

Twelve Communicational Principles of Propaganda

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how is structured the propaganda (pyramid of propaganda) and the steps of development of propaganda, in order to detach operating principles of propaganda. Investigative approach is meta-analytical. It assumes that propaganda is a type of persuasive communication. It examines, first, the ontological elements of communication and it is found that crucial elements are the target-group, the propagandistic message and the planning. It is a tangible element (target-group) and two ideational and intangible elements (propagandistic message and planning). Then, starting from the 6 propaganda techniques and rules set by Jean-Marie Duvignac (1961-2004), we identify 12 communicational principles of propaganda. The 12 principles are not regarded as principles of existence, but as principles of efficiency of propaganda.

Keywords: persuasive communication ; pyramid of propaganda ; principles of propaganda

1. INTRODUCTION

Propaganda is a matter of ideas and persuasion. It is a matter of ideas, because is based on subtle and clear ideas. It is a matter of persuasion, because it is done only by persuasive methods (Rhodes, 1987; Taylor, 1992). Propaganda is the most important form of persuasion. After it come the manipulation, disinformation and intoxication. A. R. Pratkanis, A. Pratkanis and Aronson E. (2001) opine that today we live in the "Age of Propaganda". As a social practice propaganda phenomena emerges from the influence of large groups, crowds, associations, parties, mass

Concept covering such social practice meanings was established in the Middle Age; it was revealed in the religion and was taken there by social scientists. In the twentieth century, propaganda became a political and war weapon. J. D. Squires (1935), J. A. Leith (1965), HC Peter (1965) and M. Balfour (1979) analyzed the incidence idea of propaganda and propaganda in France, the U.S. and the UK, the period from 1914 to 1917. P. Kenez (1985) notes that the Soviet Union has patented "propaganda state" during 1917-1929.

The first prominent theorists of propaganda are Harold D. Lasswell (1927, 1935), E. L. Bernays & M. C. Miller (1928), F. E. Lumley (1933) and L. W. Doob (1935). Known for communication model launched in 1948, Harold D. Lasswell is the most important theoretician and practitioner of propaganda advisor of the twentieth century (During World War II, he was Chief of the Experimental Division for the Study of War Time Communications at the Library of Congress.) His works as sole author ["The Theory of Political Propaganda" (1927), "Propaganda Technique in the World War" (1938)] or in accomplice ["Propaganda, communication, and public Opinion: a comprehensive guide" (1946), "Propaganda and

promotional activities. An Annotated Bibliography "(1969)] is established as a corpus for propaganda fundamentals. Outstanding works about propaganda writing T. H. Qualter (1962), J. Ellul (1962; 1965), J. A. C. Brown (1963), J.-M. Domenach (1965, 2004), A. L. George (1973), J. M. MacKenzie (1984), P. M. Taylor (1992; 1999), W. L. Hixon (1997), Noam Chomsky (2002), D. Miller (2004), N. Davies (2011), G. S. Jowett & V. Donnell (2014).

2. PYRAMID OF PROPAGANDA AND PHASES OF PROPAGANDISTIC PROCESS

The propagandistic approach is always an act "premeditated" by a propagator. The propagandistic operator operates deliberately, relying on direct and indirect propagandistic effects, meaning perceived as intentional, respectively as involuntary (Rosca, 2002; Roşca, 2006; Borowski, 2014). They engage widely diverse communicational means and capabilities into the project of propaganda and do not exclude the achievement of some levels such as instigation and agitation. In any case, these are used only in special situations. The propagandistic activity may have various forms: propaganda action, operation or campaign. The propagandistic production involves financial and intellectual efforts of a higher magnitude than those allocated in influence itself and intoxication. S. Chakotin (Ceakotin, 2004) believes that the propagandistic process is scientifically based on the Pavlovian theory of the conditioned reflex. The driving motor is suggestion. Pavlov sets forth the suggestion in the same field as sleep and hypnosis, assessing that an order given in the context of suggestion is of guaranteed efficiency. The propagandistic process focuses therefore on suggestion and refers to organising the production and circuit of the masses.

According to Chakotin, schematically, the process has the shape of a pyramid:

- the base is the doctrine;
- doctrine is concentrated in a program;
- the program is synthesized in a slogan;
- the slogan is centered on a symbol.

S. Chakotin shows that the more suggestive it is, the more effective is the symbol and the better idea it sends. The idea function in the direction of the doctrine, the better it induces the emotional basis to which the action of propaganda guides, stirs, instigates, pushes: threat, compassion, hatred, material interest etc. The pyramid of Chakotin shows that in order to propagate the doctrine, we need not rely on detailed expositions, argumentations (Roventă-Frumuș, 2000) and demonstrations (meaning, as we say, on conviction), but on implicit and simple information, meaning on symbols and slogans. The action of propaganda promotes a doctrine based on a program on the way of symbols and slogans.

In his turn, J. Ellul (1962) distinguishes two phases in the propagandistic process. The first phase, the pre-propaganda or sub-propaganda is featured by coming into contact with the masses and knowing them. Here it would act what we call the principle of knowing and adapting to the target-audience. The second phase is an active propaganda, and the messages are triggered therein. Ellul (1962) states the following limits or preconditions of the efficiency of the propagandistic process: pre-existing attitudes, the propaganda being able to operate at first only therein, using them to gradually change them; global trends and sociological presuppositions of the society, propaganda not being able to reverse itself the fundamental course of the society's development; the need for consistency with the facts, the propaganda not being able to ever be just a display of ideas, but a presentation of ideas concerning the facts,

and the propaganda in contradiction to facts can only succeed temporarily; the time limit (time, continuity and sustainability are required in propaganda); limit due to influences from abroad or from outside the group subjected to propaganda; unpredictability of people's direct reactions to propaganda (depending on the culture, their training, as well as on other individual and social factors).

According to Jean Cazeneuve (Cazeneuve, 1976, pp. 360-364), propaganda has two stages. The first stage is the ideological pre-propaganda. Therein, a picture is delimited, which includes: range of moment of stability values and social change, the echo of the facts of actuality and "dominant political myths" (economical progress, liberalism, sovereignty, national independence, socialism). By relating to this content found in the pre-propaganda stage, the propagandistic message is developed in the stage of propaganda itself. The propagandistic text must provide the reader's holding by a title simultaneously expressing topicality fact and claiming or ideology of the targeted subgroup. Further it must slide towards "the evidence of the final slogan".

The way from the title to the slogan must be transited "by a gain of images or force-ideas and sophisms or reasons which send to the undisputed evidence of the title" (Cazeneuve, 1976, p. 363). What creates the propaganda itself (the title, the way to slogan and the slogan) "is done, shows Cazeneuve (Cazeneuve, 1976, p. 363), in a sort of a selective syllogism in three-steps." The goal of developing the propaganda is to impose the slogan as evidence. "The slogan ensures the unit of propaganda" emphasises Cazeneuve (Cazeneuve, 1976, p. 363). It ultimately faces through it the divergent and diversified interests of the subculture of the target-group. Extended effects are also provided though it: even group being "convinced by a different reading of the text" (Cazeneuve, 1976, p. 363).

3. PRINCIPLES OF PROPAGANDA

Having advertising and ideology as sources and the lie and myth as basis (Moraru, 2009), propaganda is clearly according to Jean-Marie Domenach, as aspiring to become a science through certain rules and techniques. The main contribution of the renowned French specialist to theorising the propaganda consists in preparing such rules. He is aware that nobody can pretend to have succeeded to circumscribe propaganda to a number of functional laws. Propaganda is polymorphic and has almost infinite resources (Domenach, 2004, p. 64). The main obstacle to strengthening the laws is the large number of factors that need to be taken into account, the fact that the rules and techniques depend on context.

Jean Domenach develops six "rules and techniques" (Domenach, 2004, pp. 63-109). The first one is "the rule of simplification and unique enemy". The second one is "the rule of distinction and caricature". The third one: "rule of orchestrating". The fourth rule is the rule of transfer. The fifth one is the rule of unanimity and contagion. The sixth one is the rule of counterpropaganda. The rules developed by Domenach have value of principles.

A good propaganda action, operation or campaign is based on acquiring and applying principles. Within the activity of propaganda, the following principles operate, and in between brackets, we mention the equivalence of the twelve principles we developed with Domenach's six rules:

A) Principles of the target-group:

- a) the first principle, that of knowing and adapting to the target-audience;

b) the second principle, that of selecting a unique, uniform, homogenous public, or under homogenisation;

c) the third principle, that of applying the contagion (the principle Le Bon), Domenach's fifth rule. According to this principle, the reality that mental contagion always intervenes must be exploited, according to Gustave Le Bon (Le Bon, 1990), in order to determine the special characters of the masses and their orientation; within a mass of people, any feeling, any act is contagious, so contagious that the individual sacrifices easier their personal interest in favour for the collective one. This shows that the group puts pressure on the individual opinion; the various forms of conformism that arise in society are managed therein. According to Domenach, the idea of contagion belongs to F. Expinas. Expinas starts from finding the "wroth" behaviour of the sentinel-bee. This behaviour triggers the wrath of the entire hive; calls the mechanism underlying the phenomenon "law of contagion". Further, Le Bon and Expinas reach the idea of contagion. Similar to bees, the individual whom is part of a group is much more sensitive to the reactions of the other individuals. Propaganda triggers the consent by the human example, by the brightness of the apostolate, by the presence of the hero, by the conviction of proselytism. The most common means of contagion are the mass demonstration, the rally and the parade. The crowd begins "to hit" in a unique rhythm, by using means such as: flags, banners, canopies, emblems, badges, inscriptions, devices, uniforms, specific music, spotlights, torches, convergence gymnastics (Vlăduțescu, 2006).

The unanimity is also a means of propaganda and demonstration of force. The individual in group is hardly permeable to propaganda. The compact groups are not sensitive to psychological contagion. The isolated individual is the perfect element for the effect of the propaganda. Contagion then starts from them. From a strategic point of view, the soldier, the military, the militant, the member of a party, member of a well structured group, such individuals are difficult to attract to an opinion. The resistance of such an individual once it has been defeated, they can become the trigger of the contagion.

B) Principles of the message.

a) the fourth principle, that of simplicity of the message (the ideational of the message must be simple) – first rule of Domenach; whatever the field where it would be manifested, propaganda shall primarily strive to simplify, direct everything in a few ideas which would be as clearly defined as possible. In this respect, in order to influence the audience, the propagandist has available manifests, professions of faith, programs, declarations, catechisms. These shall be developed in an affirmative, concise, clear form and shall be directed towards one enemy;

b) the fifth principle, that of frontal non-contradiction (knowing the opinions of the target audience, the propagandistic message must be original and at the surface in agreement with the audience – starting on the projected direction). Propaganda is not done by starting from nothing, it always operates on an already existing sub-layer. The base of the transfer is the idea that the propagandist must never contradict their audience. Anyway, they shall consent to the predominant emotion of the crowd since the beginning. The program must be connected to the audience's primary attitude;

c) the sixth principle, that of mono-thematics (when the projected message is formed from a set of messages, they must focus on a single topic);

c) the seventh principle, that of the rhetoric of repetition (Domenach's third rule): the message shall be developed having repetition as figure of speech. Gustave Le Bon shows (Le Bon, pp. 60-62) that there are three procedures to inoculate certain ideas and beliefs in the minds of the masses: affirmation, repetition and contagion; when an affirmation is repeated

enough, it is unanimously formed what is called a trend of opinion, where the powerful mechanism of contagion intervenes; the contagion of emotions explains the rapidity by which the panic sets; the first rhetorical condition of a good propaganda is the uninterrupted repetition of main topics; the permanence of the topic is synthesised in watchwords and slogans; the topic must persist in various forms (Ștefănel & Roventă-Frumușani, 2010). As if confirming our principle of repetition rhetoric, Professor Mielu Zlate shows that: "the repetition of some formulations comes to lead to accepting the idea contained therein, independently of any verification (Zlate, 2004, p. 493);

e) the eighth principle, that of thematic recovery of myths (the topics of propagandistic messages shall be argumentatively anchored in the mythology well-known to the audience), this principle is also called the principle of transfusion, on the idea that those ideas needed to support the topic of the propaganda are grafted on a pre-existing ideal-mythical ground;

f) the ninth principle, that of distortion (Domenach's second rule): the distortion of information is perceived by the masses as a novelty, and novelty is seen as true information; Gustave Le Bon (Le Bon, 1990) shows that the delivery of some legends circulating very rapidly at the level of crowds is not only the result of total credulity, but also of gross distortions which the events become in the imagination of individuals gathered together: the most banal story becomes increasingly deformed, because the masses think in pictures, and the evoked image evokes in its turn other images in full logical inconsistency in relation to the first image; the distortion of news is a journalistic process (commonly used in negative journalism), by means of which the journalist highlights only the information that suits them: a politician's hazardous phrase, announcement of an aircraft or un-own ship is converted into threatening evidence; the skilful use of quotations detached from their context is also a frequently used procedure.

C) Planner's principles:

a) the tenth principle, that of organisation based on a plan: any propagandistic action, operation or campaign must be planned and based on a plan;

b) the eleventh principle, that of *feed* (*feed-forward* + *feed-back*): the action must be allowed to flow as long as the desired effects and reactions are produced; one must intervene with corrections whenever the desired effects and reactions are not achieved.

c) the twelfth principle, that of counterpropaganda (Domenach's sixth rule). The propaganda which combats the opponent's theses focuses on a few directions: locating the topics of the opponent's propaganda, attacking the weaknesses, abstaining from assailing the adverse propaganda when it is weak, debile, disdaining the opponent whom is under assault, putting the opponent's propaganda in contradiction with the facts and ridiculing them, imposing its own climate of force (Popa, 2006).

According to Domenach, propaganda has two sources: advertising and political ideology. Advertising and propaganda shook hands a long time ago. Their evolution is parallel. At first, the doctrines are praised as the producer praises their products, meaning their features are described and benefits explained. As Domenach shows (Domenach, 2004, p. 29), "the programs and presentations of doctrines correspond to the informative advertising, which marks the beginning of the art of advertising".

The common procedures are manifold: "the profession of faith" corresponds to the ad, symbol corresponds to the brand, the political slogan corresponds to the commercial slogan. On the other hand, propagandas are inspired by the inventions and successes of publicity and copy a style which is deemed to be the audience's will. Over time, the slogan, repetition, attractive images increasingly gain more ground, to the detriment of serious and demonstrative

announcements: it is concluded (Domenach, 2004, p. 30) that “from informative, publicity becomes suggestive”. It is relied more and more on obsession and sexual instinct, procedures also acquired by political propaganda. Simultaneously, political propaganda tends to become a science. Its results are tested and they want their efficiency (Branea, 2009; Gheorghe, 2010). The suggestibility of modern man is also exploited: they hardly abscond from an obsession, a certain procedure of attracting. Now, the product is no longer imposed to the customer, but the need for the product is induced to them. Advertising creates needs.

What modern technicians of propaganda have not discovered is that “the individual in the middle class is a being basically liable to influence” (Domenach, 2004, p. 20). It means it is possible to induce beliefs which they shall consider to be theirs, it is possible to literally change their ideas. Part of the propaganda survives even today in symbiosis with advertising. “The propaganda of publicity type” is limited to election campaigns, a case where certain ideas are valorised.

If the sources of propaganda are publicity and ideology, its foundations are, according to Domenach, the myth and the lie. The first propaganda within the name “propaganda”, “propaganda *fide*” is Christian propaganda, and this first propaganda of Christianity “owes a great deal to eschatological myth”. The new political propagandas are also rooted in a mythology of liberation and redemption. Domenach uses the concept of “myth” in the acceptance given by Sorel. People participate at the great social movements, they represent their action which they execute as images of fighting for their own cause, an approach where they come out in triumph from (Coman, Radu, Preteasa, Păun, Bădău, 2011). The myth is such a mental construction. Concerning the lie, it has been made obvious by our era: false speeches and communiqués abound.

The psychological foundations of propaganda are polarised on the idea that “individuals like to dream” (Domenach, 2004, p. 123). One can fight against the lie and myth only with facts. The insidiousness of propaganda has also destroyed this pillar, which makes “the distinction between propaganda and information become increasingly more difficult”. Propaganda “has learnt to hide itself behind apparently objective information”.

4. CONCLUSION

The strategy of propagandistic persuasion is developed by benefiting from the propagandist's prestige, by the seduction produced by the “scholarly” assertions, but which lack evidence, by the shock of the myths drawn into natural reasoning, on repeating which act as substitute for argumentation, on the permeability to seduction and suggestion, on mental influence.

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