# Communicational types of propaganda

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## ABSTRACT

On a meta-analytical way, the study inventorizes and organizes the types of propaganda. It configures a communicational-persuasive taxonomy of types of propaganda. In this explicit relevant contributions of some outstanding communication authority propaganda: Serge Chakotin, Jacques Ellul, Jean Cazeneuve, Garth S. Jowett, Victoria O'Donnell, H.-P. Cathala, J.-M. Sproule, J. E. Combs, D. Nimmo, Cristian Florin Popescu, Călin Hentea. As prototypes of propaganda are recorded vertical and horizontal propaganda; rational and irrational propaganda; propaganda of competition, propaganda of integration and propaganda of subversion; ideological, political, economy, moral, aesthetical, religious, oral, written, visual, audio-visual, organizational propaganda. The core propaganda will always find the target group. How relevant taxonomy is what is done according to the action on the target group: seductive propaganda, propaganda mythical false propaganda, propaganda fiction.

*Keywords*: communication; persuasion; propaganda

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Propaganda is an activity to promote and disseminate opinions, ideas, theses, conceptions and doctrines, realised by a propagator from the positions of an ideology and with the purpose to cause some effects for forming, changing or reinforcing certain opinions, attitudes or behaviours. Jacques Ellul observes that classical propaganda is a vertical propaganda. It is done by a leader, a personality, an authority acting by influence from the height of their prestige. The target audience is a crowd placed in a position of inferiority. The message comes from up, and the receiver is generally passive. This form of persuasive communication is of complementary type. In contradistinction to this, after 1950, a "horizontal propaganda" develops on the scientific base of the theory of K. Lewin of dynamics of groups (Ellul J., 1962, pp. 95-96). The horizontal propaganda of sociological orientation is now opposed to the vertical propaganda of ideological nuance. What is important is that both these types remain forms of the propaganda for integration. The criterion for distinguishing between vertical and horizontal propaganda is the direction of propagation. In fact, as a form of propaganda for integration, vertical propaganda crosses history (Buzărnescu, 1996; Borowski, 2013; Borowski, 2014).

It is practiced by the authorities, individuals, political power, political groups. In contemporary, propaganda's specificity is the Globalisation of sending its message through media-type communications. Horizontal propaganda is characterised by dimming the contrast

between propagandist and target-group. One may say it is based on the equality of group members. Every individual makes propaganda and is object of propaganda, within a global process of influence, support, promotion and exposure to the actions of others.

## 2. TAXONOMIES OF PROPAGANDA

Serghei Chakotin (2004) is the one establishing the typology: rational propaganda, irrational propaganda. According to him, there is a propaganda based on persuasion and reasoning and another one based on suggestion, on engaging the instinctive pulses, on emotional exaltation, fear, enthusiasm, ecstatic delirium. Rational propaganda the privilege of democracy. Instead, irrational or sense-propaganda is the tool of totalitarian regimes, such as communism and Nazism. While rational propaganda would be, we say today, of rational nature, addressing the thinking and characterising by the use of syllogisms, demonstrations and positive arguments, irrational propaganda is of emotional nature, addressing the emotional and individualising by the appeal to sophism and free affirmation.

The information from the messages of rational propaganda is objective, it comes from the technical cultural spheres, it uses static digits. This information is integrated into a concrete system of idea and is processed by the logical structure of thinking. The information in the irrational propagandist messages is seductive and, additionally, it is processed within a lateral thinking, weak thinking, confused thinking. The affects are mobilised to persuade the audience in order to adopt the propagandistic message without counterarguments. When man is seductive, has charm, charisma, what they shall say will be seductive, and thus they shall persuade. When the message is seductive, it will persuade. Concerning seduction, there is an ancient Greek legend where an assassin woman with no mitigating circumstances and in despair for a cause removes her robe and she resignedly shows her naked body before the judges. They exonerate her: in this case seduction has the desired effect.

Jean Cazeneuve (Cazeneuve 1976, pp. 359-365) considered three types of propaganda as absolute novelties of contemporary propaganda: of competition, of integration and of subversion. With the propaganda of competition, one seeks the social change, mainly the political change, it develops as an organise conflict: during election campaigns, around the propaganda of governance or of the field of action of various ideologies. Propaganda of integration aims to achieve an agreement between habits and laws, between ideology and economical and political structures. Propaganda of subversion serves a political organisation, which aims the accession to power by force. It does not serve a democratic ideology, but an undemocratic one.

Victoria O'Donnell and Garth S. Jowett (Apud Popescu C. F., 2002, p. 285) consider that, in general, there are three types of propaganda: white propaganda, grey propaganda and black propaganda. White propaganda is characterised by that it has a source which is identified exactly, which coherently communicates the information and works at its own credibility, it is also called open propaganda, official propaganda. White propaganda is done by institutions or public people, states, governments and bodies. The preferred channel to propagate is the media. This way, official documents are promoted, such as: laws, decrees, speeches, standards of national or international politics, press releases, etc. White propaganda generally aims at propagating values, political, economical, military and social rules and principles. It also aims to counteract the adverse propaganda. In short, white propaganda openly assumes its message, is justly declared its producer and transmits it to be received, with the clear awareness of "we". Grey propaganda, show O'Donnell and Jowett, is that the

source of which "could be or could not be identified correctly" and the information of which does not have a reliable accuracy. It does not openly declare against an opponent or another propaganda.

This makes the topics dealt with to be easily accepted in various circles of the public opinion, but leaves the source in "the grey mist", not disclosing it. Black propaganda is individualised by that it hides its source of propagation or falsely declares the source, with the purpose to get the enemy or the competitor confused. Black propaganda is done when the producing source wants to be known as uninvolved. Black propaganda is also known as undercover propaganda or hidden, masked propaganda. O'Donnelll and Jowett (Apud Popescu C. F., 2002, p. 285) consider that "black propaganda is the Big Lie" This type of propaganda is the most subversive. Black propaganda affirms a source of false origin for messages. It addresses the opponent directly and openly attacks its most poignant issues. Concrete information is generally used, which lead to poisoning the public opinion, affecting and weakening the internal solidarity of the group. Ultimately, it leads to total confusion and anarchy (Siminică & Traistaru, 2013; Traistaru & Avram, 2014). Calumny and defamation are not avoided. Black propaganda generates and disseminates false information, modifies, distorts the reality, deforms the truth.

C. F. Popescu believes that "disinformation is a synonym for black propaganda" (Popescu C. F., 2002, p. 285). The message of black propaganda hides behind the innocence of a non-partisan opinion and issued in good faith, is camouflaged as information, but one that selects the facts, inserts factoids, changes the visibility scale of certain events in favour for others.

A specific type of propaganda is metapropaganda. This is actually, an evolution of counterpropaganda. Metapropaganda consists in labelling the information originated from the opponent as propaganda, which automatically leads to discrediting it as information (Arsith & Draganescu, 2011).

In the scope of propaganda, we come across another three types that are worth mentioning: symbolic propaganda, tactic propaganda and strategic propaganda. Symbolic propaganda uses allegoric, metaphoric constructions, images and sensitive (not seldom even fictive) representations, is based on affects, passions, resentments, addressing the obscure layers of the subconscious. Tactic propaganda is characterised by that it is designed on a short-term in order to get immediate effects. Strategic propaganda is planned to act on a short-term and is destined to forming or changing values, basic attitudes and conceptions of the target-group.

H.-P. Cathala distinguishes three "forms of propaganda" (Cathala H.-P., 1991, pp. 50-51):

- that exercised on the occasion of mass meetings, rallies and large broadcasting actions; in this case the crowd is treated as an integer, which allows the engagement of all, including the unsure (most often against their will);

- the "evangelical" one, circulated by priests and missionaries or newsmongers of tendentious rumours; evangelical propaganda currently registers a remarkable success using techniques of mailing, oral or telephonic transmission;

- self-propaganda, that propaganda practiced in limited groups and where everyone is invited to speak completely spontaneous; in reality, observers guiding the debate towards a never omitted topic are present within that

group; the conclusions are ultimately even firmer, as they appear to be developed in full freedom of thinking; this type of propaganda has been imposed by Mao Zedong.

According to the content, propaganda can be: ideological, political, economical, moral, aesthetical, religious, etc. According to the form: oral, written, visual, audio-visual, organizational. With this typology, propaganda has passed into the 21st Century. He 21st Century did not individualise only regarding the content of propagandistic messages. Evolutions also occurred within the other elements of the operational structure of propaganda. The main character of propaganda is the target-audience. Concerning the target-audience, an essential mutation is generated within the propaganda of the 21st Century: it is matter here of change from exponents to masses. It is a matter of paradoxical evolution denying the force of the theory "two-steps-flow". As J.-M. Sproule (Apud Combs & Nimmo, 1992, p. 18) showed, "before the 20th Century, persuasive efforts were directed to elites consisting of interesting, informed, knowledgeable people. The message was created based on the arguments of motivations, facts, based on logic. However, the audience nowadays is a mass that replaces the elites. Although they are not passive, the masses are not always well informed, their interest for politics is sporadic, their direct political experience is low, being trapped in the daily routine. The masses respond to conclusions, not to reasons, slogans, complex matters, images, ideas, to what is pleasant".

The institution of propaganda is delimited by three characteristics:

- A specialised silent partner structure which consists of the managerial body and units of organisation, research, analysis, assessment of the situation of propaganda, as well as units of designing the actions and propaganda campaigns (mainly propagandistic messages);

- a derived axiology appropriate to the goals, objectives and interests of the social group and forming the platform of the reference values for designing and implementing the propaganda actions, operations, campaigns;

- a set of means of disseminating the messages.

In the activity of propaganda, the following are delimited as actors: silent partners, planners and target-group. The silent partners are those who feel the need to ensure a high yield for their social, political, economical, military enterprises. They discover propaganda to be a means to achieve an objective. Therefore, propaganda is not a goal in itself, but a means among others for achieving a goal (Otovescu, Frăsie, Motoi & Otovescu, 2011). The objective need is translated by the need for support. In a circumstance or another, silent partners observe that the needs, as derivates of the necessity, can be satisfied by getting a support of propaganda, either from the public opinion, or from certain segments of the population, or from some organisations or bodies. The circumstances where propaganda become a means of achieving certain interests represents what is called a situation of propaganda. The central objective of propaganda is concretely differentiated within the situation of propaganda: triggering some trends of opinion which would form the basis of subsequent elaboration of some attitudes, which would then underlie behaviours (Seceleanu, 2009; Cojocaru, Sandu & Cojocaru, 2011). Silent partners make the situation of propaganda known to some planners who have the role to design and implement propaganda actions, operations or campaigns, so that the desired effects of support and promotion would be

achieved (Neacşu, 2005; Olimid, 2013). First of all, planners evaluate whether the situation of propaganda is the one which the silent partners made known. No matter whether it is or it is not the presented one, they, as specialists, configures the real situation of propaganda. In relation to this, re-signifies the interests of which achievement must be supported or based on propaganda. It sets forth the goals and objectives of the action of propaganda, of which the imperative to induce a trend of opinion favourable to supporting and promoting a certain major interest must not be missing. It also designs the propagandistic message and ways of dissemination (Bunea, Cojocaru & Cojocaru, 2010; Narita, 2013; Hintea, 2013; Oprea, 2013).

Concerning the messages, they carefully give attention to their central topics and ideas, on coherence, cohesion and their thematic unity. They decide on the speeches where the messages are to be integrated to, as literary genre or discursive form. They decide on the channels of dissemination and ways of diffusion: symposium, rallies, media, posters, leaflets, Internet outputs, etc. They order in relation to the area of disseminating the speeches message and to the financial-logistic means to support the propaganda operation or campaign. In relation to these, they choose the dissemination operators, set forth the frequency of repeating the messages, taking into account the fact that seduction is especially generated by repetition.

A feed-type device is integrated into the project of the action of propaganda: a set of criteria to discount the effects, to anticipate the effects *(feed forward)* and one to correctively adjust the action according to the effects produced, related to the goals set forth and reactions obtained *(feedback)*. On the other hand, the white, grey or black feature of propaganda is generically given: the source is or is not made known. The entire project of the action of propaganda has "a single" actor in the centre: the target-group. All depends on this actor, on knowing this actor. The effects discounted and reactions obtained, as sides of the feed device, are fully subordinated to knowing the target-group. Failure or success of the propaganda action, operation or campaign is fully conditioned by knowing the target-group. It is not the silent partner's needs to ensure the success of the propaganda. The discounted effects are presided by the identification of the needs, desires, aspirations and interests of the target-audience, by finding the way to capitalise them, by selecting the operators and relays to intermediate the message, well adapted to the target-audience.

Propaganda uses all ways of informational processing. It acts seductively and mythically on feelings, ideas, will, conscious and latent needs. The target is followed both in the public space and intimate space. Propaganda leaves no room for intimacy. The propagandistic approach suggests a global explanation of the world and engages in providing immediate reactions of acquiescence to the target. In this direction, propaganda is continuous and fierce, it takes time, being "total", as J. Ellul says.

In order to fulfil its purposes and achieve its goals, propaganda is aimed at subordinating the public opinion, which is why pressures shall be made in order to subordinate the media to it. Even when it fails, propaganda cannot do without the media. No propaganda planner designs their project without taking into account a media component. On this idea, Călin Hentea shows that one cannot "design any military operation without taking into account the media component" (Hentea C., 2000, p. 16). Besides these operations, language techniques and cogitative techniques are also present in the portfolio of the propaganda tools. In fact, the propagandistic activities aim to achieve the programmed effects on the opinions, attitudes and behaviour of a target-group, through cogitative-language means. At language level, propaganda deliberately and systematically draws a rhetoric of the transmitted word, into the circuit of influence (Lesutan, 2007; Popa, 2010; Popa, 2011).

## 3. CONCLUSION

The propaganda actions and campaigns start from the minimal idea that the first effect shall be creating a public opinion by crystallising some latent opinion, by rallying others, conforming the individual dispersed opinions. Concerning the latent opinions, propaganda seductively and mythically stimulates them in the direction of interest, bringing them on a premeditated convergent course. It thus determines the formation of an active trend of public opinion, guided on the coordinates which exist in the propaganda plan. The means and forces make up the propagandistic device. The basis of the activity of propaganda is the information about the target of the propaganda, particularly consisting in knowledge about the aspirations, desires, fears and needs of the target-group. The aspirations and fears of the target mass form the goal which the most important operation of propaganda moves towards: seduction. The intellectual aspirations shall be attacked by capitalising the myth. The lie and fiction do not miss from the actions of propaganda.

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