concluded with the certainty that the deployment of Com Estrt and its systematization will contribute to increasing the synergy of planning, execution and control of the activities of the Brazilian Army. To this end, it is essential that the alignment, integration and synchronization of communication in the Force are already collated in the EB Command and its indicators monitored at all levels, promoting, full-time, the necessary readjustments for the achievement and maintenance of the Strategic Objectives of the Army.

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