Strategic Narratives and YARNS: the Effectiveness of Communication Strategies to Disarm Russian Information Warfare and Influence Operations, Shift Perceptions in Adversary Populations and Immunise Domestic Populations Against Influence Operations

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In fulfilment of the requirements of Master of Conflict and Terrorism Studies (MCTS)

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Submitted 26 October 2018 (amended in part, 12 & 23/07/19; 8/07/2020)

"The aggressor is always peace-loving: he would prefer to take over our country unopposed" –

Carl von Clausewitz

TABLE I:

Propaganda Colour Wheel: Creative commons licence

Islamist   **Fake News**

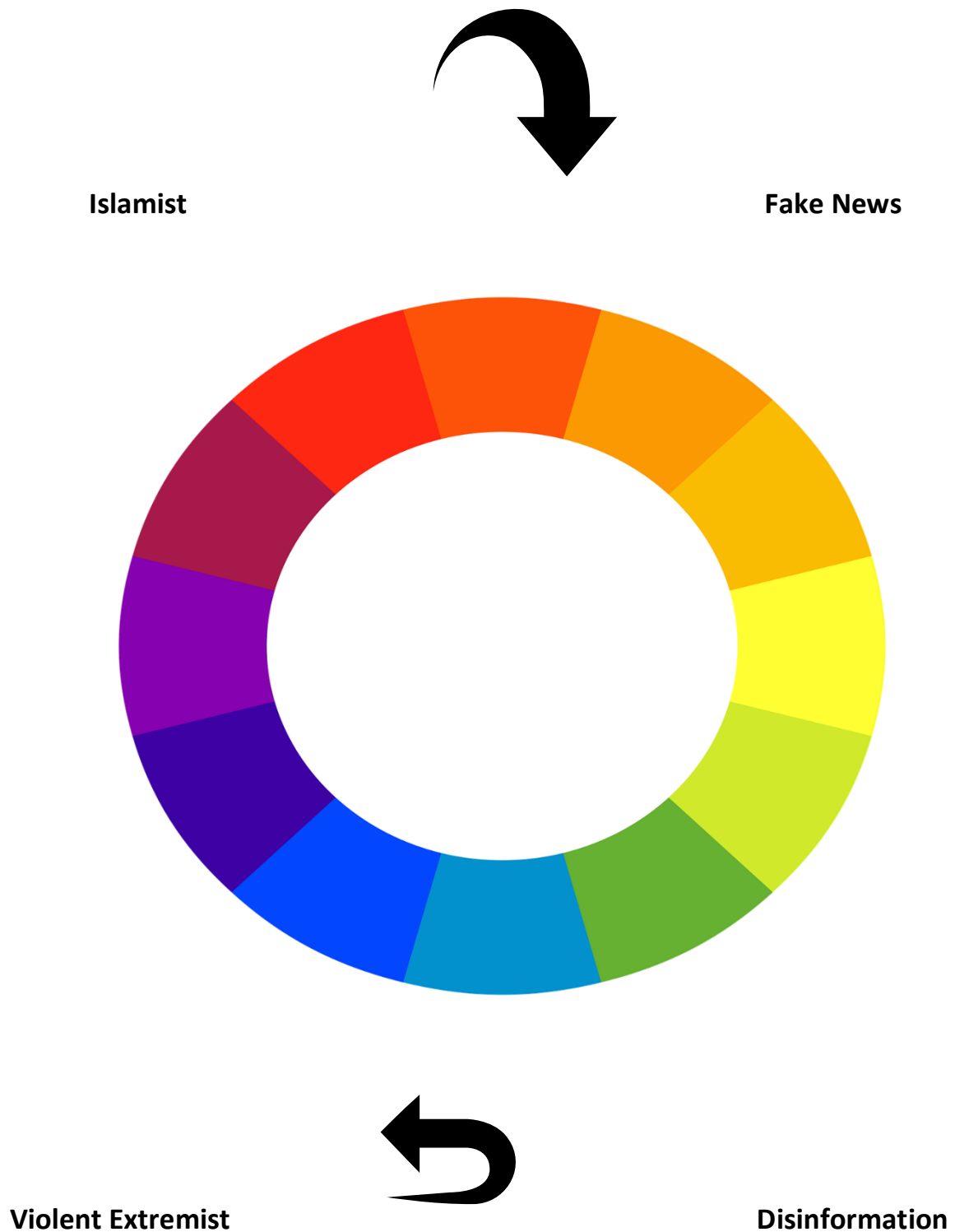**Violent Extremist**   **Disinformation**

TABLE II

The Kremlin Watch Report*

The five categories based on their acknowledgement of the threat and governmental countermeasures:

- **Kremlin Collaborators: Greece and Cyprus (no meaningful resistance);**

- **Countries in Denial:** Hungary, Austria, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Italy

- **The Hesitant:** Croatia, Ireland, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Belgium;

- **The Awakened:** Spain, Netherlands, France, Romania, Germany, Finland, Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland;

- **The Full-Scale Defenders:** The Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, which declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, as well as the U.K. and Sweden;

*Kremlin Watch: www.kremlinwatch.eu; http://www.kremlinwatch.eu/#about-us
https://www.axios.com/russia-influence-report-european-union-ukraine-b9507f3f-e456-41fd-999f-f782cd1959ce.html

TABLE III

NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence, Riga, Latvia

Case Study: Analysis of the Linguistic and Visual Images of the Ukraine-Russia Conflict

"Framing of the Ukraine–Russia conflict in online and social media Representations of the conflict in discourse in Facebook, Vkontakte and internet portals (DELFI, korrespondent.net, pravda.com.ua, kyivpost.com and onet.pl) and social media (Facebook, Vkontakte) in the period from 1 April to 31 December 2014.

Conclusion:

- analysis of internet content: reconstruction of propaganda objectives; frames in which to portray current and past events;
- 'frames' as means – structures, forms and schemes that influence individuals' interpretations of issues, facts, groups and ideas and 'determine' the choices people make;
- frame analysis enables prediction of future actions; reconstruction of a country's strategic and operational objectives;

- Use of linguistic means (e.g., metaphors, idioms and labels), to amplify images that describe Ukrainians as killers, cruel murderers, victims of the US and NATO, manipulated by the US and NATO;

- ideological content from the Russkij Mir (Russian World Foundation - soft power): filling comment sections with 'evidence', 'arguments' and 'facts' which demonstrate that the Ukrainians' and NATO allies' 'actions', 'thoughts' and 'intentions' are aggressive and dishonest;

- Photographs and memes: disinformation, manipulation and fabrication of information.

Abstract

It is clear in the academic and military literature that there is enough evidence now that Russia aggressively targets the West utilising weaponised narratives as an extension of the long Soviet tradition of Reflexive Control[1] (aka "perception management"[2] strategies) that incorporates misinformation, disinformation and propaganda known by Russia as "active measures".[3] The goal is to disrupt, undermine and divide (and thereby weaken) countries which lack adequate defences and response-ability to such attacks. A puzzle remains: how can Western democracies effectively counteract Russian political and information warfare[4] narratives and disinformation campaigns[5] since there is still a knowledge gap of the kind of narratives that have the most deterrent impact on Russia's demonstrably effective information and influence operations. Are proactive or defensive strategies (or both) the most effective response? Do the most successful strategic narratives independently, proactively and aggressively target Russia? Is an approach targeting the psychological/cognitive/identities of

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[1] Annie Kowalewski, "Disinformation and Reflexive Control: The New Cold War", Georgetown Security Studies Review, 1 February 2017; http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2017/02/01/disinformation-and-reflexive-control-the-new-cold-war/

[2] Official Definition of the US Department of Defense (US DoD): "perception management (US DoD)", *Military Factory*, US Department of Defense (US DoD); https://www.militaryfactory.com/dictionary/military-terms-defined.asp?term_id=4039

[3] Nicholas J. Cull, Vasily Gatov, Peter Pomerantsev, Anne Applebaum and Alistair Shawcross, "Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda: How the West Fought Against it An Analytic History, with Lessons for the Present", Executive Summary*, LSE Consulting*, October 2017; http://www.lse.ac.uk/iga/assets/documents/arena/2017/301017-Jigsaw-Soviet-Subversion-Disinformation-and-Propaganda-EXEC-SUMMARY.pdfOctober 2017.

[4] Alina Polyakova, Spencer P. Boyer, "The Future of Political Warfare: Russia, the West and the Coming Age of Global Digital Competition", The New Geopolitics of Europe and Russia, *Brookings*, March 2018.

https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-future-of-political-warfare-russia-the-west-and-the-coming-age-of-global-digital-competition/

[5] Dr. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen et al., "A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation", *European Commission*, March 2018.

 "6 Key Points EU High Level Groups New Report on Disinformation", Reuters Institute, 12 March 2018.

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation

a hostile aggressor in different contexts[6] the most effective strategy or must it be used in combination with the implied threat of kinetic warfare? How do we measure the impact and effectiveness of such narratives? What are the vulnerabilities in the much-hyped hybrid warfare[7] strategies of Russia? What is lacking is a rigorous data-based study and analysis of all the proactive and counter-strategies as well as "whole of society" resilience-based approaches. There has been wide advocacy in the literature for not only the "cross-pollination" of research across disciplines but also for increased investment in studies that deconstruct narrative effectiveness[8], to identify what is a complete narrative strategy[9] connected with advanced cyber warfare and AI initiatives. Firstly, this paper reviews the place (both historical and current) of narratives in information warfare and influence operations. Next, the design structure, themes, content analysis and semiotics of narrative theory has been applied to various narrative and counter-narrative models. Models of terrorist and Russian disinformation counter- narratives as well as models of effective resilience narratives have been deconstructed. They have been analysed utilising narrative, psychological, communications, hypnotic communication and marketing theories. Finally, a model for YARNS[10], a form of resilience narrative, is described and a proposal for a meta-model of narrative structure that may have applicability to both terrorist and disinformation contexts has been advanced as a platform for future research and testing.

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Sascha-Dominik Bachmann and Håkan Gunneriusson, "HYBRID WARS: THE 21st -CENTURY'S NEW THREATS TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY", *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies, Vol 43, No. 1*, 2015, pp. 77 – 98. doi : 10.5787/43-1-1110, 16 September 2014 at p.77; https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2506063

[8] Garth Davies, Christine Neudecker, Marie Ouellet, Martin Bouchard, Benjamin Ducol, "Toward a Framework Understanding of Online Programs for Countering Violent Extremism", *Journal for Deradicalization, Nr.6,* Spring 2016; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/43

[9] Thanks to Paul Cobaugh of US-based Narrative Strategies for the concept.

[10] YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narrative strategies") incorporate the structural elements of effective narratives. They evoke the campfire, comfortable chats and non-threatening casual communication. They contain "yeast" – that magic ingredient that makes buns rise and elevates stories into compelling narratives with many layers of meaning. YARNS are metaphorical grassroots stories with layers of meaning - powerful yet oblique narrative devices that can speak to all the identities of an individual and provide an instant heuristic that has the inherent capacity to manage intrapsychic change without the need for direct confrontation. Written well they will engage, entertain, teach, motivate, train, inspire and delight. They can make us laugh. They can change us – our perceptions, mood, and behaviour. They can also defend democratic populations by boosting populations that have been deflated, undermined and confused by hostile, divisive and contradictory narratives. They may also serve to subvert illiberal democratic regimes (see Appendix 5).

Acknowledgements:

I wish to offer my whole-hearted thanks and appreciation to several individuals in the international foreign relations, military, intelligence, cyber, IT and academic communities who have supported and encouraged either my interest and/or study in this novel area for the past 2 years. You know who you are. I also want to specifically thank my lecturers at the University of Auckland, Professor Stephen Hoadley, Drs. Chris Wilson, Thomas Gregory and Maria Armoudian for their helpful feedback and tough standards. Special thanks to my dissertation supervisor Dr. Stephen Noakes who shepherded me through this dissertation with such patience, skill and encouragement. He had an uncanny knack of guiding me to take it to the next level. I wish to give my profound thanks also to my friends Paul Cobaugh, Alan Malcher and Dr. Ajit Maan of Narrative Strategies for their generosity and kindness. Finally, deep thanks, love and appreciation are due over and over again to my family: to my dearest sister Suzanne for her kind and unwavering support and to my darling children Rose and Logan for their good-humoured patience with their mother's "cool" academic interests and long association with academia!

Pamela Williamson
Auckland, October 2018.

INTRODUCTION: This IS A War: So What Kind of War Are We In?

"Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult." **-** Carl von Clausewitz[11]

Overview, Rationale, Purpose and Application of Research:

Populations in democratic countries (the United States and Eastern Europe in particular) are currently being targeted by the strategic communications of Russia via information warfare and influence operations. This paper will discuss the work of some of the leading political narrative and warfare theorists and will analyse some of the key Western and Eastern European narrative frontlines defending against Russia's disinformation strategies which have been identified as the most serious threat to democracies and illiberal democracies since the Cold War.[12]

There is potentially a beneficial crossover between the existing models of terrorist and disinformation counter- and alternative narratives. A meta-model has been devised based on these models as well as an innovative extension of the alternative narrative model which I have entitled YARNS. This model draws on existing psychological, narrative, literary, communications and marketing theory. Delivery models utilising disruptive cyber technology and artificial intelligence are not the main focus but some of the innovations and concerns will be covered.

A comprehensive quantitative analysis utilising primary sources is not realistic and beyond the scope of this dissertation. More raw data needs to be available for that type of research to identify and solidify causal links and thereby close the knowledge gap more fully. There are nevertheless significant secondary sources in the form of peer-reviewed studies and reports that add authority to the contentions in this paper. Some are referenced here. An analysis based on "thick description" may yield insights that help develop evolving theory.

Some combination of context-appropriate narrative types may be necessary for a narrative strategy to be comprehensive and effective. What the balance would ultimately look like will

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[11] Ibid Clausewitz, *On War*, Book 1, Chapter 7, at p. 119.

[12] China is another rising Great Power whose cyber warfare is of increasing concern but is not the subject of this paper.

depend on how flexible and willing leaders are to think laterally and entertain innovative and creative modifications to current paradigms of warfare and how they prioritise investment in such research and strategies utilising collaborative approaches across allies, competitors, and contributary disciplines.

An attempt to formulate an extension of the realist political theory, namely "*non-material realism",* has been made. My hypothesis of '*non-material*' realism is a novel theoretical basis for a re-balancing of the focus of democratic state and military actors from purely kinetic and technological strategies to those which maximise the utilisation of cross-disciplinary academic research and modelling. The reliance on the widest range possible of intellectual drivers meshed with technology may be a force-multiplier that can maximise the effectiveness of oppositional strategies to aggressors who utilise hybrid and asymmetric warfare.

Intellectual property needs a much bigger investment in research and development at the same time as cyber capabilities - "IP *and* IT".[13] It is not an either or but a combination of both intellectual property (with emphasis on the sophisticated and creative design of narrative) with enhanced cyber capabilities to deliver them that may be the most effective approach in the 21st century. An emphasis on one to the detriment or neglect of the other will keep the West behind in its efforts to catch up with the past master of these "dark arts" - Russia. The balancing of innovative intellectual property working in conjunction with modern cyber, with IP leading the way, is potentially a more effective operational relationship than the reverse - cyber deploying IP. This is because AI and cyberwarfare are still relatively newly-deployed and in continuous development with many major algorithmic problems yet to be satisfactorily worked out. An undue reliance on technology and obsession with hardware may be to the detriment of thinking. A lesser focus on critical cognitive and psychological, socio-cultural issues, values and ethics may lead to tunnel vision. Most importantly, civilian values and priorities *must* lead if democracy is to be protected. It is a different mind-set and its constitutional leadership must be protected and enhanced. This may not be a popular view.

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[13] Thanks to my dissertation supervisor Dr. Stephen Noakes, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Auckland, for this apt aphorism.

Hypotheses:

"the second rule is to concentrate our power as much as possible against that section where the chief blows are to be delivered and to incur disadvantages elsewhere, so that our chances of success may increase at the decisive point" - Carl von Clausewitz

1. *'Non-material' realism* is a novel theoretical basis for the maximisation of state influence against aggressors who utilise hybrid warfare;

2. Intellectual property needs investment and development at the same time as cyber capabilities; "IP *and* IT".

3. There is a need for the better development of effective strategic narratives and YARNS[14] as tools for defence against Information and Narrative Warfare and for the proactive, collaborative responses of both military PSYOP and civil society to the Influence Operations of hostile adversaries;

4. YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narrative strategies") incorporate the structural elements of effective narratives. They evoke the campfire, comfortable chats and non-threatening casual communication. They contain "yeast" – the "magic ingredient" that makes buns rise and elevates stories into compelling narratives with many layers of meaning. YARNS are metaphorical grassroots stories with layers of meaning - powerful yet oblique narrative devices that can speak to all the identities of an individual and provide an instant heuristic that has the inherent capacity to manage intrapsychic change without the need for direct confrontation. They create rapport by matching the cultural identity of the audience. Written well they will engage, entertain, teach, motivate, train, inspire and lead. They can make us laugh. They can change us – our perceptions, mood, and behaviour. They can also defend democratic populations by boosting populations that have been deflated, undermined and confused by hostile, divisive and contradictory narratives. They may also serve to subvert illiberal democratic regimes (see Appendix 5).

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[14] YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narrative strategies"): metaphor is a powerful yet oblique narrative device that provides an instant heuristic to manage intrapsychic change without the need for direct confrontation. YARNS incorporate the structural elements of effective narratives. They evoke the campfire, comfortable chats and non-threatening casual communication. They contain "yeast" – that magic ingredient that makes buns rise and boosts stories into compelling narratives with many layers of meaning. They engage, entertain, teach, motivate, train, inspire and delight. They can make us laugh. They can change us – our perceptions, mood, and behaviour. They may be a secret weapon for the defence of democratic populations and may also serve to subvert illiberal democratic regimes (see Appendix 5).

5. The re-prioritisation of strategic narratives and YARNS as effective counter-messaging tools is urgent;

6. How they can best be crafted, for what purposes and in which contexts is not well understood yet so further experimental research is needed;

7. Existing terrorist counter-narrative models may be a guide for the structure of Russian disinformation counter-narratives as their structures are similar in certain ways although with key differences; see Flow Chart at Appendix I.

8. Interdisciplinary research and active collaboration among democratic countries and their militaries, academia and civil think-tanks is required;

9. An inter-country action plan is needed to coordinate strategic communications within the bounds of country security concerns.

I argue that:

Firstly, there is a problem and, secondly, that the nature of the problem is cognitive -from some of the entrenched attitudes and practices of academics and the military many of whom refuse to entertain "out of the box" thinking and innovation let alone support and fund it, to the prioritisation of the development and deployment of hardware and cyber capabilities over the intellectual property needed to create effective guiding meta-narratives at government policy level. Furthermore, I will argue that the development of a strong meta-model, that can be generalised at lower levels from military, media to civil society and back again, is essential for efficient delivery of response. The vision, mission and direction of governments are still inchoate and uncoordinated and the changing nature of 21st century warfare to hybrid warfare[15] still has limited recognition from governments.

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[15] Ibid. Sascha-Dominik Bachmann and Håkan Gunneriusson, "HYBRID WARS: THE 21st -CENTURY'S NEW THREATS TO GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY", *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies, Vol 43, No. 1*, 2015, pp. 77 – 98. doi : 10.5787/43-1-1110, 16 September 2014 at p.77; https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2506063

Bachmann, Sascha Dov and Gunneriusson, Hakan, Hybrid Wars: The 21st-Century's New Threats to Global Peace and Security (September 16, 2014). Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies, Vol 43, No. 1, 2015, pp. 77 – 98. doi : 10.5787/43-1-1110. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2506063 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2506063

Political Theory:

Waltz considered Russia would maintain defensive capability only based on the assumption that symmetric wars would remain the norm.[16] The realist "*material capabilities*" doctrine of Mearscheimer[17] is outdated. His view of states' "*latent power*" is limited to socio-economic wealth and technology as related to kinetic military power and does not address non-material power or influence capabilities. Mearscheimer[18] takes a more offensive position than Waltz and regards states as pursuing power logically beyond their borders to ensure their survival via hegemony. The assumption is still that material and kinetic power are the basis of any advance. Kagan[19] in contrast appears to have maintained his former neo-conservative view that the US needed to remain an interventionist hegemon. In 2014 he mounted a critique of isolationism and has called the US under Trump a "rogue superpower". Pillar[20] has claimed that Kagan has called Trump's erratic and aggressive foreign policy a realist "doctrine" but Trump himself (under the influence of neo-conservative John Bolton) has claimed it is a "doctrine of patriotism" which appears to equate with a virulent form of isolationist nationalism.

But neither Kagan or Pillar make any mention of the cancer of disinformation that is seeking to collapse democracies from within with very little hardware or military power. The current US *volte-face* towards a more aggressive foreign policy still maintains its obsession with massive physical strength and underinvests in strategic communications. The advent of the US National Security, Cyber and Intelligence Strategies in 2018/2019 may or may not be the start of a change in that direction.

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[16] Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 1993), at p.52; The MIT Press, DOI: 10.2307/2539097; https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539097

[17] John Mearscheimer, *Structural Realism,* 2006*,* Chapter 4 at p.78; http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/Structural2.pdf

[18] Ibid. Introduction at p72. http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/StructuralRealism.pdf

[19] Robert Kagan," Superpowers Don't Get to Retire", *The New Republic*, 2014; https://newrepublic.com/article/117859/superpowers-dont-get-retire

[20] Paul Pillar, "How Trump is Reshaping US Foreign Policy", *Consortium News*, 2018; https://consortiumnews.com/2018/07/10/how-trump-is-reshaping-us-foreign-policy/

Traditional realist doctrines do not acknowledge *as a priority* the core necessity for multi-layered strategic narratives that provide *non-material* power to country-level strategic communications and end-goals. 'Capabilities' must be re-thought to include the essence of strategic communications that goes beyond simply words, facts and ideas, the transmitting media and technologies. To that end, I argue for a shift in the perspective of realism, that of '*non-material' realism*,[21] which focuses on the narrative meaning perceived by the receiver.

Although elegant and widely recognised (albeit with its challengers), its limitations become apparent when studying phenomena such as institutions like the military and how they interact both at State and community level. This is due both to the rigid historical structure, norms and culture as well as top-down policy-making.

Propaganda, Democracy, Autocracy and Civil Society: the rise of Russian-backed nationalism and illiberal democracies:

Democratic countries and illiberal democracies get bombarded with fake news daily. The subtle model of autocracy, Putin's Russia,[22] that has also infected regimes in Europe, Eurasia, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America,[23] is based on "double-think" uses fake news, audacious, blatant, "black is white" confusion tactics and denial of reality. The redefinition of the values of what it means to be a democracy[24] by incipient anti-democratic regimes has put civil society on high alert to fact-check to preserve their institutions such as a free press, free and fair elections and their legal system free from interference and corruption. In Russia a veneer of "useful" civil society can be held up to "real" full democracies as window dressing to mislead and propagandise so long as it does not stray too far into dangerous zones such as freedom of speech and human rights.

Questions arise as to which messaging is more effective - deterrence counter-narratives or resilience-building and in which context. When deconstructed and examined in the light of

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[21] Thanks to my dissertation supervisor Dr. Stephen Noakes, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Auckland, for coming up with this novel theoretical term that neatly encompasses my hypothesis.

[22] Arch Puddington, *"Breaking Down Democracy: Goals, Strategies and Methods of Modern Authoritarians, Executive Summary and Introduction: Modern Authoritarianism: Origins, Anatomy, Outlook"*, *Freedom House,* 2016.

https://freedomhouse.org/report/modern-authoritarianism-origins-anatomy-outlook

[23] Ibid at Chapter 3 The Enemy Within: Civil Society at Bay, Freedom House, Report, Modern Authoritarianism, June 2017.

[24] Ibid, "*Alternative values***; Majoritarianism;** Sovereignty; History revised; Democracy redefined; **Return of the Leader for Life; Dashed Hopes;** Dictatorship of law.

neuroscience and insights from psychological and emotional research and treatment, how effective is "weaponised" counter-messaging in terms of persuasion objectives or does it simply mirror aggression back in a tit-for-tat manner?

If the objective is persuasion of the 'soft power' variety, would "assertive/affirmative" rather than "aggressive" narratives be more productive? Does "weaponised" mean context or style? Are confrontational or undermining narratives less or more effective than positive approaches that may have a better chance of bypassing ingrained defensive responses? How does one build allegiance to normative ideals within Western societies? Would using empathetic messages utilising myth, metaphor, legend, humour and satire, increase cohesion and bonding and strengthen increasingly fragmented Western societies being subverted by the Kremlin?

This IS a War

"You may not be interested in war, but war is interested in you": Attributed to Leon Trotsky

According to Sari, the depth and breadth of the coverage and impact of Russia's Influence Operations and their novel and sophisticated use of narrative strategies, *"cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns and interference in elections,"*[25] have been exponentially accelerated by the mechanised dissemination technologies utilised.

The 10 'D's of Russian Disinformation tactics[26] - *deceive, disrupt, divide, defame, demonise, deny, deflect, distract, dispute and dismiss* - have been refined and 'weaponised' since the Soviet era's *"active measures"* campaigns.[27] Russia's skill is to massively and continuously attack the *"centre of gravity"*[28] (COG) that is most vulnerable in the West – its democratic openness that leads to its ability to target public opinion.

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[25] Aurel Sari, "The Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Takes on the Legal Challenges of Hybrid Warfare", *LAWFARE*, Wednesday, May 23, 2018, 7:00 AM; https://lawfareblog.com/council-europes-parliamentary-assembly-takes-legal-challenges-hybrid-warfare

[26] Author list.

[27] Steve Abrams, "Beyond Propaganda: Soviet Active Measures in Putin's Russia", *Connections: The Quarterly Journal,15, No.1,* 2016; https://connections-qj.org/article/beyond-propaganda-soviet-active-measures-putins-russia

[28] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II at I.3.7.f.

Clausewitz identified several centres of gravity in his seminal work *On War*.[29] Meilinger described the key COG's of Clausewitz as

> *"society (passion or "natural force"), the military (chance and probabilities), and a country's government (reason)"[30]*

Why Clausewitz at all? According to the US National Military College:

> **"***.... he made a deliberate effort to come to grips with the multi-dimensional phenomenon of war in response to what he saw as a pressing need for a better understanding of that phenomenon."[31]*

The most targeted COG in the West, is, arguably, its national, social and economic civil society.[32]The most vulnerable COG in Russia is its oligarchy and ambitious and dissatisfied middle class. Overseas adventures with an expensive military may not distract them forever from the effects of sanctions and internal economic challenges. The Russian people have themselves been targets for anti-Western propaganda by the Kremlin since the start of the Cold War. Kovaleva[33] has concluded however that the internet has loosened Russia's information control of its people significantly although mainstream media is still heavily state-controlled. The ambivalence of the Russian people and the issues that drive them makes them a prime target for weaponised and proactive Western alternative and counter-narratives.

Propaganda

Extremism and propaganda go hand in hand. Defining both terms is not easy. Propaganda is a necessary but insufficient condition for both extremism, violent extremism (and its cousin

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[29] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II; I.3.7.f. (Clausewitz at pp. 595-6 and 617-619).

[30] Phillip S. Meilinger, "Busting the Icon Restoring Balance to the Influence of Clausewitz", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2007 at p.117; https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Meilinger.pdf

[31] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II at II.A.a.

[32] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II; fn1. at f. centers of gravity.

[33] Natalya Kovaleva, "Russian Information Space, Russian Scholarship, and Kremlin Controls," *NATO Stratcom CoE,Defense Strategic Communications, Vol,4,*Spring 2018; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/natalya-kovaleva-russian-information-space-russian-scholarship-and-kremlin-controls

terrorism). But extremism and terrorism are not necessary conditions for propaganda (and its cousins, "fake news", misinformation and disinformation).

A colour spectrum wheel (Table I) expresses the level of intensity of each form of these different kinds of propaganda. A dark to light wheel is an appropriate graphic metaphor because extremism can step up and can vary in strength and intensity whether it becomes violent or not. Each phase has the potential to bleed into the other as escalating emotional connections in the brain interact with the environment. Sometimes there is convergence in narrative mode, structure, style, purpose and dissemination engine if not actual substance. Sometimes one kind "dog-whistles" to another as in the memes of Neo-Nazis and Russian/Scandi heroic myths and Russian disinformation.

Narrative

Maley (2018)[34]has studied and analysed state communications, message formulation and reception. He concluded that:

> *"effective state communications need to be integrated, multidimensional and persuasive. ……. effective messaging can be of great psychological value, helping to trigger 'cascades' that can undermine even ruthless enemies."*

He considers that it is preferable for state communications not to outright lie but sees merit in not telling the whole truth in the face of an adversary. He argues[35] that effective messaging must be multi-layered and directed at different audiences and contexts:

> "*Messages can be poorly formulated, and can be understood in unexpected ways, not least because the re may be multiple audiences for a particular message…effective messaging can be of great psyhological value, helping to trigger 'cascades' that can undermine even ruthless enemies. Except perhaps in the direst of existential crises, effective messaging should avoid lies; but it can be of value not to fixate on telling the whole truth.*"

Maan[36] takes the argument one step further by arguing that military strategies should reflect the reality that narrative influence operations not kinetics alone are the key determinant in the winning of wars nowadays:

> *"This form of warfare is all about influence. But this is not information warfare; this is warfare over the* meaning *of the information. Information consists of facts—raw data. Narratives do not tell the facts. Narratives tell the meaning of the facts. This is narrative warfare, and our adversaries are beating our brawn with their brains."[37]*

The susceptibility of populations to subversive narratives, such as those in the US, UK and Europe, has been amply demonstrated particularly during elections. There has been complacency, lulled by the continuity of the settled world order post-World War II and the end of the Cold War, resulting in the need for a much greater recognition that there IS a war on and an urgent need for deep reflection about where their best interests lie.

Most importantly, skilful counter- and alternative narratives need to originate from an engaged civil society to protect its institutions; narratives that reaffirm, inspire, re-engage and move people to be more proactive in protecting their democratic values. Open messaging about the nature of the threats to democracy, that motivates and educates people about history, international law and the important meanings inherent in these values, needs to be fostered across communities and all their institutions from the bottom up and top down to build resilience in faltering or indifferent communities.

What Kind of War Are We In?

"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish by that test [viewing war as an act of policy] the kind of war on which they are embarking……This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.[38]

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[36] Ajit Maan Ph.D., Battles Can Be Won With Kinetics, but Wars Are Won With Influence, *Real Clear Defence,* May 23, 2017;
http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/05/23/battles_can_be_won_with_kinetics_but_wars_are_won_with_influence_111436.html

[37] Ajit Maan, Ph.D, *Narrative Warfare,* 27 February 2018;
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/27/narrative_warfare_113118.html

[38] Clausewitz, On War, pp. 88–89.

i.   The 'West,' Asymmetric Hybrid Warfare and Disinformation[39]

"It is subtle, subtle" – Sun Tzu[40]

The "West" is arguably more fractured than at any other time since World War II and The Cold War. Democratic European allies, the US and illiberal democracies in the EU and NATO, have an uneasy co-existence as a revision of priorities and values takes place along with renewed negotiations of commitment.

Hybrid warfare[41] is an ancient concept in the history of warfare since Sun Tzu and Clausewitz. Western democracies are currently battling weaponised propaganda from Russia utilised under the Doctrine of Hybrid Warfare[42] to protect their way of life, values and democratic norms. Bachmann (2016) cites Hoffman (2009)[43] as the leading theorist on hybrid or "multi-modal"[44] tactics. These are a mixture of traditional and atypical approaches that aim to disorient, intimidate and undermine and the target. Hoffman concludes[45] that a dichotomous choice between symmetric and asymmetric warfare is misleading as he regards both as necessary to counter

> *"both large, conventionally armed states and their militaries and against widely dispersed terrorists—and against everything in between."*

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[39] Mike Pietrucha, "LIVING WITH FOG AND FRICTION: THE FALLACY OF INFORMATION SUPERIORITY", *War on the Rocks,* 7 January 2016; https://warontherocks.com/2016/01/living-with-fog-and-friction-the-fallacy-of-information-superiority/

[40] Sun Tzu at [13.11]

[41] Samuel Zilincik and Ivo Pikner, "Clausewitz and Hybrid War", Economic Management, *University of Defence in Brno, Czech Republic,* at p.16; https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ivo_Pikner/publication/322402922_CLAUSEWITZ_AND_HYBRID_WAR/links/5b1aeb64aca272021cf3548d/CLAUSEWITZ-AND-HYBRID-WAR.pdf?origin=publication_detail

[42] Sascha DOV Bachmann, "Understanding Lawfare in a Hybrid Warfare Context", *NATO Legal Gazette Issue 37*, October 2016, at pp.22-25; https://www.academia.edu/31353275/Understanding_Lawfare_in_a_Hybrid_Warfare_Context?auto=download

[43] Ibid at pp22-23

[44] Frank G. Hoffman, "Hybrid Threats: Reconceptualizing the Evolving Character of Modern Conflict", Key Points*, Strategic Forum 240,* April 2009 at p.1; https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98862/SF240.pdf

[45] Ibid at p.8.

Russia, with its so-called 'Gerasimov Doctrine',[46] has paved the way with its utilisation of hybrid warfare. It has tested its efficacy successfully so far in Ukraine[47] and provoked skirmishes with the West using tactics that are just below the mark of direct confrontation (such as incursions into others' airspace to test defences), but which serve to annoy, distract - and learn.

This hybrid warfare style of Russia is asymmetric to compensate for the smaller size and funding of its military. It cannot afford to confront NATO symmetrically and kinetically. Information warfare and Disinformation is much cheaper than hardware. This strategy is challenging Western leaders both politically and militarily to adapt from a more traditional model of warfare towards a greater embrace of cyber warfare and influence operations.

Shepler[48] notes the long-standing history of Russian Information Warfare, refers to "*decision-making paralysis*" and calls for action not endless further analysis.

Pietrucha[49] considers whether it is best to rely on machines or people and finally concludes that in the military "*Combat operations are always a gamble and we need to rely on the gamblers, not the dice.*"

That may also be the case as civilians contend with Russian disinformation and the information "fog" generally. As the extent of Russian bot warfare and troll farms targeted at the West becomes known,[50] mechanised bot warfare (a subset of information warfare), may

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[46] This so-called doctrine has been challenged and repudiated by the purported originator but has the working meaning of hybrid warfare.
Molly K. McKew, " The Gerasimov Doctrine", *Politico,* September/October 2017:
https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/09/05/gerasimov-doctrine-russia-foreign-policy-215538

[47] Alex Deep, "Putin, Clausewitz and Ukraine", *Small Wars Journal*, citing Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War.* Edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989;
http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/putin-clausewitz-and-ukraine

[48] Drew Shepler, "Russian Hybrid Warfare as Unconventional Warfare: Implementing a Counter-Unconventional Warfare Strategy", *Small Wars Journal*
http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/russian-hybrid-warfare-unconventional-warfare-implementing-counter-unconventional-warfare

[49] Ibid Pietrucha

[50] Philip N. Howard, Samuel Woolley & Ryan Calo, "Algorithms, bots, and political communication in the US 2016 election: The challenge of automated political communication for election law and administration", *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 15:2, 81-93, 2018, DOI: 10.1080/19331681.2018.1448735;
https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2018.1448735

need to be utilised by the West in response. However, the relevant intellectual property, that underpins PSYOP, cyber warfare and anti-disinformation measures needed to combat attacks against minds, hearts and spirits, must be assessed more thoroughly and properly coordinated so that effective approaches to counter-messaging are undertaken. The effectiveness of such measures requires further rigorous study.

ii.   **Which Communities Are Threatened and by Whom?**

Some Western countries are contending with the rise of right-wing nationalism within their own countries fuelled by Russia.[51] But propaganda also assails the West from North Korea (DPRK), China and non-state actors like IS and al Qaeda, to name the major players with the greatest threat to Western democracies.

The Baltic States particularly, have been fending off Russian propaganda since the fall of the Soviet Union. The rise of Putin and Russian nationalism with him since 1990 has led to a new imperial quest to regain its lost rightful sphere of influence in the world.

NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (Stratcom CoE) based in Riga, Latvia[52] is a prolific source of papers and studies about disruptive and divisive Russian "fake news" and propaganda. NATO is now moving more strongly to counter Russian hybrid warfare that utilises disinformation as a key strategy.[53]

Both the US, the UK and other European countries have reported Russian interference via Facebook with elections in 2016 and in 2017 via The Internet Research Agency now indicted in the US.

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[51]

1. Tyler Fox, "Eurasianism, History, and the Narrative Space: Why Russian Information Operations are so effective, *Modern War Insitute, Westpoint*. 12 March 2018.

2. Keir Giles, "Handbook of Russian Information Warfare", Fellowship Monograph 9, Research Division *NATO Defense College*, November 2016

   http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/86813714-b37b-4537-b2b6-b0a9dbe33353

[52] NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence (CoE) is based in Riga, Latvia; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/

[53] Jim Garamone, "NATO Moves to Combat Russian Hybrid Warfare", *US Department of Defense*, 29 September 2018; https://dod.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1649146/nato-moves-to-combat-russian-hybrid-warfare/source/GovDelivery/

ii.   **Social Media and "the fog of war"**

"War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. A sensitive and discriminating judgment is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth" — Carl von Clausewitz

Russian disinformation strategies are used as part of Russia's hybrid warfare strategies.[54] Agarwal and Bandeli[55] identify social media as the main front line of this war (blogs, cyberwarfare and disinformation[56]). Counter-narratives are the first line of defence[57]. "Fake news"[58] is all-pervasive as it has been disseminated by mechanised bots with exponential numbers, speed and reach.[59]

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[54] Chivvis, Christopher S., Understanding Russian 'Hybrid Warfare' and what can be done about it; Testimony presented before the House Armed Services Committee on March 22, 2017 at p.1; https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND_CT468.pdf

Peter W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *Like War: the weaponization of social media,* amon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, October 2018;

[55] Nitin Agarwal and Kiran Kumar Bandeli, "Examining Strategic Integration of Social Media Platforms in Disinformation Campaign Coordination", Stratcom Centre of Excellence (CoE), Riga, Latvia; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/nitin-agarwal-kiran-kumar-bandeli-examining-strategic-integration-social-media-platforms

[56] Max Seddon, "Documents Show How Russia's Troll Army Hit America", *BuzzFeed*, 2 June, 2014, at 1:48 p.m; https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/maxseddon/documents-show-how-russias-troll-army-hit-america; Accessed 28.08.18.

[57] Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konijn, Beatrice de Graaf & Mariëlle de Goede, Abstract and Summary, "Developing a Social Media Response to Radicalization: the role of counter-narratives in prevention of radicalization and de-radicalization", University of Amsterdam, September 2017.

[58] Susan Morgan, "Fake news, disinformation, manipulation and online tactics to undermine democracy", *Journal of Cyber Policy*, 3:1, 39-43, 2018; DOI: 10.1080/23738871.2018.1462395; https://doi.org/10.1080/23738871.2018.1462395

[59]

1. On Fake News: https://www.vox.com/2018/8/8/17657800/qanon-reddit-conspiracy-data

2. Ed. Jente Althuis and Leonie Haiden; Text Editor: Anna Reynolds Authors: Iona Allan, Jente Althuis, Alexander Averin, Giulia Conci, Sarah Dooley, Erin Duffy, Douglas Gray, Leonie Haiden, Mitchell Ilbury, Natalia Kantovich, Chelsea McManus, Celeste Michaud, Emma Moore, Kierat Ranautta-Sambhi, and Siri Strand, "Social Media in Operations: A Counter Terrorism Perspective", 9 March 2018, "Fake News" 25 Feb 2018 and "Robotrolling", 14 Feb 2018; "Fake News Road Map", King's Centre for Strategic Communications (KCSC) and the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, in Riga, Latvia, Jan. 2018; www.kingscsc.co.uk; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/fake-news-roadmap; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/publications

Singer and Brooking[60] describe a social media that has become "weaponised". The effect it is having on the conduct of war and terrorism is extraordinary. Clausewitz's (paraphrased) maxim that war is merely an extension of politics has been turned on its head. War and politics are now arguably an extension of social media. The conflation of entertainment, politics, war, influence operations, gaming, media, pop culture, dark web and terrorism creates a modern online environment of mirror mazes. They delineate the concerted attack on truth and values and describe a new counter-paradigm to defend against this complex attack.

Morgan[61] highlights the threat to journalism and democracy and describes the complex interaction in the media environment of the proliferation of disinformation and fake news with the concentrated power of online platforms and the advertising industry. She identifies citizen education as a key promoter of civil society resilience and calls for the opening of data sources and the regulation of bots and the way political parties use citizen data. She also calls for greater research and collaboration.[62]

Ritzmann[63]queries whether online terrorist propaganda is effective and asks how it can be countered. The question is equally as relevant to Russian disinformation and the norm entrepreneurs, think tanks, government agencies, War Colleges, journalists and academics who battle it. It is also a core question of this paper.

Since 2010, there have been major international events that have exposed the now threadbare Russian social media strategy: the discovery of 'illegals' in the US, the invasions of Georgia and Ukraine,[64] the annexation of Crimea as well as an effective attempt to influence the 2016

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[60] Peter W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *Like War: the weaponization of social media,* amon Dolan/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2 October 2018.

[61] Ibid Morgan

[62] Ibid Morgan

[63] Alexander Ritzmann, "A Tribal Call to Arms: propaganda and what PVE can learn from Anthropology,

Psychology and Neuroscience", *European Eye on Radicalisation*, 22 March 2018;

https://eeradicalization.com/a-tribal-call-to-arms-propaganda-and-what-pve-can-learn-from anthropologypsychology-and-neuroscience/

[64] Robert Szwed, "Framing of the Ukraine–Russia conflict in online and social media Representations of the conflict in discourse in Facebook, Vkontakte and internet portals: DELFI, korrespondent.net, pravda.com.ua, kyivpost.com and onet.pl", NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence (CoE), Riga, Latvia, at p.122-123; https://issuu.com/natostratcomcoe/docs/ukr_social_media_full_report/; Accessed 29.08.18.

US election,[65] and its aggressive strategy in Syria.[66] Russia has now lost a significant strategic advantage – its secrecy. The continuing challenge for the West is how to combat autocracies who seek influence online without diminishing the open values of the West that allow for freedom of expression, movement, association and plurality.

iii.   The Meaning of Information Warfare[67] or Narrative Warfare [68]

"Many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain.": Carl von Clausewitz

Information warfare has been practised for centuries as an art form from Sun Tzu[69] to Clausewitz to the present day.[70] Although war today is infinitely more complex technologically, the psychological aspects of war are still, arguably, the key to *"victory without bloodshed"*[71].

Damarad and Yelisayeu utilise the following definition of Information Warfare:[72]

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[65] Hearing before the US Senate, 21 June 2017:
https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/Russian%20Interference%20in%20the%202016%20U.S.%20Elections%20S.%20Hrg.%20115-92.pdf

[66]

1. Yuri M. Zhukov, "Understanding Russia's New Role in the Middle East", *Lawfare Blog*, Sunday, April 23, 2017, 10:00 AM; https://www.lawfareblog.com/understanding-russias-new-role-middle-east

2. SC Woolley and PN Howard, "Computational Propaganda Worldwide: Executive Summary", Computational Propaganda Research Project, Working Paper 2017:11; University of Oxford, 2017; https://andyblackassociates.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/propagCasestudies-ExecutiveSummary.pdf

[67] D.S. Hartley, *Unconventional conflict: A modelling perspective*, New York, Springer, 2017.

[68] Ajit Maan Ph.D, *Narrative Warfare*, Penguin, 2018 at p.

[69] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Original Translation of All 13 Chapters; Translated by the Sonshi Group; https://www.sonshi.com/sun-tzu-art-of-war-translation-not-giles.html

[70] Michael L. Handel, *Masters of War Classical Strategic Thought*, Chapter 1, Strategy: Past Theories, Modern Practice, US Naval War College, Third Revised and Expanded Edition (1992,1996, 2001) at p1.

[71] Ibid at p.117, Meilinger, "Busting the Icon Restoring Balance to the Influence of Clausewitz", *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2007; https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Meilinger.pdf

[72] Volhad Damarad and Andrei Yelisayeu, "Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe", *Eurasian States in Transition Research Center*, Kyev 2018; http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DRI_CEE_2018.pdf

"– Adopted from Čižik, Tomáš, ed. 2017. Information Warfare: New Security Challenge for Europe. Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs.
http://www.cenaa.org/data/databaza/Information%20Warfare%20+%20cover.pdf, cited in Pernik, Piret. 2018.

> *"'coordinated and deniable activities that are initiated by a state actor and which are aimed at influencing the decisions, perceptions, and behaviour of political leaders, the population, or particular target groups (such as experts and media) with the objective of achieving the state actor's security policy objectives, mainly through the dissemination of misleading or incorrect information, often complemented with other actions tailored for the purpose that is being pursued.'*

Armistead et. al[73]describe the changes in military education due to technology, social media and the nature of warfare itself.

> *"Traditional training and combat skills often do not match the modern battlefield. We must progress beyond the traditional combined arms doctrine. Modern soldiers must not only be traditional warriors; they must be competent in information operations and information warfare".* (Abstract)

'State of the art' recommended responses range from the scaling up of automated bot propaganda or "the influence machine"[74] to novel and aggressive approaches such as "memetic" warfare.[75]

iv. Counter Narratives[76] and Building Resilience in Threatened Communities

a. Counter Narratives

"Hacking for Influence: Foreign Influence Activities and Cyber-Attacks." International Centre for Defence and Security.
https://www.icds.ee/fileadmin/media/IMG/2018/Publications/ICDS_Analysis_Hacking_for_Influence_Piret_Pernik_February_2018.pdf

[73] Armistead, Edwin L., Huthinen, Aki-Mauri, Schou, Corey D., "EDUCATING AND TRAINING SOLDIERS FOR INFORMATION OPERATIONS, JOURNAL OF INFORMATION WARFARE, VOL.9, ISSUE 2; ABSTRACT; https://www.jinfowar.com/journal/volume-9-issue-2/educating-training-soldiers-information-operations

[74] Podcast: "The Influence Machine: Hacking Deterrence with Automated IO"; *Speaker: Major C.Telley, Naval Postgraduate School; Date: 15 August 2018;* 1:35/7:59 *180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe* https://nsiteam.com/the-influence-machine-hacking-deterrence-with-automated-io/; Accessed 28.08.18.

[75] Jeff Giesea, "It's Time to Embrace Memetic Warfare", NATO Stratcom CoE, Riga, Latvia, at p. 75; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/jeff-giesea-its-time-embrace-memetic-warfare

[76] Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konijn, Beatrice de Graaf & Mariëlle DeGoede, "Developing a Social Media Response to Radicalization: The role of Counter-narratives in Prevention of Radicalization and De-radicalization", *University of Amsterdam*, September 2017; www.wodc.nl

Milo and Klingova (2016)[77], claim that Russia has a concerted campaign of exploiting the West's increasing reliance on information. It has been extensively argued that strategic communication narratives in response must contain 'weaponised' (confrontational and defensive) narrative approaches to counteract the infiltration of Western societies by hostile adversaries including ISIS and Russia.

Maan[78]describes how narrative intersects with identity and meaning and mobilises to action at a deeper and more complex level than mere "stories" with their simple linear structures:

> *".... identity and action are correlative to narrative, and if unity-wholeness-linearity are not universal characteristics of narrative, then they are also not universal characteristics of identity or the actions that result from it (them). And this is good news for counter-terrorism strategists. Alternative narrative structures leave more room for changes and re-association and re-framing."* [79]

Maan[80]emphasises *meaning* over information, counter-factuals or even "truth-telling". Drawing on recent cognitive research, she describes how the meaning of a 'narrative' goes beyond simple story arcs and content and targets the identity of and wider contextual meaning for the individual. It thereby shapes thinking and behaviour.

For Maan, narratives are specially crafted "stories with purpose"- the intended meaning of the narrator. They resonate with the socio-economic, cultural and political identities of the target audience and recognise and relate to its context.

Watt[81]summarises her approach thus:

> *"narrative war-fare is a more powerful concept than information warfare alone, because it represents a battle over the meaning of information. In narrative war- fare, our own ideas*

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[77] Daniel Milo and Katarina Klingova, "Countering Information War: Lessons Learned from NATO and Partner Countries", Executive Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions, *GLOBSEC Policy Institute, Bratislava, Slovakia,* 2016; https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/countering_information_war.pdf

[78] Ajit K. Maan, "Calls to Terrorism and Other Weak Narratives", Narrative and Conflict: Explorations of Theory and Practice, Vol.2, Issue 1, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, (2005) at pp.78-87
http://www.ajitkaurmaan.com/uploads/2/6/7/9/26794704/calls_to_terrorism_and_other_weak_narratives.pdf

[79] Ibid at p. 83.
[80] Ibid. Ajit K. Maan, *Narrative Warfare,* 27 February 2018;
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/27/narrative_warfare_113118.html

[81] John T. Watt, Sovereign Challenge Conference Paper: Whose Truth? Sovereignty, Disinformation and Winning the Battle of Trust, *Atlantic Council, Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security*, September 2018 at p.14;
http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Sovereign_Challenge_Report_091718_web.pdf

and narratives can be weaponized against us. An illustrative example is the way Islamic extremists have subverted the "war on terror" into a "war on Islam," which draws upon the fundamental identity of their target audience and resonates with an existing sense of oppression and aggression by Western forces."

b. **Building Resilience**

"Strength of character does not consist solely in having powerful feelings, but in maintaining one's balance in spite of them": Carl von Clausewitz

The best disinfectant to immunise civilian populations and create resilience may be the public exposure of hostile tactics as well as education in civics and the recognition of propaganda. A definition of the meaning of 'resilience' in the context of disinformation is required before the building of resilience within targeted communities can be achieved and deemed effective. Its meaning seems to be context-dependent.

The Disinformation Resilience Index[82] was developed in Kiev, Ukraine and utilises the European Commission definition of 'disinformation'[83] within the context of Information Warfare as follows:

'the adaptability of states, societies, communities and individuals to political, economic, environmental, demographic or societal pressures, in order to sustain progress towards national development goals.'

Shea[84] noted that NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016 identified resilience as "*a core element of collective defence*".

Whole-of-society campaigns to reduce internal divisions and conflict may be needed to counterbalance the toxic divisions that Russia exploits in its efforts to undermine the West.

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[82] Volhad Damarad and Andrei Yelisayeu, "Disinformation Resilience in Central and Eastern Europe", *Eurasian States in Transition Research Center*, Kyev 2018; http://prismua.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DRI_CEE_2018.pdf

[83] Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council 'A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action', 2017; https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/join_2017_21_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v7_p1_916039.pdf.

[84] Ibid Damarad and Yelisayeu citing Shea, Jamie. "Resilience: A Core Element of Collective Defense," 2016. http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2016/Also-in-2016/nato-defence-cyber-resilience/EN/index.htm

Strategic and Resilience-Building Narratives

What the balance of different types of narrative strategies would look like, and what the most effective content is, and in which context, is still relatively unstudied formally with some exceptions[85]. An analysis of "effectiveness" requires long-term rigorous analysis of the quantitative variety. However, qualitative analysis of narratives can provide keys for further study.

An analysis of the structure of strategic narratives currently utilised by the European Parliament[86] (citing RAN and The Institute of Strategic Dialogue)[87] by Reed et al. identified problems:

> *"the wide breadth of meanings, ambiguity, the variety of initiatives, the number of different audiences, the number of different messages."[88]*

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[85]

1. Haroro J. Ingram and Alastair Reed, "Lessons from History for Counter Terrorism Strategic Communications," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague 7, no. 4 (2016): 3, https://www.icct.nl/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/ICCT-Ingram-CTSC-June-2016-3.pdf.

2. Haroro J. Ingram, "A Brief History of Propaganda During Conflict: Lessons for Counter-terrorism Strategic Communications," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague 7, no. 4, (2016): 6, https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ICCT-Haroro-Ingram-Brief-History-Propaganda-June-2016LATEST.pdf.

[86]

1. Alastair Reed, Haroro J. Ingram and Joe Whittaker, "Countering Terrorist Narratives, 3.3. Campaign and Message Design Method – RAN, ISD, and the Hedayah Center" *International Centre for Counter Terrorism-The Hague*; commissioned study by the European Parliament, Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union PE 596.829-November 2017 at pp. 10 and 32;

2. Kate Ferguson, "Countering Violent Extremism through Media and Communication Strategies: A Review of the Evidence," Partnership for Conflict, Crime and Security Research, March 1, 2016, 7, http://www.paccsresearch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Countering-Violent-Extremism-Through-Mediaand-Communication-Strategies-.pdf.

3. Rachel Briggs and Sebastian Feve, "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What Works and What are the Implications for Government?" Institute for Strategic Dialogue, (2013): 1, https://www.counterextremism.org/resources/details/id/444/review-of-programs-to-counter-narratives-of-violentextremism-what-works-and-what-are-the-implications-for-government

[87] Radicalisation Awareness Network, "Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives," RAN Issue Paper (2015): 4-5, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-wedo/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf.

[88] Ibid Reed, Ingram and Whittaker at p.10.

The authors suggest that there are three types of counter-messages: *"government strategic communications, alternative narratives, and counter-narratives."* They emphasise the "*location* and *socio-cultural identity factors"* of the audience.

Counter Narratives to Russian Disinformation

Some Brief History to Now

Propaganda campaigns have been refined throughout the 20th century, coming of age during both Stalinist Russia and the Cold War, and evolving into Putin's refined and complex campaigns that interfere in elections today.[89] These strategies have also reframed Stalin as a writer of romantic poetry[90], created "fake news" about vaccines[91], conspiracy theories about AIDS[92] and exploited divisions within societies, for example, the NATO alliance.[93] Early Soviet narrative warfare by the KGB[94]in Operation INFEKTION fostered the florid myth and

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[89] Digital Forensic Research Lab, "#TrollTracker: Facebook Uncovers Active Influence Operation", *Troll Tracker,* 1 August 2018; https://medium.com/dfrlab/trolltracker-facebook-uncovers-active-influence-operation-74bddfb8dc06; Accessed 28.08.18.

[90] Controversial Propaganda: "Using Stalin to Boost Russia Abroad", *Der Spiegel Online*, 20 November, 2007; http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/controversial-propaganda-using-stalin-to-boost-russia-abroad-a-518259.html; Accessed 28.08.18.

[91] Science Daily, "Bots and Russian trolls influenced vaccine discussion on Twitter, research finds", 23 August 2018; citing David A. Broniatowski, Amelia M. Jamison, SiHua Qi, Lulwah AlKulaib, Tao Chen, Adrian Benton, Sandra C. Quinn, Mark Dredze. Weaponized Health Communication: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify the Vaccine Debate; *AmericanJournal of Public Health*, 2018; e1 DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2018.304567; https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/08/180823171035.htm; Accessed 29.08.18.

[92] Thomas Boghardt, "Soviet Bloc Intelligence and Its AIDS Disinformation Campaign: The Creation and Perpetuation of a Myth", *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 53, No. 4 (December 2009); https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol53no4/pdf/U-%20Boghardt-AIDS-Made%20in%20the%20USA-17Dec.pdf ; Accessed 28.08.18.

[93] Friedheim, Rolf and Gallacher, John, *Stratcom CoE: Robotrolling: https://www.stratcomcoe.org/robotrolling-20183-0?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=Advert&utm_campaign=Robotrolling-3&utm_content=Newsletter%202-65
[94] Ibid Boghardt, "Soviet Bloc Intelligence and Its AIDS Disinformation Campaign: The Creation and Perpetuation of a Myth", *Studies in Intelligence* Vol. 53, No. 4 (December 2009); https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol53no4/pdf/U-%20Boghardt-AIDS-Made%20in%20the%20USA-17Dec.pdf ; Accessed 28.08.18.

conspiracy theory that the US created the "myth" of AIDS as a by-product of its biological warfare experimentation[95].

According to Rosenzweig,[96] counter-narrative strategies are not new but were utilised against Russia in the 1980's.

Russian Propaganda Model

Paul and Matthews (2016) [97] of RAND describe the Russian propaganda model as:

> "*1. high-volume and multichannel, 2. Rapid, continuous, and repetitive 3. Lacks commitment to objective reality 4. Lacks commitment to consistency.*

They endorse the utilisation of psychological research[98] on multiple sources[99] and advocate countering it by forewarning audiences and pre-emptively countering with the truth. Guidance and leadership to shift the focus and prioritising counter measures are seen as key. They describe a stepped-up approach from building resilience by "increasing the flow of information" in competition with Russia to "active hostilities" when sources of propaganda are targeted. Their 5 suggestions utilising the metaphor of a firehose are:

1. *"Don't expect to counter the firehose of falsehood with the squirt gun of truth.[100]*
2. *Find ways to help put raincoats on those at whom the firehose of falsehood is being directed.[101]*
3. *Don't direct your flow of information directly back at the firehose of falsehood;*
4. *Increase the flow of persuasive information and start to compete, seeking to generate effects that support U.S. and NATO objectives;[102]*

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[95] Ibid at p.4.

[96] Paul Rosenzweig, Active Measures Working Group, *Lawfare Institute in Cooperation with Brookings*, Monday, January 16, 2017, 11:35am. Available at https://www.lawfareblog.com/active-measures-working-group

[97] Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, "The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It", RAND Corporation, 2016 at p.2; https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE198/RAND_PE198.pdf

[98] Ibid at pp.3-9.

[99] Ibid at p3.

[100] Ibid at p.9.

[101] Ibid at p.10.
[102] Ibid at p.10.

5. *turn off (or turn down) the flow."* [103]

Maan advocates however that focusing on "truth" and "facts" alone misses the point that propaganda targets *identity* and therefore counter-messaging must contain *meaning*-full messaging directed at those identities.[104]

The Russian "near abroad"

The Baltic States (Russia's "near abroad") are communities under direct threat from Russia. Their research and analysis of Russian disinformation is highly sophisticated. However, the EU response to the escalating Russian threat varies widely. A Report from Kremlin Watch, a strategic program of the Czech-based European Values Think Tank[105] evaluated all 28 European Union countries based on their governments' attitudes, policies, and strategic responses to the Russian threat, following the Kremlin's recent influence operations throughout the West. Kremlin Watch aims to expose and confront instruments of Russian influence and disinformation operations focused against Western democracies. The Kremlin Watch report grouped countries into five categories based on their acknowledgement of the threat and governmental countermeasures (see Table II).

Parallel Lines of Inquiry: terrorism and disinformation

There are parallel lines of inquiry into terrorism and disinformation narratives. From time to time they converge[106] as the underlying cognitive processes may overlap. Psychologists Lewandowsky et al.[107]concluded in the context of war and climate change that:

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[103] Ibid at p.10-11.

[104]

[105] See Table II: Kremlin Watch, a strategic program of the Czech-based European Values Think Tank; www.kremlinwatch.eu; http://www.kremlinwatch.eu/#about-us; https://www.axios.com/russia-influence-report-european-union-ukraine-b9507f3f-e456-41fd-999f-f782cd1959ce.html

[106] Stephan Lewandowsky, Alexandra M. Freund, Werner Stritzke and Klaus Oberauer, "Misinformation, Disinformation, and Violent Conflict From Iraq and the "War on Terror" to Future Threats to Peace", *American Psychologist*, Vol. 68, No. 7, 487–501, October 2013; DOI: 10.1037/a0034515

[107]Ibid: pp. 487–501, October 2013.

See also: Lewandowsky, S., Ecker, U. K. H., Seifert, C., Schwarz, N., & Cook, J. (2012). Misinformation and its discounting: Continued influence and successful debiasing. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 13, 106–131. doi:10.1177/1529100612451018; ResearchGate

"One important role for psychology is to help inoculate people against misinformation and disinformation, and to build resilience against narratives that frame conflicts in antagonistic, dehumanizing ways."

Through the 'cross-pollination' of research, it is possible to identify commonalities in narrative types that need further modelling and testing and even a meta-model. What common values do they inspire, what human vision is being promulgated and how they cause disaffected individuals to take violent action. A meta-model that combines the characteristic elements of extremist narratives and counter-narratives may be a necessary next step towards countering them more effectively. Models have already been developed (see Appendices 2-6), and the next step for the benefit of ease of use alone is a meta-model (see Appendix 1) that can computer-generate the matrixes of numerous models and synthesise them.[108]

c. **A Combination of Strategies?**

The new realities in the information space have created mounting pressure on Western democracies to develop a more effective and complete narrative strategy[109] as part of their soft power toolkits to overcome the sophisticated propaganda and disinformation narratives that have infiltrated the West via viral social media political and recruiting campaigns. It is imperative to comprehend fully what works best thereby improving the effectiveness of counter measures and 'immunising' communities under threat by building awareness, collaboration, cooperation and resilience. It is, arguably, apart from climate change, the key ultimate issue of the West and has now surfaced into mainstream media with articles and reports being published regularly.[110]

Increased collaboration and coordination between military, policing and civilian personnel (such as academics, intelligence professionals, cyber experts[111] and other experts in the

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[108] See Appendix I.

[109] Paul Cobaugh, A Five-Point Strategy to Oppose Russian Narrative Warfare, *Medium*, April 2018, https://medium.com/@paulcobaugh/a-five-point-strategy-to-oppose-russian-narrative-warfare-56e0006aab2a

[110] Michael P. Ferguson, "Welcome to the Disinformation Game -You're Late", *RealClear Defense*, 29 August 2018; https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/08/29/welcome_to_the_disinformation_gameyoure_late_113752.html

[111] The 2018 U.S. National Cyber Strategy has a strong focus on greater international cooperation: https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/09/286093.htm

intellectual property of narrative, psychology, media), has become a vital necessity to maximise the utilisation of evidence-based research to more fully comprehend and develop better responsiveness to this phenomenon.

The US Secretary of State Mattis has released a National Security Strategy that recognises the urgent need to address information warfare from not only Russia but other strategic adversaries.[112] The US Department of State has also recently recognised the need for international cooperation in its National Cyber Strategy released in September 2018.[113]

IDS International Government Services[114] utilise SMEIR[115], a cyberspace training system in the "*cyber battlefield.*"

However cyber tools and machines must be complementary to and must not replace an effective coherent and multi-layered Master Narrative, with clear goals and sub-narratives to support it and funded fully as a top priority. This is increasingly urgent given a motivated adversary that lacks dominance in military capability in traditional warfare (via a vis a united EU and the US) but far outstrips the chaotic conflicted West with its coherent hybrid warfare doctrines and performance in the Information Warfare space.

The first recommendation of a recent RAND Report of 5 April 2018 [116] was the need for increased co-ordination among military, diplomatic and civilian personnel versed in modern political warfare to create "*synergy*".

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[112] Ibid Ferguson at "U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis is wise to have recognized these challenges in the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which offers a fitting subtitle: "Sharpening the American Military's Competitive Edge." In its pages, Secretary Mattis maintains that, if left unaddressed, the use of information warfare by America's adversaries "will challenge our ability to deter aggression."

[113] The 2018 U.S. National Cyber Strategy has a strong focus on greater international cooperation: https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/09/286093.htm

[114] IDS International Government Services, https://www.smeir.net/

[115] IDS International Government Services, SMEIR, https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/c124c4_852d45f4e91d4e1f8a1f887e69ff345c.pdf

[116] Linda Robinson, Todd C. Helmus, Raphael S. Cohen, Alireza Nader, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson, Katya Migacheva, "Modern Political Warfare Current Practices and Possible Responses", RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 5 April 2018; https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html.

Recommendation 1: *"To improve whole-of-government synergy, U.S. military commands, including all deployed headquarters, should as a matter of course include civilian departmental representatives in order to understand, coordinate with, and support U.S. State Department and other civilian program execution."*

Narrative and Political Warfare

To fully understand the narrative aspects of political warfare it is essential to dig deeper into the value that cross-disciplinary studies and experience can deliver. I will survey the literature for those features of 'narrative' that psychological-empirical studies show can motivate targeted audiences away from becoming dupes of hostile state disinformation agencies or radicalised into different forms of violent extremism, and moved instead, towards positive community engagement.

I will explore whether what I call "Yeasty Affirmative Resilience Narratives" (YARNS[117]), or positive stories of heroism, survival, values, community and hope, are as (or more) influential than aggressive or defensive political warfare[118] narratives. The creation of YARNS may be a community-based approach with greater appeal to those under threat from Russian disinformation than negative or defensive top-down campaigns alone that may develop their own brand of toxicity. More research on the effects of these types of narrative and their combination in different contexts is urgently required. They may be found to be as (or more) influential than offensive or defensive political warfare narratives on their own. A broader community understanding of "influence", how it is exerted and how to recognise it (beyond the arcane secret knowledge and knowhow of PSYOP experts) is needed.

The truism of Clausewitz that "war is an extension of politics" may have been forever turned on its head, according to the authors of the RAND Study, with the increase of *"armed politics"* or policy considerations occurring within warfare.[119] Their conclusion[120] is that top-down Governmental oversight and co-ordination of the different strands of response to the hybrid warfare practiced by State and non-State actors is the best response.

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[117] Coined by the author of this paper, the acronym YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narratives"). 'yeasty' is the special ingredient X or spark of creativity that makes the story "rise". The goal is to make citizens of threatened democracies 'rise', expand their knowledge, assert their values and become more resilient in the face of Russia's undermining and "deflating" narratives. Copyright asserted by the Author of this paper Pamela Williamson.

[118] Ibid. Robinson et al. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html

[119] Ibid at p319.

[120] Ibid at Recommendations

That may be true for weaponised narratives and disruptive cyber warfare, however resilience narratives may be better suited to a 'bottom-up' community approach with buy-in from civil society.

CHAPTER 1: Analytical Framework, Theoretical Perspective and Methodology: A Puzzle, Hypotheses, Arguments

i.   A Puzzle

"Given the same amount of intelligence, timidity will do a thousand times more damage than audacity": Carl von Clausewitz

What poses one of the most challenging conundrums of current narrative strategies in Information Warfare, Narrative Warfare and Influence Operations is the still-mystifying question of what works most effectively to counter the strategies of asymmetric aggressors. How can Western democracies counteract Russian political and information warfare[121] narratives and disinformation campaigns[122] (aka "active measures")[123] effectively when there is a knowledge gap in terms of: (1) the effectiveness of counter-narratives,[124] (2) the kind of counter-narratives that have the most deterrent impact on Russia and its disinformation and influence operations (the cognitive/identity part of its hybrid warfare[125]); (3) the most

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[121] Alina Polyakova, Spencer P. Boyer, "The Future of Political Warfare: Russia, the West and the Coming Age of Global Digital Competition", The New Geopolitics of Europe and Russia, *Brookings*, March 2018.

https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-future-of-political-warfare-russia-the-west-and-the-coming-age-of-global-digital-competition/

[122] Dr. Rasmus Kleis Nielsen et al., "A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation", *European Commission*, March 2018.

"6 Key Points EU High Level Groups New Report on Disinformation", Reuters Institute, 12 March 2018.

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation

[123] Nicholas J. Cull, Vasily Gatov, Peter Pomerantsev, Anne Applebaum and Alistair Shawcross, "Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda: How the West Fought Against it An Analytic History, with Lessons for the Present", Executive Summary*, LSE Consulting*, October 2017; http://www.lse.ac.uk/iga/assets/documents/arena/2017/301017-Jigsaw-Soviet-Subversion-Disinformation-and-Propaganda-EXEC-SUMMARY.pdfOctober 2017.

[124] TANYA SILVERMAN, CHRISTOPHER J. STEWART, ZAHED AMANULLAH AND JONATHAN BIRDWELL, "THE IMPACT OF COUNTER-NARRATIVES", INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC DIALOGUE (ISD), AUGUST 2016; HTTPS://WWW.ISDGLOBAL.ORG/PROGRAMMES/RESEARCH-INSIGHT/PUBLICATIONS/

See also ISD's freely available online Counter-narrative Toolkit, which can be found at www.counternarratives.org

[125] Gregory F. Treverton, Andrew Thvedt, Alicia R. Chen, Kathy Lee, and Madeline McCue, "Addressing Hybrid Threats", *Swedish Defence University*, *CATS (Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies) and Hybrid COE (The European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats)*, 2018; https://www.hybridcoe.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Treverton-AddressingHybridThreats.pdf

successful strategic narratives for different contexts[126], and the measurement of the impact and effectiveness of such narratives.

Could the answer be counter-intuitive in that might the most obvious strategies (such as tit-for-tat offensive and defensive narratives) also be the most unhelpful and counter-productive to the purported goal and challenge of developing an operational "*complete narrative strategy*"?[127] Since the latter decade of the twentieth century community norms and resilience in democracies has been under threat from both the recruitment propaganda of al Qaeda and Daesh/ISIS and divisive Russian disinformation. The stakes have been raised and the increasingly blatant boldness of their respective asymmetric attacks has been aimed at recruiting followers and destabilising the West. There has been mounting pressure on Western democracies to develop more effective responses as part of their soft power toolkits to counter the sophisticated information warfare and influence campaigns that have infiltrated the world via viral social media and political campaigns.

ii. Innovation is Key

Innovative ideas may range from the need for an increased focus on (and application of resources to) US PSYOP,[128] the renewed deployment of the traditional practices of state propaganda - the old US Office of War Information (OWI) and the later US Information Agency (USIA),[129] the re-energisation of the run-down US Global Engagement Center, to innovative cyber and AI methods of disruption and transmission.

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[126] Ibid.

[127] Thanks to Paul Cobaugh, VP of Narrative Strategies, a US Thinktank and coalition of scholars and military professionals, for the concept: www.narrativestrategies.com

[128] Meghann Myers,"The Army's Psychological Operations Community is Getting its Name Back", *Army Times*, 6 November 2017;
 https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2017/11/06/the-armys-psychological-operations-community-is-getting-its-name-back/

[129] USIA Alumni Association; http://www.publicdiplomacy.org/2.htm

A cross-disciplinary approach utilising insights from psychology[130], cognitive science, sociology, narratology, semiotics, identity theory and mass communications scholarship is needed to tie in parallel research and make quantum leaps in this field.

The use of marketing, hypnotic techniques may have tried and tested approaches that could have value and be synthesised. Personnel skilled in non-military endeavours could be recruited in a similar fashion to how the Bletchley Park code-breaking team was formed. If so, this may be a problem for some current researchers who may wish to continue to conceive solely of a more traditional and symmetric warfare approach.

Weaponised humour[131] is making a comeback after the funny satirical posters of Hitler et al. during WWII.[132] NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence has recently identified the power of humour[133].

What kind of empirical studies need to be set up to determine the effectiveness of different types of counter-narratives? Key questions are (i) what are the options, factors and dilemmas underpinning a complete narrative strategy; (ii) how could counter narratives be improved after their deconstruction and modelling and after there has been a comparison of different types of narrative models located in different contexts to elucidate a meta-model of effectiveness; (iii) whether more innovative (and even counterintuitive) approaches are required. It may be that a hybrid approach is likely to be most successful where there is no "one size fits all" solution. Narratives could continue to be tailor-made depending on context, circumstances and strategic objectives but a meta-model would reduce the time spent in

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[130] Bjorn Palmertz," Theoretical foundations of influence operations: a review of relevant psychological research", *Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies Swedish Defence University,* 2016; https://www.msb.se/Upload/Om%20MSB/Forskning/Kunskapsoversikt/Theoretical%20foundations%20of%20influence%20operations.pdf

[131] Žaneta Ozoliņa, Jurģis Šķilters, Sigita Struberga, "Humour as a Communication Tool: the Case of New Year's Eve Television in Russia", NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence, Riga, Latvia, *Defence Strategic Communications,*Vol.4, Spring 2018; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/zaneta-ozolina-jurgis-skilters-sigita-struberga-humour-communication-tool-case-new-years-eve; http://bit.ly/2Oz0rzc

[132] Cecile Vallee, "Monsters and Clowns Incorporated: the Representations of Adolf Hitler in British and American WWII Propaganda Posters", *Revue LISA / LISA e-journal,* 2008*;* https://journals.openedition.org/lisa/4880

[133] Žaneta Ozoliņa, Ivars Austers, Solvita Denisa-Liepniece, Sigita Struberga, Maksym Kyiak, "Stratcom Laughs: In search of an analytical framework", *NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence, Riga, Latvia,* 2017; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/download/file/fid/7890

"reinventing the wheel" as systems models could draw ideas for structure and content from the meta-model.

Some Hypotheses[134]:

a. 'Non-material' realism is a new theoretical basis for the maximisation of state interests against aggressors who utilise hybrid warfare;

b. Intellectual property needs investment and development at the same time as cyber capabilities; "IP *and* IT"[135]

c. There is a need for strategic narratives as an effective tool for defence against Information and Narrative Warfare;

d. Their re-prioritisation as an effective tool is urgent;

e. How they can best be crafted for what purpose and contexts is not well understood so further experimental research is needed;

f. Research into counter-narratives for terrorism may be a guide for structuring Russian disinformation counter narratives as their structures are similar in certain ways with key differences;

g. Interdisciplinary research and active collaboration is required; norm entrepreneurs are a vital component;

h. An inter-country action plan is needed to coordinate strategic communications within the bounds of country security concerns.

A. Arguments and Contribution to the Literature

The subjective knowledge and knowhow of empiricists in the narrative domain must be married to objective rationality. The core problem is that there is insufficient present research to develop a meta-model of the effectiveness of counter-narratives. My contribution to evolving theory may be advancing the bare bones of one. The new concept of *non-material realism* takes into account the cognitive, psychological, cyber and AI processes that are

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[134] Ibid Overview at pp.8-9.

[135] Thanks to my dissertation supervisor Dr. Stephen Noakes, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Auckland, for this apt aphorism.

emerging.[136] Furthermore the narrative structure YARN[137] (see Appendices, in particular 5) may be useful for resilience-building in communities.

B. Conceptual Framework: Theory and Methodology

"Theory need not be a positive doctrine, a sort of manual for action. . . . It is an analytical investigation leading to a close acquaintance with the subject.": Carl von Clausewitz

Quantitative Research

This option would require the testing of a range of international responses (and the meta-model I advocate - see Appendices) to Russian Information Warfare in answer to the question of what factors determine the effectiveness of US/Allied counter-narrative strategies. A comprehensive quantitative analysis utilising primary sources is not realistic and beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, a comprehensive model will be needed eventually to test hypotheses and develop theory and to close the knowledge gap fully. There are nevertheless significant secondary sources in the form of peer-reviewed studies and reports that add authority to the contentions in this paper. Some are referenced here. An attempt in its early stages to build a meta-model is also made (see Appendices).

Finnemore[138] in 1998 advocated the examination of psychological studies and *"ideational phenomena….. particularly work on the roles of affect, empathy, conformity, and esteem"*. She highlighted the debate between rational choice theorists and social constructionists but

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[136] Ibid. at Overview pp.8-9: For a contrast with the Realist Doctrine of International Relations see the works of Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics", *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall, 1993), at p.52; The MIT Press, DOI: 10.2307/2539097; https://www.jstor.org/stable/2539097

John Mearscheimer, *Structural Realism,* 2006*,* Chapter 4 at p.78; http://mearsheimer.uchicago.edu/pdfs/Structural2.pdf

Robert Kagan," Superpowers Don't Get to Retire", *The New Republic*, 2014; https://newrepublic.com/article/117859/superpowers-dont-get-retire

[137] Coined by author to reflect the elements of good psychologically effective narrative. Psychologists such as Lewanowsky et al. have identified resilience narratives as highly effective strategies.

[138] Finnemore and Sikkink at p.917.

did not see rationality as the issue rather the roles that motivation, choice and persuasion play. She advocated a research approach that synthesised theories within the discipline.[139]

Theory-Building Through Thick Description

"Theory then becomes a guide to anyone who wants to learn about war from books; it will light his way, ease his progress, train his judgment, and help him to avoid pitfalls …" - Carl von Clausewitz[140]

I propose to outline different types of narratives whose purpose is to counter Russian disinformation strategies and identify when and how they are currently being used, particularly in Europe and the US. The purpose is to explore how more innovative thinking can contribute to this field which has been swamped with defeat so far by Russia (and IS another sophisticated operator of simple stories purveyed by complex technology). Enlisting personnel across disciplines with analogous activity such as writers, marketing, therapeutic intervention and PR may add hybrid vigour to the task.

Qualitative research is a natural fit for an analysis of political narrative warfare because it enables thick descriptions[141] of the conditions and factors underpinning narrative strategies from which theory can develop and emerge.

Political Theory:

(i)   Rational Choice Theory

Steinmo et al.[142] criticise rational choice theory as being based on deductive reasoning based on limited assumptions.

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[139] Ibid Finnemore at p.917: *"No school of thought in the discipline is entirely comfortable with its answers to these questions at the moment. We believe this is a good state of affairs, one that will encourage scholars to venture beyond narrow methodological commitments to think more broadly about these issues."*

[140] Ibid *On War*, p.141.

[141] Cecile Badenhorst, , 2016, https://cecilebadenhorst.wordpress.com/my-research/; https://cecilebadenhorst.wordpress.com/2015/07/16/thick-description/
Lincoln, YS. & Guba, EG. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

[142] Sven Steinmo, Ann Thelen, Frank Longstreth, "Structuring politics: historical institutionalism in comparative analysis", The Historical Institutionalist Project, *Cambridge University Press*, 1992 at p12; https://content.talisaspire.com/auckland/bundles/5a552e23540a2637bb56b364

This theoretical model would require the impetus of interested parties, "norm entrepreneurs"[143] and an instrumental purpose that essentially rests on straightforward IR realist logic.[144] Operational Counternarrative warfare which is *"competitive and conflictual"*[145] must be utilised because the Russian adversary is already doing so, therefore a narrative version of an 'arms race' aimed at counterbalancing and ameliorating threat is called for. "Norm entrepreneurs"[146] in civil society contract with military spheres of influence to collaborate and coordinate with each other and complement each other's skillset in asymmetric or Hybrid warfare. Narrators work alongside the kinetic arm of modern warfare, the recent culmination of which is the newly renamed PSYOP.[147]

"Non-Material" Realism

My hypothesis of '*non-material*' realism is a novel theoretical basis for a re-balancing of the focus of democratic state and military actors from purely kinetic and technological strategies to those which maximise the utilisation of cross-disciplinary academic research and modelling.

The "material capabilities" doctrines of Waltz[148], Mearscheimer[149] and Kagan[150] are, arguably, outdated and limited as they do not acknowledge the necessity for multi-layered

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[143] Christine Ingebritsen, "Norm Entrepreneurs", *Cooperation and Conflict* Vol 37, Issue 1, 1 March 2002, pp. 11 – 23; http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0010836702037001689

[144] Korab-Karpowicz, W. Julian, "Political Realism in International Relations", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), forthcoming URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/realism-intl-relations/

[145] Ibid.

[146] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink , International Norm Dynamics and Political, *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics. (Autumn, 1998*), MIT Press*, pp. 887-917. Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8183%28199823%2952%3A4%3C887%3AINDAPC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M at 915-917.

[147] Ibid. https://www.armytimes.com/news/your-army/2017/11/06/the-armys-psychological-operations-community-is-getting-its-name-back/

[148] Ibid. Overview at pp.8-9. Kenneth N. Waltz,

[149] Ibid. Overview at pp.8-9. John Mearscheimer,

[150] Ibid. Overview at pp.8-9. Robert Kagan,

narratives that provide meaning to country-level strategic communications and end-goals. Capabilities must be re-thought in today's strategic architecture.

The reliance on the widest range possible of intellectual drivers meshed with technology may be a force-multiplier that can maximise the effectiveness of oppositional strategies to aggressors who utilise hybrid and asymmetric warfare. The balancing of intellectual property working in conjunction with modern cyber, with IP leading the way, is potentially a more effective operational relationship than the reverse - cyber deploying IP. This is because AI and cyberwarfare is in development only with many major algorithmic problems yet to be satisfactorily worked out.

(ii)   Institutional Theory

Steinmo, Thelen and Longstreth[151] identified historical institutionalism as providing *"analytic bridges between State-centered and society-centered analyses"* which may be another flexible model with which to study narrative warfare. The "bottom-up" approach of developing hypotheses during the collection and assessment of narratives (rather than the other way around) may be a more natural fit and applicable to this type of research than that of rational choice theory with its "*universal toolkit*"[152] that may be too narrow in its willingness to encompass and analyse relationships. In this case the institutional variables are the secret military structures that have to date prioritised kinetic over non-kinetic strategies.[153] There has been a "left-brain" disdain for, and therefore failure to do, much qualitative research. As early as 2005 a paper was written by RAND[154] on how the research model and infrastructure of the US Air Force in respect of decision-making was, arguably,

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[151] Ibid Sven Steinmo, Ann Thelen, Frank Longstreth, "Structuring politics: historical institutionalism in comparative analysis", The Historical Institutionalist Project, *Cambridge University Press*, 1992 at pp 10-13; https://content.talisaspire.com/auckland/bundles/5a552e23540a2637bb56b364

[152] Ibid at p.12.

[153] Mitchell D. White, "Diary of an Orphan: Information-based Effects in the US Military", 18 January 2018. https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2018/1/18/diary-of-an-orphan-information-based-effects-in-the-us-military

[154] Paul K. Davis, Jonathan Kulick and Michael Egner, "Implications of Modern Decision Science for Military Decision-Support Systems", Chapter 6 Conclusions, *RAND Corporation*, 2005 at pp 95-98.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG360.pdf

outdated. They referenced the seminal work of psychologists Kahneman and Tversky[155] on narrative paradigms[156] and framing[157]. Its use in branding and politics points the way to its utilisation in counter-narratives. Frame-manipulation research has shown that framing issues positively results in people making safer choices. The reverse has been found to be true-negative framing tends to inspire riskier decision-making.

(iii) Constructivism:

This research theory, a favourite of qualitative researchers, recognises, inter alia, the intangibles of human beings - internal "events" including feelings, emotions and attitudes or habits of thinking. Neuroscience brings credibility to the field as it can show the areas of the brain that activate[158] when these intangibles are in play. On its own however it has limitations that "non-material" realism would fulfil.

(iv) Constructivist Institutionalism:

The theory of Constructivist Institutionalism,[159] a hybrid theory of constructivism and institutionalism, is comprehensive as it locates the interior architecture of individuals *in context* and *in relation to* the institutional spaces that affect them. Hay[160] sees this theory as

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[155] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of Decisions and the Psychology of Choice". *Science*. 211 (4481): 453, 58, 1981; doi:10.1126/science.7455683.

[156] Walter R. *Fisher,* "Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument". *Communication Monographs. 51 (1): 1–22.* doi:10.1080/03637758409390180. ISSN 0363-7751.

 Robert C. Rowland, "The value of the rational world and narrative papradigms". *Central States Speech Journal. 39 (3-4): 204–217.* doi:10.1080/10510978809363250. ISSN 0008-9575.

[157] Ibid: Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman

[158] Karim S. Kassam, Amanda R. Markey, Vladimir L. Cherkassky , George Loewenstein, and Marcel Adam Just," Identifying Emotions on the Basis of Neural Activation", Department of Social and Decision Sciences, Porter Hall, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, 15213; Department of Psychology, Baker Hall, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA, USA, 15213; https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/sds/docs/loewenstein/EmotionNeuralAct.pdf

[159] Colin Hay (2016) Good in a crisis: the ontological institutionalism of social constructivism, New Political Economy, 21:6, 520-535, DOI: 10.1080/13563467.2016.1158800 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/13563467.2016.1158800

[160] Ibid: "*a distinct understanding of the relationship between actors and the environment (both natural and social) in which they find themselves and to its characteristic emphasis on the ideational mediation of that relationship.*"

enabling the elucidation of the dynamic of ideas between the individual and the environment. This hybrid theory has flexibility and comprehensiveness to include the study of, not only how individuals process narrative information and create meaning in their brains, but how they then translate those processes into action and interaction with various institutional spaces such as those in civil society, police, the military and politicians both locally, nationally and internationally.

Finally, the debate within the discipline itself about Rational Choice (still mainly a "US-centric" approach) and Constructivist Theories (more accepted as an approach in Europe) [161] may influence what choice of theory is utilised.

The interactive nature of a combination of elements of all these theories, combined with some cross-disciplinary investigations, neatly mimics the nature of the phenomenon of 'narrative in cyberspace' itself and has the potential to lead to new theory and doctrine.

(v) The Narrative Meta-Model[162] of Effective Counter-Narrative Messaging (NMM)

"We represent a system by using a language that is compliant to a meta-model. The metamodel provides the concepts and relations that will be used to filter the relevant entities of a given system in order to extract the model." - Jean Bézivin[163]

The development of a meta-model for this paper is a theory-building exercise that points a direction to quantitative research that either proves, disproves or develops it further. It is offered as one possible platform to extend the conversation around effective counter-

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[161] Ole Waever, "The Sociology of a Not So International Discipline: American and European Developments in International Relations", International Organization, Vol. 52, No. 4, International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics (Autumn, 1998), pp. 687-727, *The MIT Press*; URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2601355; Accessed: 09-06-2018 03:40 UTC

[162] Mellor, Scott, Uhl & Weise. MDA Distilled. Principles of Model Driven Architecture, 2004; *"A metamodel is a model of a modeling language. The metamodel defines the structure, semantics and constraints for a family of models".*

See Appendix 1 for elements of a 'Narrative Meta-Model' and a Flow Chart of 2 divergent narrative contexts in Influence Operations (author)

[163] Jean Bézivin, On the unification power of models, 2005: This paper is based on a guest talk presentation given at the UML'2003 conference in San Francisco and entitled: "MDA™: From Hype to Hope, and Reality" http://www.sciences.univ-nantes.fr/info/perso/permanents/bezivin/UML.2003/UML.SF.JB.GT.ppt https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/aba6/bc5ca45d29369b805e1dd9675f65c15b94a1.pdf?_ga=2.22122683.187315 5545.1538603052-1499224743.1538603052 at p.29.

narratives. Its usefulness will need to be tested empirically and I wish to emphasise that is beyond the scope of this paper.

Models[164] conceptualise, simplify and represent reality but are not reality. A meta-model is a simplified abstraction that both extrapolates the structural elements of relevant models and also frames, delineates and makes rules for their structure and design. It explains and defines relationships among the various pieces of the original systemic model itself. Models are instances of a meta-model which must conform to the meta-model which specifies the modelling language and its heuristic short-cuts of models.[165]In short, a meta-model is a model of models.

(vi)   The Meta-Model of Effective YARNS and Counter-Narrative Messaging[166]

"A metamodel is a model of a language that captures its essential properties and features. These include the language concepts it supports, its textual and/or graphical syntax and its semantics (what the models and programs written in the language mean and how they behave)." – Clark, Sammut and Willans

This meta-model (Appendix 1) synthesises several narrative models (see Appendices 2-5):

1) A Model of Effective Narrative drawn from Narrative Theory (Appendix 2);

2) A Model of Terrorism Counter-Narrative Messaging (Appendix 3);

3) A Model of Resilience Messaging (Appendix 4);

4) The YARNS Model (Appendix 4);

5) A Model of Disinformation Counter-Narrative Messaging (Appendix 5);

6) The RAN PVE Model (Appendix 6).

These models represent different alternative and counter-narrative systems for different purposes. This meta-model serves as a conceptual unifier of these models by extrapolating or "filtering"[167] their common structural elements. The meta-model will enable the future

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[164] Ibid Bézivin *"A meta-model is a "class of models"; the model is an instance of a meta-model* (p.29)

[165] Clark, Sammut & Willans. Applied Metamodelling. A Foundation for Language Driven Development, 2000.

[166] Concept copyrighted by the author.

[167] Jean Bézivin, On the unification power of models, 2005: This paper is based on a guest talk presentation given at the UML'2003 conference in San Francisco and entitled: "MDA™: From Hype to Hope, and Reality" http://www.sciences.univ-nantes.fr/info/perso/permanents/bezivin/UML.2003/UML.SF.JB.GT.ppt

compliance of other related relevant models as it can also utilise computer-generated matrixes. This is important for several reasons:

1) speed, parsimony and ease of use: no need to 'reinvent the wheel';

2) streamlining and synthesising disparate but related research models developed in parallel and often without cross-reference to the other;

3) a type of 'clearinghouse' that brings together and simplifies different branches of research and discipline so that learning can be expedited.

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/aba6/bc5ca45d29369b805e1dd9675f65c15b94a1.pdf?_ga=2.22122683.187315 5545.1538603052-1499224743.1538603052.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review I: Counter-Narrative Research

A.   Identified Problems

i.   Tradition and Ignorance

"……a certain grasp of military affairs is vital for those in charge of general policy." [168]

One of the core issues that has stultified innovative US responses to the innovative strategies and tactics of both Russia and ISIS is tradition ie the ways things have always been done. Russia does not rely to the same degree on military might as the US has traditionally done. It cannot do so as it cannot compete economically. Creativity and innovation are children of poverty. Tradition and reason may end up being the governors of creativity to a certain extent but stifling or ignoring creative innovative and disruptive approaches is a failure to "think outside the box" and has serious limitations to the flexibility and speed of response below the level of outright kinetic warfare.

Some analysts do consider that a return to the successful Cold War tactics of the Reagan era are appropriate under the new open OSINT[169] environment. Jones [170]of CSIS advocates for a "*a more aggressive offensive information campaign."* by the United States.

In 2017 the US House Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities[171] held a hearing on information warfare and counter-propaganda strategy. Matthew Armstrong of Kings College, London in his evidence [172]called for

> *"We must change our mind-set about adversarial propaganda and subversive actions, especially those carried out below or outside the military's phasing construct. This starts with*

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[168] NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008 (Clausewitz at p.608). http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/NWC/ClausewitzNotesAY2008.htm

[169] Heather J. Williams and Ilana Blum, "Defining Second Generation Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) for the Defense Enterprise", *RAND Corporation*, 2018; https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1964.html

[170] Seth G. Jones, "Going on the Offensive: a US Strategy to Combat Russian Information Warfare", *CSIS Briefs*, October 2018; https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/181001_RussiaActiveMeasures_FINAL_0.pdf?Bc8SwvPkq8G6jNu096e6kcqRAeEkU6gQ

[171] US House of Representatives SubCommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, "CRAFTING AN INFORMATION WARFARE AND COUNTER–PROPAGANDA STRATEGY FOR THE EMERGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT", 15 March 2017; at pp.8-9; https://fas.org/irp/congress/2017_hr/counter-prop.pdf

[172] Ibid Prepared Statement of Matthew Armstrong, Kings College London at pp.3-5 and Appendix.

changing the language we use. We need to think and speak in terms of undermining adversarial psychological influence which will guide us toward preemptive behavior and messages. We need to think and speak in terms of a communication environment which will guide us toward a preemptive interactivity that can establish, preserve, and strengthen our credibility so that we set the narrative that must be displaced by our adversaries."

However, the current US Administration has so far repudiated any efforts to fund counter-propaganda messages within US Cyber Command.[173] In 2017 the US Congress however held a hearing on countering Russian propaganda.[174] In addition, the new US Defense Strategy 2018 acknowledges the need for a comprehensive response to attacks below warfare level:

"As the 2018 National Defense Strategy explains, adversaries are increasingly capable of contesting and disrupting America's society, economy, and military. This is in part because of our growing reliance on cyberspace. Adversaries direct continuous operations and activities against our allies and us in campaigns short of open warfare to achieve competitive advantage and impair US interests." (US Cyber Command 2018 at p.2)

ii.   **Underfunding:**

"If you desire peace, prepare for war": Carl von Clausewitz

Several researchers have identified a large gap between what is now theoretically and empirically known about propaganda, radicalisation and disinformation and the funding attached to further studies.

The task of funders in this area is to identify potentially disruptive, creative lateral approaches and innovative technologies and writers. Any roadblock to implementing disruptive modern narrative approaches may be shifting with the new more assertive US

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[173]

2018: https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/mar/16/senators-explain-unspent-anti-propaganda-funds/; https://thehill.com/policy/international/376684-state-dept-hasnt-spent-any-of-its-120m-to-counter-foreign-election
2017: https://www.cyberscoop.com/cyber-command-head-not-prepared-counter-info-operations/

[174] "CRAFTING AN INFORMATION WARFARE AND COUNTER–PROPAGANDA STRATEGY FOR THE EMERGING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT", HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION HEARING HELD MARCH 15, 2017;
https://fas.org/irp/congress/2017_hr/counter-prop.pdf

Defense Strategy 2018[175] and the new vision of US Cyber Command that has as its Imperative 3 to:[176]

> *"Create information advantages to support operational outcomes and achieve strategic impact. Enhance information warfare options for Joint Force commanders. Integrate cyberspace operations with information operations. Unify and drive intelligence to support cyberspace operations and information operations. Integrate all intelligence capabilities and products to improve mission outcomes for the Joint Force and the nation."*

This may herald also a revaluation also of traditional propaganda approaches that will be transmitted via advanced cyber and AI technology.

iii.   **Security Clearances:**

'Action [in war] is no mathematical construction, but has to operate in the dark, or at best in the twilight' - Carl von Clausewitz[177]

The difficulties in involving civilians with expertise in IT, Linguistics and with cultural skills without security clearances was discussed at the House Subcommittee Hearing in 2017. The idea of placing such uncleared personnel in a "box" (ie segregated from secret information) was mooted and an expert witness before the committee considered it feasible but only in the short-term since he considered that fast-tracking clearances was a more sustainable option.[178]

iv.   **Limited Cross-Disciplinary Research (aka 'cross-pollination'):**

Reed and Dowling [179] have called for more studies on the use of historical narratives terrorist narratives. There are several disparate studies in various allied disciplines however there is

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[175] Unclassified Summary of US National Defense Strategy 2018 at p.5. https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf

[176] "Achieve and Maintain Cyberspace Superiority: Command Vision for US Cyber Command" 2018; at p. 9. https://www.cybercom.mil/Portals/56/Documents/USCYBERCOM%20Vision%20April%202018.pdf?ver=2018-06-14-152556-010

See also: Nina Kollars and Jacquelyn Schneider, "Defending Forward: the 2018, Cyber Strategy is Here", *War On the Rocks,* 20 September 2018; https://warontherocks.com/2018/09/defending-forward-the-2018-cyber-strategy-is-here/

[177] On War, p. 545.

[178] Ibid. at pp.18-19; https://fas.org/irp/congress/2017_hr/counter-prop.pdf

[179] Alistair Reed and Jennifer Dowling, "The Role of Historical Narratives in Extremist Propaganda", Stratcom CoE, Defence Strategic Communications, Vol.4, Spring 2018 at pp.101-102. https://www.stratcomcoe.org/alastair-reed-jennifer-dowling-role-historical-narratives-extremist-propaganda

not a concerted research effort with an over-arching strategic goal. This is one of the great advantages that propagandists such as Russia and IS have.

A possible cause of the blinkers and slow government-level response, and the response of the military establishment used to a focus on hardware, are the narrow paradigms of expertise deployed in research strategies and the difficulties in identifying what is a complete narrative strategy. Cobaugh describes it as:

> "*.....better described as "Operational Narrative Strategy" which includes both offensive and defensive narratives in support of countering weaponized narrative by adversaries and a compelling resilience building narrative strategy which in a sense, inoculates the targeted group from the weaponized narrative targeting them. An individual focus on either the weaponized version or the inoculation version misses seeing the complete picture, much like a partially completed jigsaw puzzle.*"

Cobaugh,[180] also notes the possible connection between effective strategies for Russia and for Daesh/ISIS:

> "*.....many other nations and non-state actors such as DAESH are also executing similar strategies against the US and our Allies with varying degrees of intensity and success. Developing an effective strategy for Russia by default would go a long way towards addressing these other threats as well.*"

Although it may be necessary initially to stay within one's field to deliver credible, rigorous and original research, ultimately moving outside one's field to engage, share and "cross-pollinate" is essential if researchers are going to move beyond the inherent limitations of their own paradigms. Like bees which only do the rounds in one field and ignore an even more lush field next door, researchers will remain the poorer for missing out on adjacent intellectual harvests.

a. **Narrative, Neuroscience, Linguistics, Psychology, Psychotherapy, Sociology and Influence**

"The moral elements [everything that is created by intellectual and psychological qualities and influences] are among the most important in war": Carl von Clausewitz

The study of "meaning-making" in psychology, that was inspired by Frankl [181] and his concentration camp experiences, identified that the prime motivator of human beings is *meaning* that originates in the stories we tell ourselves to make sense of our experiences.

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[180] Paul Cobaugh, "A Five-Point Strategy to Oppose Russian Narrative Warfare, *Medium*, April 2018; https://medium.com/@paulcobaugh/a-five-point-strategy-to-oppose-russian-narrative-warfare-56e0006aab2a

[181] Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning,* 1959, ISBN 9780807014295.

The eminent Harvard psychologist Jerome Bruner pioneered the field of cognitive development, concept formation and how narrative works.[182] This provides some insight into how our personal stories can be influenced and manipulated. Neuroscience has made recent discoveries about cognition and how our story-telling provides us with meaning and shapes our identities, attitudes, habits and behaviour. Narrative arguably shapes thinking not the other way around.[183] "Neuromarketing"[184] claims to utilise psychological findings to "*persuade, anyone, anywhere, anytime*". Obtaining the "cognitive edge" in warfare has become a strong focus of militaries.[185] McInnes cites the "*fox or hedgehog*" types of cognition coined by Tetlock who considered that *how* you think is more important that *what* you think.

So, the "selling" of an idea is not new. In the early 20th Century the advertising industry cottoned on to this and its tactics were in turn adopted during World War II to drive propaganda. Toxic political 'advertising' designed to appeal to the very worst in people is very potent. The politicisation of narrative as propaganda[186] is not unknown. Herman and Chomsky wrote "Manufacturing Consent" and developed a Propaganda Model in the 1970's. What is unusual, and novel is the speed, amplification and spread of narratives via the internet and social media eg Twitter, Facebook, Linkedin and Telegram.

Framing is the slanted presentation of information. Frames use language constructs that create a selective focus[187] and thereby direct and limit attention. The process of language framing creates a cognitive bias[188] that powerfully influences attitudes, emotions and

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[182] Ibid: "His theory differentiated between "narrative thought" (temporally/causally sequential, focused on details and action) and "paradigmatic thought" (mental categorization by recognizing abstract, systematic similarities of unrelated phenomena)."

[183] Jerome Bruner, https://psychology.fas.harvard.edu/people/jerome-bruner

[184] Roger Dooley," The Persuasion Code Part 1, Interview with Christophe Morin", citing Christophe Morin and Renvoice, "*The Persuasion Code*: *How Neuromarketing Can Help You Persuade Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime*", Wiley,19 September 2018; https://www.rogerdooley.com/christophe-morin-persuasion-code

[185]Chris McInnes, "Finding the Cognitive Edge", *The Central Blue, The Sir Richard Williams Foundation*", 23 September 2018; http://centralblue.williamsfoundation.org.au/finding-the-cognitive-edge-chris-mcinnes/

[186] Ibid Benson

[187] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of decisions and the psychology of choice", *Science*, 211 (4481):pp.453–58, 1981.

[188] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of decisions and the psychology of choice", *Science*, 211 (4481): pp.453–58, 1981.

subsequently choices[189], decisions and behaviour. Tversky and Kahneman (1981)[190]researched cognitive and emotional bias and Lin and Kerr[191] note that cognitive biases may be at the root of the susceptibility of populations to varieties of information warfare and disinformation.

Linguistics, semiotics (meaning in communication), semiosis (sign process), and transformational grammar are the foundational units of narrative, study of which is critical to the analysis of effective narrative construction.[192] Irvine (2004-2012)[193] defined the function of semiotics as looking at the interaction between culture, language and signs. These disciplines all impact of the socio-cultural identities of target audiences of the Russians. Having knowledge of them may make the crafting of narrative more professional, evidence-based, standardised and replicable.

Although political science is a discrete and bounded discipline, a cross-disciplinary approach could still be taken within its boundaries to explicate certain aspects of both the nature and structure of narrative itself and the psychological impact of it.

b.   **Narrative and Interethnic Conflicts**

Ritzmann[194]considers that anthropology, psychology and neuroscience are key fields that can yield insights relevant to the construction of effective narratives.

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[189] Ibid Tversky and Kahneman at p.453–58.

[190] Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, "The Framing of decisions and the psychology of choice", *Science*, 211 (4481): pp.453–58, 1981.

[191] Herb Lin et al., "Developing Responses to Cyber-Enabled Information Warfare and Influence Operations" *Lawfare*, 6 September 2018; https://www.lawfareblog.com/developing-responses-cyber-enabled-information-warfare-and-influence-operations

[192] Martin Irvine, "Structural Linguistics, Semiotics, and Communication Theory: Basic Outlines and Assumptions", *Georgetown University*, 2012. http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Semiotics_and_Communication.html

[193] Ibid.

[194] Alexander Ritzmann, "A Tribal Call to Arms: Propaganda and What PVE Can Learn from Anthropology, Psychology and Neuroscience", *European Eye on Radicalization (EER)*, March 22, 2018. https://eeradicalization.com/a-tribal-call-to-arms-propaganda-and-what-pve-can-learn-from-anthropology-psychology-and-neuroscience/

Anthropologists Christian et al.[195] utilise narrative and semiosis in tribal contexts in Afghanistan to gain close rapport with tribal leaders and mediate conflict in a transformational way. He eschews quantitative research in conflict zones as both ineffective and inhumane:

> *".....we learned that what really matters are the psychosocial constructions of trauma, terror, starvation, alienation, shame, rage, hopelessness and grief as experienced by the surviving population.........Most importantly, we found that the quantitative research that drove our plans and programming were based on the logic of rational actor theories of political science and international relations in complete defiance of the realities we now faced in these open conflict zones."*

Maan's seminal work on "internarrative identity",[196] which extends the concept of "narrative identity" and reframes displacement, marginalisation, trauma and conflict as fruitful sources of a hybrid identity, an internarrative identity, which is then located in (and shaped by) a bridging narrative that is transformative of old and new cultural experiences. Refugees, those fleeing from authoritarian regimes, or any dislocated individual vulnerable to radicalisation can benefit from such insights as links to both to the past, present and future can be maintained via narrative.

c. Psychological Interventions

War strategy theorists[197] and Influence practitioners utilise sophisticated psychological theory to better craft messaging. Doing psychological harm to enemies now (who may later arguably become allies) to win a war may be a counter-productive strategy in the long-term. The framing of human beings as legitimate targets for what could potentially lead to permanent harm raises ethical questions that have not been satisfactorily answered if addressed at all. To what extent are influence operations bound by the laws of war (LoW) in psychological operations (although psychologists advising the military are themselves accountable)? An analogy would be a mistreated prisoner who will be later released into the community. In the

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[195] Patrick James Christian (2018) Qualitative Research in the Shadow of Violent Conflict, in *Experiences in Violent Research and Researching Violence,* edited by Althea-Maria Rivas, PhD, University of Bristol and Brendan Ciarán Browne, PhD, Centre for Post-Conflict Justice, Trinity College Dublin at Belfast, University of Bristol: Policy Press (31-46).

[196] Ajit K. Maan, *Internarrative Identity*, second edition, Placing the Self, Rowman and Littlefield, 2010.

[197] Samuel Žilinčík, "Strategy and the Instrumental Role of Emotions*", RealClear Defense*, 25 September 2018;https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/09/25/strategy_and_the_instrumental_role_of_emotions_1 13834.html

asymmetric war with ISIS that is an unresolved dilemma in the conduct of Information Warfare.

Influence Operations are traditionally a "softer" field of persuasion rather than attack. Palmetz[198] reviewed the psychological literature of Influence Operations and exhorted those tasked with defence against hostile state narratives to "*take heed of the body of knowledge already in existence.*"[199] He concluded that more studies are required into *"how various actors combine multiple capabilities in order to influence".*[200]

To answer these difficult questions adequately involves the invoking of cross-disciplinary theories of Psychology (psychodynamics, cognitive-behavioural theory, neuroscience and psychoanalysis), Linguistics, Social Psychology, Anthropology and Identity and Political Theory.[201]

v.   **Identified Key Counter-Narrative Influencers**

The key influencers (and their biases) are divided into a couple of major regions -Europe and the United States. In certain areas their meta strategies are similar or converge and they draw on each other's research. International Counter-Terrorism Conferences are held annually. Where there is the most obvious differentiation is the military and civilian divide. Significant research into 'weaponised' narratives and Strategic Communications are conducted by NATO and the US Military Academia. Private thinktanks such as RAN, the European Parliament Committees and the European Commission.

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[198] Bjorn Palmertz," Theoretical foundations of influence operations: a review of relevant psychological research", *Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies Swedish Defence University,* 2016; https://www.msb.se/Upload/Om%20MSB/Forskning/Kunskapsoversikt/Theoretical%20foundations%20of%20influence%20operations.pdf

[199] Ibid. at p.32.

[200] Ibid. at p.34.

[201] Clarissa Rile Hayward and Ron Watson, Identity and Political Theory, 33 Wash. U. J. L. & Pol'y 9 (2010), http://openscholarship.wustl.edu/law_journal_law_policy/vol33/iss1/3

The work of RAN CoE[202] has led the way on the development of research into the structure of narrative that is applicable to both terrorism and disinformation (the GAMMMA+ model: Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Media, Action plus Monitoring and Evaluation.

Maan[203]focusses on how counter-narratives can exploit and turn around the inherent weaknesses of manipulative terrorist narratives that target recruits via their vulnerable identities and mobilise them to engage in self-defeating behaviour.

> *"A well-crafted narrative strategy should have two components: 1) A Military and Development Narrative explains the necessity for military activities and development strategy for our domestic audience, although it will be heard world-wide. 2) A Counter-Terrorism Narrative provides a protective function against the story expressed by our adversary by complicating their narrative and discouraging the enemy's potential recruits.These two components must be interactive and mutually supportive to be effective.[204]*

Cobaugh[205] considers both types of narratives - weaponised and resilience - are needed to "inoculate" communities.[206] Cobaugh,[207] a US norm entrepreneur,[208] states that *"Operational Narrative Strategy"* to be complete must include *"both offensive and defensive narratives"* and a *"compelling resilience-building strategy"*. An advocate for an increased US focus on countering Russian and other narratives, Cobaugh considers that there are *"glaring inadequacies in US information warfare trade-craft, doctrine and architecture"*. The

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[202] RAN Centre of Excellence ISSUE PAPER, RAN guidelines for effective alternative and counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+), 31/12/2017.
https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf

[203] Ajit Maan, "Narrative: the Critical Component of Counter-Terrorism Strategy", Small Wars Journal, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/narrative-the-critical-component-of-counter-terrorism-strategy

[204] Ibid. Maan

[205] www.narrative-strategies.com

[206] Paul Cobaugh*: ".....a strategy which in a sense, inoculates the targeted group from the weaponized narrative targeting them. An individual focus on either the weaponized version or the inoculation version misses seeing the complete picture, much like a partially completed jigsaw puzzle."*

[207] Paul Cobaugh, Narrative Strategies, a US Thinktank and coalition of scholars and military professionals; co-author of Soft Power on Hard Problems, Ed. Ajit Maan and Amar Cheema, Chapter One: "Soft Power in the Lead", *Hamilton Publishing*, 2017.

[208] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink , International Norm Dynamics and Political, *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4, International Organization at Fifty: Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics. (Autumn, 1998*), MIT Press*, pp. 887-917. Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0020-8183%28199823%2952%3A4%3C887%3AINDAPC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-M

elements of his 5-point strategy[209] are as follows: building resilience in US audiences, applying cyber tools, disseminating effective alternate and counter-narratives, messaging in support of a narrative strategy and deterrence and resistance to aggression.

In addition, Maan and Cobaugh have applied their work to irregular warfare and influence operations.[210]

vii.   Lack of an Overarching Strategic Doctrine:

"the first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and the commander have to make is to establish by that test [i.e., what's the value of the objectives] the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to make it into something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive." - Carl von Clausewitz[211]

Can any war be won with an isolationist stance in the world or are allies required? These are political questions and it is essential that they are coherently and consistently answered and resolved with significantly greater self-reflection as a nation otherwise there will be not be an effective forward momentum in both war readiness or peace negotiations. All the military hardware and tactical plans in the world will not advance matters unless there is a more-or-less clear consensus from the top down as to the strategic goal with a master narrative to match.

viii.   Re-Prioritisation and Consensus

The prioritisation of activity against terrorists, the far-right and Russia by states is undergoing re-evaluation as the threat levels of each are regularly assessed. The Institute for Economics and Peace released its Global Terrorism Index (GTI) in 2017.[212] It measures and analyses the impact of terrorism on 163 countries (99.7% of the world population)[213] and is based on the

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[209] Paul Cobaugh, *"A Five-Point Strategy to Oppose Russian Narrative Warfare", Narrative Strategies,* April 2018. https://medium.com/@paulcobaugh/a-five-point-strategy-to-oppose-russian-narrative-warfare-56e0006aab2a

[210] *Soft Power on Hard Problems: Strategic Influence in Irregular Warfare,* Ed. Ajit Maan and Amar Cheema, Rowman and Littlefield, 2016.

[211] Ibid at p.88 http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/NWC/ClausewitzNotesAY2008.htm

[212] Global Terrorism Index (GTI), *Institute For Economics and Peace*, 2017; Executive Summary at pp.2-3; Key Findings at pp.4-5; http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2017.pdf

[213] Ibid at p.6

global dataset of the authoritative open source Global Terrorism Database developed by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START).[214] It is a measure of the current low prioritisation of START by the US State Department, formerly the major funder, that its contract has not been renewed beyond May 2018. They currently do not have sufficient funds to complete the 2018 Database.[215]

Finding the right context for the right type of counter-narrative is an ongoing challenge. With the datasets being in doubt, finding the appropriate match of counter-narrative to country-context is going to be that much harder. There is as yet no consensus as to whether aggressive counter-narratives and memes are any more effective than "softer" resilience narratives aimed at targeted populations. The mode of transport is becoming increasingly high-tech without a commensurate investment in creatives who provide content.

Might there be a more complete narrative strategy when there are a sufficient number of "norm entrepreneurs" to create a critical mass?

ix.   **Political Divisions/Media Framing:**

"war is merely the continuation of politics by other means": Carl von Clausewitz

Political divisions within both the European Union and the United States may be slowing down research and development activity on the intellectual property of counter narratives as well as the cyber capabilities needed to power them. The tensions between military and civil leadership create budget stalling and low prioritisation to the funding of narrative interventions. The old US PSYOP is again the new US PSYOP. To what extent it is properly informed by and whether it undertakes research itself is unclear (to me at least).

What is missing is a transparent global entity for Russian Disinformation Counter Measures that is a hub to coordinate a world-wide effort to become more proactive against Russia's subterranean asymmetric war.

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[214] *START Global Terrorism Database (GTD), *University of Maryland*, 2017; https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/ *Collection and coding for the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is solely conducted by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. The GTD is produced and maintained by START and the University owns all rights, title, and interest in the GTD, the data and codebook, and all auxiliary materials.
[215] Statement from Dr. Erin Miller, Global Terrorism Database Manager: http://www.start.umd.edu/news/message-global-terrorism-database-manager

The framing by the media of such divisions driven by simplification, dramatisation and personalisation, adds to the general zeitgeist of paralysis and confusion.

x. **The Western Alliance and Russia: the "West": does it speak with one voice?**

Divided and weakened international alliances (aka the 'Trump Factor') may have led to an "every man for himself" mentality. This is unfortunate as countries and their agencies working at cross-purposes is unhelpful in the face of an organised determined adversary like Russia. However, the US-backed Atlantic Council has just hosted the Global Forum on Strategic Communications and Digital Disinformation (StratcomDC) for relevant professionals on countering disinformation.[216] This is a big signal that the US is about to take Russian undermining of its democracy much more seriously in line with European efforts.

The EU response to the Russian threat varies widely. A Report from Kremlin Watch, a strategic program of the Czech-based 'European Values' Think Tank, evaluated all 28 European Union countries based on their governments' attitudes, policies, and strategic responses to the Russian threat, following the Kremlin's recent influence operations throughout the West. Kremlin Watch[217] aims to expose and confront instruments of Russian influence and disinformation operations focused against Western democracies (see Table 2). Another site that analyses the strategy and tactics of pro-Russian disinformation campaigns is EU vs DISINFO.[218] It regards the key strategic objective of the pro-Kremlin disinformation campaign messages is to "*weaken the West and strengthen the Kremlin in a classic zero- sum game approach*".

xi. **The Current US Master or 'Meta' narrative**

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[216] The Global Forum on Strategic Communications and Digital Disinformation (StratComDC 2018), *Atlantic Council*, 2-3 October, 2018, in Washington, DC. Watch the full event; http://stratcomdc.org/;
see also http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/here-s-how-to-fight-disinformation

[217] Kremlin Watch: www.kremlinwatch.eu; http://www.kremlinwatch.eu/#about-us
https://www.axios.com/russia-influence-report-european-union-ukraine-b9507f3f-e456-41fd-999f-f782cd1959ce.html

[218] EU vs. DISINFO: https://euvsdisinfo.eu/uploads/2018/06/EUVSDISINFO-COMMENTARY-PDF-EN_Web-1.pdf

In the flush of success after the Cold War and the fall of the Soviet Union the hegemonic master narrative of the United States has been predominant. However, it is arguable whether this is now a sustainable position given that the US is not yet capable of fighting on many fronts at once, although currently there is are significant efforts to rectify this with the release of the National Defense Strategy and the re-invigoration of US Cyber Command.

The current controversial US "go it alone" narrative emanating from the top highlights the increasing divisions between military and Administration master narratives. This appears to be fundamentally driven by a wish to remain the world's main hegemon on one side and a political drive towards isolationism on the other. The isolationist nationalism of the current US President works against the tide of Western strategic consensus and he may become an increasing impediment to international cooperation. His "doctrine of patriotism" (announced to the UN General Assembly in September 2018) is a consistent message of retrenchment and protectionism with a sinister question mark of Russian collusion still hanging over his head - whatever that may or may not amount to. Despite this, it is likely that tiers below the Administration of political, diplomatic and military leaders as well as civil society will continue to collaborate and cooperate. The narrative from the State Department[219] is more conciliatory cognizant of the Great Power rivalry developing and the need to compete with other global narratives placing pressure on democracies to become illiberal and under the sway of Russia and/or China.

Watts (2018) [220] cautions against one narrative only prevailing in the global information space and the undermining of a resilient civil society's response to disinformation:

> *"Government plays a critical but limited role in an effective response. For all the reasons above, government responses must be restrained and judicious lest they undermine the nongovernmental elements that are more important to a healthy, free, and open exchange of ideas in democratic societies. This exchange, and its nongovernmental components, are necessary to properly counter disinformation. New and emerging technologies and businesses must be regulated and held accountable by elected officials, particularly where they impact public interests."*

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[219] [219] David A. Wemer, "State Department Official Sounds Warning on Russian, Chinese Influence in Central and Eastern Europe", *Atlantic Council*, 19 October 2018; http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/state-department-official-sounds-warning-on-russian-chinese-influence-in-central-and-eastern-europe

[220] Ibid. Watts at p. 18.
http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Sovereign_Challenge_Report_091718_web.pdf

There are still many areas where cooperation and collaboration will be in the strategic national interests of both the US and Europe. The narratives may differ each to each, but rights-based democracies have more in common than not and they face a declared common enemy in President Putin of Russia whose messaging is framed by narratives of power and control and the loss of freedom for populations both at home and in the near abroad.

Ideological Bias, US vs THEM, Lack of Coordination and Patch Protection

Research undertaken within any particular jurisdiction or within any mindset may have unconscious biases, some explicit some not. Whoever funds research has a stake in the outcome. The "cross-pollination" of research internationally would go a long way towards reducing confirmation bias or blind-spots. Strategic communications research funded by NATO and the US Military Universities and PSYOP via a vis Europe may hold many assumptions in common such as "Western values and norms" but priorities and pressures can be different. Russia may be defined as the "main strategic adversary" or "the near abroad threat" or "the enemy"; ISIS may be granted a more threatening status and thus a more pressing research priority. Linkages between the "narrative interplay" of terrorists and far-right extremists may be missed or identified.[221] Furthermore, a bias towards more aggressive rather than "softer", perhaps subtler, strategic strategies may exist that may lead user audiences to reject YARNS[222] in favour of "weaponised" narratives that are overtly aggressive. Context is everything.

What matters is whether research protocols are rigorous and where possible research is shared. Much is already shared on scholarly websites but there remains an unknown seam of secret or confidential research about which we don't know what we don't know depending on level of security clearance. This is one of this paper's inherent limitations.

Bias and Assumptions

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[221] Jakob Guhl and Julia Ebner, "Islamist and Far-Right Extremists: Rhetorical and Strategic Allies in the Digital Age", *Radicalisation Research*, 3 September 2018; https://www.radicalisationresearch.org/debate/ebner-islamist-far-right-extremists-rhetorical-digital-age/

[222] Coined by the author of this paper, the acronym YARNS ("yeasty assertive resilience narratives"). The goal is to make citizens of threatened democracies 'rise', expand their knowledge, assert their values and become more resilient. The copyright is asserted by the author Pamela Williamson.

The assumptions being made throughout this paper, and the possible synthesis of my initial hypotheses, is that multilateralism is a public "good", that hegemonic control of one nation in terms of one meta-narrative only may be an outdated, unrealistic strategy in terms of the geopolitical long view. Multilateral negotiation, international cooperation and collaboration may be key to the preservation not only of democracies as usually understood (bastions of human rights, freedoms, the rule of law, verified facts, science, evidence and truth), but also of the "architecture" of a free media that has already been assailed and overwhelmed by "fake" news" and aggressive disinformation strategies. Such meaningful democratic values are universal to the Western scholarship tradition which is based on the Hegelian dialectic and the objective scientific method based on tested and verified facts. The slip of some states into a preoccupation with sovereignty heralds a new nationalism and, according to its critics, indicates a totalitarian bent.[223]

The goal that democracies do not slip into "illiberal" democracies[224], and that illiberal democracies do not backslide further into authoritarian states does *not* mean that the peaceful, "unwilling" (with vastly different environments and architecture), are "force-fed" democracy via kinetics. The planning for symmetric warfare (including cyber warfare) that is currently being accelerated need not be read as desirous of war. However, a rethink of mindset in terms of the correct '*centre of gravity*' [225] of target may be needed. A fuller recognition of the need for quality intellectual property and its deployment is still considered secondary to hardware futuristic 21st century weaponry and AI. I propose to address this by challenging mindset. The ethics of new technologies of influence and counter narratives will also be explored.

A comprehensive quantitative analysis utilising primary sources is not realistic and beyond the scope of this dissertation. More raw data needs to be available for that type of research to identify and solidify causal links and thereby close the knowledge gap more fully. There are nevertheless significant secondary sources in the form of peer-reviewed studies and reports

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[223] John T. Watts, "Whose Truth: Sovereignty, Disinformation, and Winning the Battle of Trust", *Atlantic Council,* September 2018; https://xenagoguevicene.com/2018/10/05/secret-police-plan-atlantic-council-publishes-establishments-internet-censorship-guidelines-19-sept-2018/

[224] Arch Puddington, "Breaking Down Democracy: Goals, Strategies, and Methods of Modern Authoritarians", Chapter 5: Illiberal Democracy: *The Rise of 'Illiberal Democracy', Freedom House Report,* June 2017; https://freedomhouse.org/report/modern-authoritarianism-illiberal-democracies

[225] Ibid. Clausewitz

that add authority to the contentions in this paper. Some are referenced here. A qualitative analysis based on "thick description" may yield insights that help develop evolving theory.

B.   Types of Narratives in the Strategic Communication Spaces of Democracies and Autocracies

"Warfare is the Way of deception.;[226] *Therefore, if able, appear unable; if active, appear inactive; if near, appear far; if far, appear near"*[227]- Sun Tzu

Information, narrative and political warfare is strategic messaging or "meaningful stories" framed to create a result that synchronises with the ultimate strategic goals of the actor. They manipulate the target's values, attitudes, loyalties and cognitive biases utilising issues that may be contentious or confusing. They can serve to stir up societal divisions if seeking to polarise, undermine and thereby weaken an adversary. They may aim to stimulate doubts, fears, anxieties and hostilities with the specific goal being to motivate an adversary to *do something that is not in the interests of their country.* If defensive, they seek to neutralise or overcome an aggressor and "immunise" a society against such attacks.

The types of narratives utilised depend on the meta strategy of a country and its operational goals.

The available research shows that there are 3 key options in developing a Complete Narrative Strategy[228]. They encompass both "hard" and "soft" strategies. Some combination of the two may be required depending on **objectives and context.**

i.   "fighting fire with fire"

"the best form of defence is attack": Carl von Clausewitz

'Hard' offensive and defensive strategies (ie "weaponising" narrative) and concerted pushback by civil society, media and journalism within democracies against trolling, fake

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[226] Sun Tzu at [01.13].

[227] Ibid at [01.14].

[228] Ibid Cobaugh

news and disinformation, involve taking a tough line both publicly, diplomatically and privately with the Russian State. Competing offensive strategies may target the Russian population who are routinely fed disinformation by their own political masters and their agencies.

A defensive narrative strategy could be achieved by ethical, honest and exacting journalism (fact-checking/truth-telling) challenging fake news directly and exposing stories that undermine the efficacy of democracy. For example, Ofcom in the UK undertakes regular reviews and analysis of the ethical breaches of RT to highlight and track them. This may have had a chilling effect on their tendency to breach as there were no recorded breaches in 2017.[229] However, critics of a confrontational truth-telling and disputatious approach about "facts" such as Maan[230] advocate more subtle strategies that focus on the *identity* of who is targeted and which decipher the *meaning* of the messaging to the recipient. Pushback, according to Maan, must either come in the form of resilience-building narratives that concentrate on constructive messaging or in the form of weaponised narratives that likewise target identity in the adversary's centre of gravity creating oppositional meanings that undermine the aggressor.

The dilemma is that unintended consequences of inflammatory, aggressive counterinfluence strategies might occur in that they may "up the ante" and may risk being counter-productive, alienate those who might be persuadable and create further defensiveness and polarisation. The Russian population has decades of embedded hostility towards the West and direct counterattacks may simply escalate the "noise" and increase their loyalty to Putin thus playing into his hands. What may be more effective than direct attack is *oblique* messaging that confuses and disorients, creates doubt and worry and mistrust – and envy of the freedoms and rights of Westerners. In short, playing their own game back to them.

promote Western values about rights and freedoms utilising YARNS that inform, engage and inspire and provide a more appealing alternative narrative to that provided by a repressive authoritarian leader.

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[229] UPDATE ON THE RT SERVICE – NEW BROADCASTING INVESTIGATIONS AND APPROACH TO FIT & PROPER, Ofcom, https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/113043/rt-investigations.pdf Paras 21 and 22:

[230] Ibid Maan*, Narrative Warfare* Penguin 2018.

ii. YARNS[231]: stories, war stories, heroic and patriotic myths and satire

Creative engagement and innovative approaches may be as effective as weaponised approaches. Innovation, eccentricity and humour can be challenging to traditional warfare thinking and funders. The hierarchical nature of the military may tend to iron out "creative" thinking other than in heavily circumscribed ways. There are good reasons for that. Therefore, engaging "creatives" who know about cartoons, memes, joke-telling, post-modernism, silliness, magical realism, ridicule, surrealism and satire may be necessary if an asymmetric approach is going to be beefed up. Harnessing their skills may require the compartmentalisation of security information. However, the US, in particular, is so far behind Russia in its narrative strategy that enlisting civilian expertise, much like was done at Bletchley Park during World War II, may be necessary (even Hollywood) if the goal of increasing its influence response is finally to be taken seriously.

Emotional intelligence [232] is a key driver of the writing of effective narratives. In their paper Johnson et al. (2005) cited Goleman et al. (2002) and others who *"have outlined emotional intelligence domains and associated competencies to include: (a) self-awareness; (b) self-management; (c) social awareness; and (d) relationship management (p. 39)".*[233]

It is not a great leap to infer that empathic understanding is a key skill needed for the writing effective narratives. Readers and audiences need it to be motivated to engage:[234] Cash (2018) has studied empathy in relation to technical communicators. Those tasked with narrative-writing (particularly counter-narratives or weaponised narratives) may find this useful to

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[231] Coined by the author of this paper, the acronym YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narratives"). Copyright asserted by the author of this paper Pamela Williamson

[232] Richard G. Johnson III, Judith A. Aiken and Richard Steggerda, "EMOTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: NARRATIVES FROM THE INSIDE", *Planning and Changing*, Vol. 36, No. 3&4, 2005 at pp. 235–252.

[233] Ibid at pp.236-237.

[234]

    1. Bernadette L. Cash, "Beyond Audience Analysis: Conceptualizing Empathy for Technical Communication" (2018). Technical Communication Capstone Course. 22. https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/eng_tech_comm_capstone_course/22; https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=eng_tech_comm_capstone_course

    2. See also: https://medium.com/designthropologist/relating-traditional-storytelling-to-brand-storytelling-emotional-intelligence-and-user-941977868dd

extend their capabilities beyond the technical to the creative ability needed to write effectively:

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review II: Information Warfare, Narrative Warfare and Counter-Narratives

A. 'Weaponised' Counter-Narratives

Some academic work has already been undertaken on the weaponising[235] of Narrative and Narrative Warfare.[236]What is lacking are however are rigorous critiques and quantitative analysis. Qualitative evidence is largely anecdotal and obtained in the field: see the work of Anne Speckhard Ph.D[237] interviewing returning foreign fighters.[238]Organisations like RAN in Europe and RAND and START in the United States are tracking numbers and developing narrative strategies but the actual effectiveness of counter-strategies is still unclear.[239]According to Hemmingsen et al., there are insufficient studies of the causal

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[235] T.E. Nissen, The Weaponisation of Social Media: Characteristics of Contemporary Conflicts", Copenhagen Defence College, 2015 at 24 (cited by Robert Szwed, *"Framing of the Ukraine–Russia conflict in online and social media Representations of the conflict in discourse in Facebook, Vkontakte and internet portals….."*, NATO Stratcom CoE, Riga, May 2016; https://issuu.com/natostratcomcoe/docs/ukr_social_media_full_report

Ibid Szwed, Conclusion at 119-123 (at p.123); at pp. 18-19 at 1.3.2. and p.21).

[236] Ibid Maan, Narrative Warfare
[237]

1. Research Reports, International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism (ICSVE)

   http://www.icsve.org/research-reports/

3. Anne Speckhard Ph.D., Ardian Shajkovci & Lorand Bodo "Fighting the ISIS Brand", Fighting ISIS on Facebook—Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter-Narratives Project", International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism",

   https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/fighting-isis-facebook-breaking-brand-counter-anne-speckhard-ph-d-/?trackingId=l5Ni5NoDHKGOK%2FvjryEfzQ%3D%3D

[238] Anne Speckhard Ph.D, *Talking to Terrorists, Bride of ISIS, Undercover Jihadi* and *ISIS Defectors: Inside Stories of the Terrorist Caliphate*; https://georgetown.academia.edu/AnneSpeckhard; ICSVE website http://www.icsve.org

Anne Speckhard, Ardian Shajkovci, Lorand Bodo & Haris Fazliu, "Bringing Down the Digital Caliphate: A Breaking the ISIS Brand Counter-Narratives Intervention with Albanian Speaking Facebook Accounts",

http://www.icsve.org/research-reports/bringing-down-the-digital-caliphate-a-breaking-the-isis-brand-counter-narratives-intervention-with-albanian-speaking-facebook-accounts/

[239] Ann-Sophie Hemmingsen & Karin Ingrid Castro, "The Trouble with Counter-Narratives", Danish Institute for International Studies, Copenhagen, 2017; at pp.18-44.
 http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/almdel/reu/bilag/189/1729101.pdf

relationship of narratives with violent outcomes and the actual effectiveness of counter-narratives:

> *"Ferguson finds that the scientific support for these assumptions is sparse and that, although 'there is some evidence suggesting patterns of discourse and communication such as hate speech, dehumanisation, and identity-based narratives (or propaganda) can contribute to conditions where IBV [Identity Based Violence] or VE [Violent Extremism] becomes more likely, the causal relationship remains unproven' (2016, 10), and further, that evidence that counter-narratives are an effective method for intervention is absent."*

The research limitations however have not stalled the urgent use of narratives in the field. Weaponised narratives[240] are currently being used to a limited extent in the influence space of conflict zones and on social media. This is an area that requires much more investment into training and research. Counter-narrative strategies are at a nascent stage as the US military identifies that it is way behind in countering the narratives of IS and other online terrorists in reaching populations vulnerable to recruitment. According to Paul Cobaugh[241], in countering narratives at different levels, it is essential to construct narratives that are appropriate both culturally and for the "distance from the ground" of each target group.[242]

B. Counter-Narratives:[243]Terrorism

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[240] Ibid. Maan

[241] Narrative Strategies. Accessed 23.10.17. https://www.narrative-strategies.com

[242] Paul Cobaugh, *Narrative Strategies,* https://www.narrative-strategies.com/single-post/2016/07/11/Sample-Counter-Terrorism-Narratives

[243] Tanya Silverman, Christopher J. Stewart, Zahed Amanullah, Jonathan Birdwell, "The Impact of Counter-narratives- Insights from a year-long cross-platform pilot study of counter-narrative curation, targeting, evaluation and impact," *Institute of Strategic Dialogue*, 2016; www.againstviolentextremism.org [accessed 28 May,2017]

Silverman et al., "The Impact of Counter-narratives" (at p16):

Staff writer, "Global Center for Combating Extremism in Riyadh adopts unprecedented techniques", *Al Arabiya English,* Monday, 22 May 2017 http://english.alarabiya.net/en/features/2017/05/22/All-you-need-to-know-on-the-Global-Center-for-Combating-Extremism-in-Riyadh.html [accessed 22 May,2017]

The threat of increasing global terrorism has been identified by Shuurman (2018) [244]and is continually monitored and tracked by START Global Terrorism Database (GTD) which confirms it is a growing and spreading problem.[245]

Silverman et al. studied the effectiveness of counter-narrative strategies in 2016 with far-right extremists. Their definition of a counter-narrative is as follows:

> *"A counter-narrative is a message that offers a positive alternative to extremist propaganda, or alternatively aims to deconstruct or delegitimise extremist narratives."* (p.15).

Some researchers have found however that "top-down" government-led counter-narratives lacked credibility because of perceived hypocrisy in the way a state conducted its foreign policy.[246]

Maan has criticised counter-narratives as lacking cultural relevance and as too reactive.[247] Maan and Sisco (2018) focus on meaning not truth. Maan describes the influence warfare space as a "*cognitive war*" concluding that mere reactive narratives are not only ineffective but

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[244] Bart Schuurman (2018) Research on Terrorism, 2007–2016: A Review of Data, Methods, and Authorship, Terrorism and Political Violence, DOI: 10.1080/09546553.2018.1439023; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09546553.2018.1439023

[245] START Global Terrorism Database (GTD), *University of Maryland*, 2017; https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/ *Collection and coding for the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) is solely conducted by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland.

[245] Statement from Dr. Erin Miller, Global Terrorism Database Manager: http://www.start.umd.edu/news/message-global-terrorism-database-manager

[246] Gotz Nordbruch, "Videos and social media: prevention on the Internet", 22 June 2018; http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/radikalisierungspraevention/271421/videos-und-soziale-medien-praevention-im-internet?p=all

[247]

1. Ajit Maan and Thomas Ricks, *"Narratives are about "meaning" not "truth""*, Foreign Policy, December 3, 2015; https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/03/narratives-are-about-meaning-not-truth/

2. Jim Sisco and Ajit Maan Ph.D, *"The "kill/capture" approach ain't working for us: Narratives do better than drones", Foreign Policy, 23 April 2015;* http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/23/the-killcapture-approach-aint-workingfor-us-narratives-do-better-than-drones/.

are "*socially and politically dangerous*" if social and political contexts are not taken into account by those tasked with countering them. She also calls for further research:[248]

A study by Reed et al.[249] commissioned by the European Parliament's Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs at the request of the LIBE Committee, identified the key approaches necessary for the response to terrorist narratives –

> "……*disruption of propaganda distribution, redirect method, campaign and message design, and government communications and synchronisation of message and action.*"

Monroy (2017)[250] describes the most effective way of constructing a counter-narrative as

> "*one tells one's narrative in a way that re-frames the opposition's and offers a bigger, better, smarter alternative of understanding, identifying and acting*".

C. Hypnotic narratives

The linguistic analysis of therapeutic technologies in the 1980's, particularly of the work of psychiatrist and seminal proponent of clinical hypnosis Milton H. Erickson,[251] revealed the power of indirect, oblique communication in the form of metaphors (semiotics) delivered while the subject was in a light trance state. The potency lies in its hypnotic effect and its flexible utility given that that a formal trance induction is not required.

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[248] Ibid Maan at p.81:

[249] Alistair Reed, Haroro J. Ingram and Joe Whittaker, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), The Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, Leiden University's Institute for Security and Global Affairs (ISGA); Dr Haroro J. Ingram, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT); Joe Whittaker, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT), Cyberterrorism Project, Swansea University, Leiden University's Institute for Security and Global Affairs (ISGA); DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES POLICY DEPARTMENT FOR CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, CIVIL LIBERTIES, JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS, November 2017; http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses

[250] Matt Monroy, "Social Media companies launch upload filter to combat terrorism and extremism" 17 March 2017; https:// digit.site36.net/2017/03/17/social-media-companies-launch-upload-filter-tocombat-terrorism-and-extremism/.

[251] Sidney Rosen, Ed. and Commentary, *My Voice Will Go with You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson,* W. W. Norton & Company; Reprint edition (March 17, 1991).

Hermann and Chomsky[252] then developed their controversial 'Propaganda Model'.

Marketing and Media Communications Narratives

Marketing and media communications are among the most studied of effective strategists and are early adopters of psychological techniques. Its most recent iteration might be "Neuro-marketing"[253] which incorporates findings from neuroscience.

Narrative Builders[254]is a group that has harnessed narrative insights and design to business. In 2018 they held a workshop attended by academics, data and intelligence professionals. The messages on some of their slides show a compelling similarity to some of the available work on strategic communication strategies. They offer training on "brand narratives", the ironically-worded "killer websites" and "digital strategy."

NB Given the enormous psychological power of narrative and manipulative techniques that become weaponised, accountability to codes of ethics is a *sine qua non* if credibility and professionalism are to be retained.

E.   **Key Studies**

The main thesis of this paper is that it has become necessary to undertake different types of *innovative* research on narrative strategies to comprehend how to counter the unprecedented phenomenon of Russia's asymmetric strategies. Several studies have been completed on the most effective Russian campaigns, those in Ukraine and the Baltic States. The EU, NATO and RAND undertake the most comprehensive research.

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[252] Edward S. Herman and N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*, Pantheon Books, New York, at p. 306.

[253] Roger Dooley, "The Persuasion Code Part 1, with Christophe Morin", Roger Dooley Blog, 27 September 2018; https://www.rogerdooley.com/christophe-morin-persuasion-code

[254] Narrative Builders, https://www.narrativebuilders.com/

These are the slides from a workshop in 2018 attended by academics and intelligence and private data company personnel; https://www.narrativebuilders.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Slide2-300x169.jpg; https://www.narrativebuilders.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Slide3-300x169.jpg

Reed,[255] the co-author of a study commissioned by the European Parliament into counter-terrorism, including counter-narratives, makes the claim that there are four current trends of response:

> *"i) Disruption of propaganda distribution; ii) The redirect method (where counter-message adverts are targeted at users by their search terms); iii) Campaign and message design; and iv) Government communications and synchronisation of message and action."*

Reed nevertheless does not consider that the failure to establish causal links to date does not mean that counter measures are ineffective. Rather he considers that we do not yet fully understand the link, for example, between reading violent extremist material and becoming violent. He finds that the failure to establish such a link continues to hamper counter-narrative efforts. A repeated theme in the literature is an acknowledgement of the lack of empirical research, the lack of prioritisation of investment and interdisciplinary research into counter narratives, the maintenance of old paradigms of warfare and a slow-to-change inertia in terms of meaningful state-level cooperation and collaboration:

> *"an inconvenient truth that emerged in the report is the distinct lack of empirical research on which these approaches are based".[256]*

Helmus et al. (2018)[257] studied Russian propaganda on social media and identified "*pro-Russia propagandists and anti-Russia activists on Twitter*". They analysed "*the degree to which Russian-speaking populations in a selection of former Soviet states have adopted pro-Russia propaganda themes in their Twitter language*" and made recommendations for *"reducing Russian influence in the region"* (at iii). They concluded that it is necessary to sell "*skeptical Russian-speakers in the Baltic States and Ukraine*" (Russia's "near abroad") "*compelling reasons for siding with the West*".[258] They made 5 key recommendations:[259]

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[255] Alistair Reed Ph.D," An Inconvenient Truth: Countering Terrorist Narratives – Fighting a Threat We Do Not Understand", *International Centre for Counter-Terrorism-The Hague (ICCT)*, 2 July 2018;

https://icct.nl/publication/an-inconvenient-truth-countering-terrorist-narratives-fighting-a-threat-we-do-not-understand/

[256] Ibid Reed.

[257] Todd C. Helmus, Elizabeth Bodine-Baron, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson, Joshua Mendelsohn, William Marcellino, Andriy Bega, Zev Winkelman, "Russian Social Media Influence: understanding Russian propaganda in Eastern Europe", RAND Corporation, 2018; https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2200/RR2237/RAND_RR2237.pdf

[258] Ibid at p.90.

[259] Ibid, Chapter 6 at pp.75-93.

> *"Highlight and "block" Russian propaganda. • Build the resilience of at-risk populations. • Provide an alternative to Russian information by expanding and improving local content. • Better tell the U.S., NATO, and EU story. • Track Russian media and develop analytic methods."*

Unusually, they undertook a lexical analysis of:

> "*four different additional sources of Russian propaganda in order to quantitatively understand both the content and style of each and to understand the differences between what the Kremlin officially espouses and what others spread on Twitter.*"

They used datasets of tweets from Russian officials, pro-Russian thought leaders and news sources and pro-Kremlin trolls[260] and analysed keywords and signatures.[261] The key narrative themes were:

> *"Ukraine as a nationalist and fascist state, the United States as Russia's global competitor, and Russia as a place of progress and traditional values, confronting the decaying West……Crimea's historical belonging to Russia, [denial of] Russia's involvement in eastern Ukraine's conflict, blame [of] the United States for interference in other countries' affairs, and praise [for]Russia's military might."*

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[260] Ibid at Appendix C, pp.109-113.

[261] Ibid at pp.109-110:
"The baseline corpus for this analysis was a data set consisting of 21.4 million Russian-language tweets from 227,000 users across Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, and Moldova. For each propaganda source, we performed keyness testing with log likelihood scoring to find the distinctive words in the source text, as compared with the baseline text (Baker et al., 2008; Scott, 2008, p. 110), akin to the first step of the resonance analysis procedure outlined in Appendix A. The list of keywords, together with their keyness scores, is referred to as a signature."

CHAPTER 4: Media, Social Media (MSM), Disinformation and Digital Disruption: "the medium is the message"[262]

"If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: first, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead"-
Carl von Clausewitz

A.   Modern Day Propaganda: Dissemination of Disinformation, "Fake News" and Misinformation

Currently, the West is losing the narrative war on all fronts since the refined and tested social media approaches of ISIS and Russia have far outstripped the West's response-ability.[263] The President of the European Commission [264] Jean-Claude Juncker has recently taken the unusual and controversial step of ordering online platforms to take down disinformation and terrorist content within one hour of obtaining a court order.

Singer and Brooking[265] consider that social media have become "*crucial battlegrounds*". They use the Kavanaugh hearings and the noise on social media as an object lesson on how social media has been "weaponised".[266]

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[262] Ibid at 15. Holger Roonemaa and Inga Springe, "Russia Secretly Ran News Websites In Eastern Europe, BuzzFeedNews, 29 August 2018
https://www.buzzfeednews.com/amphtml/holgerroonemaa/russia-propaganda-baltics-baltnews?__twitter_impression=true

[263] Dymples Leong, "Telegram and IS: A Potential Security Threat?" *RSIS Commentary,* S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSiS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, No. 256 – 25 November 2015. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CO15256.pdf [accessed 28 May,2017]

[264] Samuel Stolton, "Juncker goes to war against disinformation and online terrorist content", *Euroactiv*, 12 September 2018; https://www.euractiv.com/section/cybersecurity/news/uncker-goes-to-war-against-disinformation-and-online-terrorist-content/

[265] PW Singer and Emerson Brooking, "Social Media is Revolutionizing Warfare", *The Atlantic*, 2 October 2018;
https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/10/likewar-internet-new-intelligence-age-flynn/571903/

[266] PW Singer and Emerson Brooking, "How the Kavanaugh information war mirrors real war zones", *Wired,* 2 October 2018; https://www.wired.com/story/how-the-kavanaugh-information-war-mirrors-real-warzones/

i. Propaganda and The Media[267]

The Media (MSM) is the usual conduit for public diplomacy and propaganda. It is also the medium for radicalisation to terrorism, violent extremism and Russian disinformation.

It is fast with high turnover, large numbers and is now highly mechanised and repetitive. It has breadth and depth of coverage, endless flexibility and is mostly cheap. When targeted at disaffected and marginalised individuals it needs to be. All strata of society are affected however as we all read and seek news particularly instant, emotive, dramatised and personalised news. The media targets identities by carrying meaningful messages that can motivate to action. Marketing acumen and expertise drives media vehicles that are often owned by corporates required to turn a profit. The narratives carried must be short with punchy ledes and with infotainment at their heart -video clips, podcasts, striking images garlanded with exciting advertising.

A puzzle is, can what Benson has described as the *"expressive discourses of freedom and the persuasive techniques of propaganda"*[268], co-exist in such a way that power is shared horizontally and that respect remains for both the public's right *to* speech and freedom *from* certain types of speech, the role of the defence of the state via narratives (that manipulate identities[269] and meaning) and the role and moral authority of journalists and their obligation to truth and "real" facts?

The sophisticated and cartoonish binary narrative justifications for Islamist terrorist violence ("good/evil", "right/wrong", "in/out group"), used to recruit both Muslims and non-Muslims online into Jihad, have been wildly successful despite the fall of The Caliphate. Social media is currently assisting the metastasising and regeneration of IS in the MENA.[270]

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[267]Holger Roonemaa and Inga Springe, "Russia Secretly Ran News Websites In Eastern Europe, BuzzFeedNews, 29 August 2018; https://www.buzzfeednews.com/amphtml/holgerroonemaa/russia-propaganda-baltics-baltnews?__twitter_impression=true Accessed 31.08.18.

[268] Krystina Benson, "The Committee on Public Information: A transmedia war propaganda campaign", Journal of Cultural Science Vol 5, No 2(2012): New work in the cultural sciences 3 http://cultural-science.org/journal

[269] David Morley and Kevin Robins, *"Spaces of identity: Global media, electronic landscapes and cultural boundaries",* Routledge, (2002)

[270] Lucas Graves and Federica Cherubini, "The Rise of Fact-checking Sites in Europe", *University of Oxford, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism*, 2016 at p.30.

The stunning bloodless 'coup' of Russia's disinformation campaign to disrupt the 2016 elections and increase conflict in the United States and Europe, the liaison of Cambridge Analytica and Facebook over personal data, and the allegations against Trump and associates of a vast network of collusion with Russian businesspeople (the subject of special prosecutor Robert Mueller's investigation), have resulted in an alleged windfall for Putin -the election of Donald J. Trump.

ii.   Misinformation: "fake news

Misinformation is inaccurate, wrong or misleading information that may be deliberate or accidental. It seems to have a more neutral sense than "disinformation" that has a strong *intent* to mislead or deceive. There is a debate about whether disinformation is a subset of misinformation or vice-versa.[271] Propaganda can utilise both at different times for different purposes. The plasticity of facts in a 'post-truth' era has led to a false equivalency of "opinion" and "expertise" leading us further away from reality.

The rise of fact-checking sites in Europe has been documented by Graves and Cherubini.[272] They concluded that there are regional variations in their ability to disseminate checked facts which are dependent on the particular political context and their relations with the mainstream media.

Psychologist Lewandowsky[273]regards misinformation as a realist or "rational" strategy that is reflective of a societal power struggle and utilised in the service of political ends. He regards the curative disinfectant as an educated public made aware of these strategies which will over time become more alert, aware and sceptical and less bamboozled, and become politically mobilised and activist.

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[271] https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/163857/what-exactly-is-the-difference-between-misinformation-and-disinformation

[272] Lucas Graves and Federica Cherubini, "The Rise of Fact-Checking Sites in Europe", *Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, Oxford University,* 2016; https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/research/files/The%2520Rise%2520of%2520Fact-Checking%2520Sites%2520in%2520Europe.pdf

[273] Stephan Lewandowsky, Ullrich K.H. Ecker and John Cook, "Beyond Misinformation: Understanding and coping with the post-truth era", *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 2017 at p.36; http://www.emc-lab.org/uploads/1/1/3/6/113627673/lewandowsky.2017.jarmac.pdf

CHAPTER 5: Russia, Disinformation, Digital Deception and Disruption

The Russian Propaganda Model[274], Information[275] and Narrative Warfare[276]:

"Many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain…. Reports turn out to be lies, exaggerations, errors, and so on. In short, most intelligence is false and the effect of fear is to multiply lies and inaccuracies." - Carl von Clausewitz[277]

The Russian asymmetric model of Information Warfare is a tried and tested strategy developed by Russian academics Dugin and Panarin.[278] Russia's sense of victimisation by the West lends it justification for its aggressive strategies and tactics. Russian history, particularly the collapse of the Soviet Union, drives it to attempt to regain its former power. Its favoured tactics are well-documented and have been used since Stalin and the Soviet Union's skirmishes with the West:

> "*active measures*" (*aktivnyye meropriyatiya)……. reflexive control, and deception (maskirovka) are antecedent to the post-Cold War Russian disinformation (dezinformatsya)".*[279]

Paul and Matthews of RAND[280] explain that it relies on volume - of conduits (usually social media), of activity and content is full of lies and half-truths. It is fast turnover, chaotic and

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[274] Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, "The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model", Perspective, RAND Corporation;
https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE198/RAND_PE198.pdf

[275] US definition of Information Operations:Cyberspace and Information Operation Study Center*:*
http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/what.htm

[276] Ajit Maan Ph.D, Narrative Warfare, *RealClear Defence*, 27 February 2018;
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/02/27/narrative_warfare_113118.html

[277] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II at II.C.d. (Clausewitz at p117).

[278] Ibid Szwed at pp19-20.

[279] Tyler Quinn, "The Bear's Side of the Story: Russian Political and Information Warfare", *RealClear Defense*, 27 June 2018;
https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2018/06/27/the_bears_side_of_the_story_russian_political_and_information_warfare_113564.html

[280] Ibid Paul and Matthews at pp.2 and 9.

uses learning tools like "spaced repetition". It does not let up and involves many thousands of trolls and rubles. What is unclear however is how to counteract it without descending into tit-for-tat reactive responses that may play into Russian hands.

Renda (2018)[281] in a paper for the European Parliament argues that:

> *"the current policy initiatives adopted by the European Commission are meaningful, but still incomplete. The policy response to online disinformation should ideally rely on: (i) the promotion of responsible behaviour in conveying information to end users; (ii) the enactment of a proactive media policy aimed at promoting pluralism and improving the exposure of diverse content to end users; and (iii) the empowerment of end users through media literacy initiatives, and supports to user behaviour."*

NATO Stratcom Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia[282] has one of the strongest research centres in the world studying Russian Disinformation. The Aim of the Ukraine project in 2014[283] was the frame analysis and reconstruction of Russian propaganda on the internet during the Ukraine–Russia conflict from 1 April to 31 December 2014. In summing up it found that the 'weaponisation' of social media is much more highly developed by Russia in all its manifestations and the West has a lot of catching up to do in the Information War space.[284] The authors cite Nissen's[285] description of contemporary warfare as a contest of persuasion is not only a military one but also "*political, social and economic contests*".

i.   Cold War Propaganda

In the 1980's Moscow embarked on an aggressive 'active measures' disinformation and misinformation campaign as part of the Cold War. A conspiracy theory blaming the US for the Aids epidemic was the focus and active measures specialists used newspapers, radio,

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[281] Andrea Renda, "The legal framework to address "fake news": possible policy actions at the EU level", European Parliament Committee, 15 June 2018; http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/supporting-analyses-search.html?action=6#supporting-analyses

[282] Stratcom CoE, Riga, Latvia; **www.stratcomcoe.org**

[283] Ibid Szwed, *"Framing of the Ukraine–Russia conflict in online and social media Representations of the conflict in discourse in Facebook, Vkontakte and internet portals....."*, NATO Stratcom CoE, Riga, May 2016; https://issuu.com/natostratcomcoe/docs/ukr_social_media_full_report

[284] Ibid Conclusion at 119-123 (at p.123)

[285] Ibid Nissen, The Weaponisation of Social Media: Characteristics of Contemporary Conflicts", Copenhagen Defence College, 2015 at 24 (cited by Szwed at pp. 18-19 at 1.3.2.).

stations, embassies, and other official institutions for implementation and diffusion. [286]Services allied to the Soviets, such as East Germany's Ministry for State Security (MfS), were frequently enlisted as well.

ii.   **Disinformation** *(dezinformatsiya)* **and Deception** *(maskirovka[287])*

"Cunning implies secret purpose. . . .. It is itself a form of deceit": Carl von Clausewitz

Disinformation (dezinformatsiya) was a particularly effective weapon in the armory of Soviet bloc 'active measures'. The term *dezinformatsiya* denoted a variety of techniques and activities to purvey false or misleading information that Soviet bloc active measures specialists sought to leak into the foreign media. From the Western perspective, disinformation was a politically motivated lie, but Soviet bloc propagandists believed their *dezinformatsiya* campaigns merely highlighted greater truths by exposing the real nature of capitalism. *Maaskirovka* ("something masked")[288] is denial and military deception (e.g. fake aid convoys and 'peacekeepers' in Ukraine); "smoke and mirrors"; artificial "fog of war"; theatricality.

iii.   **Disinformation, Misinformation and "Fake News"?[289]**

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[286] https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol53no4/pdf/U-%20Boghardt-AIDS-Made%20in%20the%20USA-17Dec.pdf

[287] John Pollock, "Russian Disinformation Technology", *Technology Review,*13 April 2017;

https://www.technologyreview.com/s/604084/russian-disinformation-technology/

[288] Paul Richard Huard," 'Maskirovka' is Russian Secret War", *War is Boring,* 26 August 2014; https://warisboring.com/maskirovka-is-russian-secret-war/; Accessed 28.08.18.

[289]
1. Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konijn, Beatrice de Graaf & Mariëlle de Goede, Abstract and Summary, "Developing a Social Media Response to Radicalization: the role of counter-narratives in prevention of radicalization and de-radicalization", University of Amsterdam, September 2017.

2. Hans Pung, "The Danger of Truth Decay across Europe", Rand Corporation, March 19. 2018. https://www.rand.org/blog/2018/03/the-danger-of-truth-decay-across-europe.html

3. Alina Polyakova, Spencer P. Boyer, "The Future of Political Warfare: Russia, the West and the Coming Age of Global Digital Competition", The New Geopolitics of Europe and Russia, Brookings, March 2018. https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-future-of-political-warfare-russia-the-west-and-the-coming-age-of-global-digital-competition/

> *"For local spies, we use the enemy's people. For internal spies we use the enemy's officials. For double spies we use the enemy's spies. For dead spies we use agents to spread misinformation to the enemy. For living spies, we use agents to return with reports."*- Sun Tzu[290]

The theoretical foundations of influence operations are usefully set out in the review of relevant psychological research by Bjorn Palmertz:[291]

> *"We are today faced with a need to better understand how various actors combine multiple capabilities in order to influence. They may combine public diplomacy, use of editorial media and social media outlets with military demonstration and economic pressures directed at certain target audiences."*

He advocates for further research to establish a baseline of understanding the dynamic of these audiences so that societies can "*develop capabilities related to influence operations.*"

He concluded that we must continue to refer to the existing large body of psychological research to inform our efforts to combat information warfare and disinformation strategies conducted in civil societies. He sounds a warning about the exploitation of our psychological vulnerabilities by adversaries:

> *"The complexity of reasoning and attitude formation, including a number of inherent vulnerabilities, has been presented. The limitations of our memory, impact of prior experiences and need to make quick connections to conserve energy are reasonable aspects of our mind…..if these aspects are known and implemented by someone who wants to direct our focus, perspectives or even decisions, they can inadvertently lead to unwanted results."[292]*

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4. Kragh, M., & Åsberg, S. (2017). Russia's strategy for influence through public diplomacy and active measures: The Swedish case. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *40*, 773–816. doi: 10.1080/01402390.2016.1273830

   [Taylor & Francis Online], [Web of Science ®], [Google Scholar]

5. NATO Allies Come to Grips with Russia's 'Hybrid Warfare'. (2015, March 18). Agence France Presse. Retrieved from http://news.yahoo.com/nato-allies-come-grips-russias-hybrid-warfare-182821895.html

   [Google Scholar]

[290] Sun Tzu at [13.09]

[291] Bjorn Palmertz , "Theoretical foundations of influence operations: a review of relevant psychological research", *Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies Swedish Defence University*; https://www.msb.se/Upload/Om%20MSB/Forskning/Kunskapsoversikt/Theoretical%20foundations%20of%20influence%20operations.pdf

[292] Ibid at pp.32-33.

On 12 March 2018 the European Commission released the Report of the independent High-Level Expert Group commissioned in January 2018 on Disinformation.[293] It issued a careful definition of "disinformation":

> *"Disinformation as defined in this Report includes all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit. It does not cover issues arising from the creation and dissemination online of illegal content (notably defamation, hate speech, incitement to violence), which are subject to regulatory remedies under EU or national laws, nor other forms of deliberate but not misleading distortions of facts such a satire and parody."*

These can be summarised as the "five pillars"[294] of transparency, media and information literacy about the digital media environment, the enhancement of tools to tackle disinformation by increased engagement with information technology, the safeguarding of diversity and sustainability of European news media "*ecosystem*" and continuing research to "*evaluate the measures taken by different actors and constantly adjust the necessary responses*".

iv. What the West can learn from Russian Strategic Communications, Information Warfare and Influence Operations and Counter Measures

"The overarching strategic objective of the pro-Kremlin disinformation campaign -despite the diversity of messages, channels, tools, levels, ambitions and tactical aims - to weaken the West and strengthen the Kremlin in a classic zero-sum game approach"- EU vs DISINFO [295]

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[293] Dr, Rasmus Kleis Nielsen et al., Report: "A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation", European Commission, March 2018.

"6 Key Points EU High Level Groups New Report on Disinformation", Reuters Institute, European Commission, 12 March 2018; https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-report-high-level-expert-group-fake-news-and-online-disinformation

[294] Ibid

[295]

1. EU vs DISINFO, 2018
   https://euvsdisinfo.eu/uploads/2018/06/EUVSDISINFO-COMMENTARY-PDF-EN_Web-1.pdf

2. Philip N. Howard, Samuel Woolley & Ryan Calo (2018) Algorithms, bots, and political communication in the US 2016 election: The challenge of automated political communication for election law and administration, Journal of Information Technology & Politics, 15:2, 81-93, DOI: 10.1080/19331681.2018.1448735 To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2018.1448735

East European groups such as Czech-based Kremlin Watch and NATO Stratcom CoE, Riga appear to have the best appreciation of strategic communications since the Baltic States are the "near abroad" for Russia and most vulnerable to its aggression.[296]

EU vs DISINFO, the Czech-based Kremlin Watch and NATO Stratcom, Riga, Latvia lead the way in the comprehension that the key ingredient in winning the Information War is *narrative*.

Lucas and Pomerantsev (2017)[297] again researched Russia's hybrid warfare, particularly Central and Eastern European propaganda disseminated by Russia. They concluded that Russian disinformation is designed to "*pave the way for kinetic war*":[298]

They also noted the "*fractured*" media and information spaces with their own "*echo chambers*" and recommended a variety of *"tactical (short-term reactive), strategic (medium-term proactive) and long-term"* utilising Ukraine as a case study.[299]

The United States, arguably, could be seen to be lagging behind (with some exceptional exceptions[300]) with its fixation on new and better cyber warfare strategieswithout a commensurate investment in the intellectual property of disinformation counter narratives.

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[296] Gatis Krumiņš, "SOVIET ECONOMIC GASLIGHTING OF LATVIA AND THE BALTIC STATES", NATO Stratcom CoE, Riga, Latvia, Defence Strategic Communications | Volume 4 | Spring 2018 DOI 10.30966/2018.RIGA.4.2. See Abstract.

[297] Edward Lucas and Peter Pomerantsev, "Winning the Information War Redux: Techniques and Counter-Strategies to Russian Propaganda," *Center for European Policy Analysis' (CEPA) Information Warfare Initiative*, Extended and Revised Edition, April 2017; www.cepa.org

[298] Ibid at p.32: *"……the use of conspiratorial discourse and a strategic use of disinformation to trash the information space, break trust, increase polarization and undermine the public space for democratic debate: This is a war on information rather than an "information war."*

[299] Ibid at p.32.

   1. RAND: Helmus, Todd C., Russian Social Media Influence: Understanding Russian Propaganda in Eastern Europe. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018. https://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT496.html.

   See also: Linda Robinson, Todd C. Helmus, Raphael S. Cohen, Alireza Nader, Andrew Radin, Madeline Magnuson, Katya Migacheva, "Modern Political Warfare Current Practices and Possible Responses", RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA, 5 April 2018; https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1772.html.

   2.Ibid Maan, Narrative Strategies.com

   3. The Weaponised Narrative Initiative

The new National Cyber Strategy could be argued to be a step in the right direction and it is. The used of 'warbots' [301]and other AI strategies may help bulk up efforts. However, the strategy needs to be undertaken with in tandem with narrative development in respect of Russia. That is understandable as their key focus until the last 2 years has been terrorism not Russia. Disclaimer: not having a security clearance I cannot be certain about this but most commentators in this area agree.

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[301]

CHAPTER 6: Terrorist Propaganda

"fear is concerned with physical and courage with moral survival." – Carl von Clausewitz[302]

I cannot build a meta-modal that highlights the similarities between Russian disinformation strategies and terrorist propaganda without providing a backdrop to terrorist activity.

A. **Counter Narratives**

The size, intensity and destructiveness of terrorist attacks has increased exponentially since propaganda arguably reached its former zenith in WWII. Groups like al Qaeda,[303] Daesh/IS and Al Shabaab[304] have taken advantage of modern communication technologies that have taken a quantum leap over the last decade to influence mass media. The Internet, Dark Web, Twitter, Facebook, Linked In, and, latterly, Telegram[305] have provided both State[306] and non-state bad actors with cheap, fast and extraordinarily effective modes to reach the disaffected and religiously and politically-motivated world-wide who are ripe for radicalisation.[307] Groups also utilise the media exploiting its demand for riveting drama and the ineffectualness

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[302] Ibid at p.138 http://www.clausewitz.com/readings/NWC/ClausewitzNotesAY2008.htm

[303] Thomas Joscelyn, "Al Qaeda criticizes Saudi relations with West during President Trump's visit", *FDD's Long War Journal*, May 22, 2017. http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2017/05/al-qaeda-criticizes-saudi-relations-with-west-during-president-trumps-visit.php [accessed 22 May,2017]

Cf President Donald Trump's speech to the Saudis with its strange inverted "unamerican" propaganda: https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2017/05/21/trumps-un-american-speech-in-saudi-arabia/?utm_term=.3ab15d9f33d6 [accessed 22 May,2017]

[304] Robyn Kriel, "TV, Twitter, and Telegram: Al-Shabaab's Attempts to Influence Mass Media", NATO Stratcom CoE, *Defence Strategic Communications*, Vol.4, Spring 2018 at pp.31 and 40; https://www.stratcomcoe.org/robyn-kriel-tv-twitter-and-telegram-al-shabaabs-attempts-influence-mass-media

[305] Dymples Leong, "Telegram and IS: A Potential Security Threat?" *RSIS Commentary,* S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSiS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, No. 256 – 25 November 2015. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/CO15256.pdf [accessed 28 May,2017]

[306] Paul Rosenzweig, Active Measures Working Group, Lawfare Institute in Cooperation with Brookings, Monday, January 16, 2017, 11:35am. https://www.lawfareblog.com/active-measures-working-group [accessed 28 May,2017]

[307] Lorand Bodo M.A. & Anne Speckhard Ph.D., "The Daily Harvester: How ISIS Disseminates Propaganda over the Internet Despite Counter-Measures and How to Fight Back", *The International Center of the Study of Violent Extremism,* April 23, 2017; http://www.icsve.org/brief-reports/the-daily-harvester-how-isis-disseminates-propaganda-over-the-internet-despite-counter-measures-and-how-to-fight-back/
 [accessed 28 May,2017]

of counter-narratives and media management skills of providing information and access to journalists.

Maley (2018)[308] has studied and analysed state communications, message formulation and reception. He concluded that:

> *"effective state communications need to be integrated, multidimensional and persuasive. Often, they are anything but……. effective messaging can be of great psychological value, helping to trigger 'cascades' that can undermine even ruthless enemies."*

He considers that it is preferable for state communications not to outright lie but sees merit in not telling the whole truth in the face of an adversary such as a terrorist. He sees that getting the message (or meaning) across that they will lose is preferable to mounting direct rebuttals to terrorist narratives. Oblique communication is more difficult to tangle with as it is subtler and has a slippery quality that is hard to grasp and attack.

The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Issues Paper of 1 October 2015[309] identified the key elements of the effectiveness of Daesh/ISIS' social media campaigns that rely on emotion to galvanise young people into radicalisation:[310]

> *"Extremist narratives are effective because of their simplicity, their use of scapegoating, and their emotional appeals to fear, anger, shame and honour. Their messages are crafted to exploit identity issues that many young people may be experiencing…..Popular extremist propaganda often includes: high production value, the use of fast-paced editing, music and a charismatic narrator, and a call to action. The professional and sophisticated use of social media by ISIL in particular has been a game-changer."*

The Center for Violent Extremism has identified The Daily Harvester[311] as a key clearing-house for ISIS supporters which provides updates on ISIS activities. The Center concluded that their activities are extraordinarily dangerous because of their global reach, scale, speed

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[308] William Maley , Terrorism, Diplomacy, and State Communications, ICCT Research paper, *ICCT-The Hague*, March 2018. DOI: 10.97812345/2018.1.16 ISSN: 2468-0656; https://icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/ICCT-Maley-Terrorism-Diplomacy-and-State-Communications-March2018-1.pdf

[309] RAN Issue Paper: "Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives Introduction", *RAN Centre of Excellence*, 1 October 2015; https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf [accessed 28 May,2017]

[310] Ibid at p. 2.

[311] Ibid Bodo & Speckhard: http://www.icsve.org/brief-reports/the-daily-harvester-how-isis-disseminates-propaganda-over-the-internet-despite-counter-measures-and-how-to-fight-back/

and scope[312]. Their recommendations[313] include the use of disruptive techniques, counter-narratives and automated software and artificial intelligence to detect terrorist activity:

Counter Narratives[314]

Braddock and Horgan (2015) [315]emphasise the need for constructive and "*proactive*" messaging not "*more negative and reactive orientations*". The authors cite Briggs & Feve (2013)[316] who claim it is necessary to compete with terrorist narratives offering by a more compelling narrative. Having a compelling 'personal/micro-narrative' provides, not only an alternative model of the world for incipient terrorists or insurgents, but speaks to soldiers and those at home alike, tying in with the overall war strategy and rationale (or the 'Master narrative') and connecting with operations on the ground. Both the "how" and the "why" questions need to be answered before an effective response with reliable modelling is found. What some researchers have found already is that context and the type of audience being addressed is key to more effective targeting of counter-messaging. What has been found to be critical is a credible messenger who can speak with empathy to the identities of the specific audience with meaningful content which resonates to it.[317] Human decision-making, creativity, perceptiveness and empathy cannot be replaced by bots or artificial intelligence. Their use is as a means of transmission.

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[312] Ibid Bodo & Speckhard.

[313] Ibid Bodo & Speckhard

[314] Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konijn, Beatrice de Graaf & Mariëlle de Goede, Abstract and Summary, "Developing a Social Media Response to Radicalization: the role of counter-narratives in prevention of radicalization and de-radicalization", University of Amsterdam, September 2017.

[315] Kurt Braddock and John Horgan, "Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counter-Narratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39 (November): 381-404, 2015. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116277; downloaded 3 October 2018; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/43/38; citing Briggs, R. & Feve, S. (2013). Report on Review of programs to counter narratives of violent extremism: What works and what are the implications for government. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. Retrieved from http://www.strategicdialogue.org/ISD_Kanishka_Report.pdf

[316] Ibid at p.5.

[317] Groot, Anouk, "Developing Counter-narratives to Challenge Violent Extremist Narratives as Part of a Comprehensive Counter-Terrorism Effort: Singapore and the United Kingdom", Master Thesis, Faculty Governance and Global Affairs of Leiden University, 11 August 2016 at p.16; https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/53665/2016_Groot_A.M._CSM.pdf?sequence=1

A repeated refrain of researchers is that more studies are needed to develop effective alternative and counter-narrative models. A meta-model of both alternative and counter-narratives may need to be investigated for its efficacy to streamline and expedite such studies. 'Reinventing the wheel' each time is inefficient and global responses are currently being 'back-footed' by terrorists themselves who have developed effective and flexible narrative models that can be tailor-made for individuals. A meta-model is provided as a starting point only (in Appendices).

CHAPTER 7: Counter Narrative Design

A. Narrative Theory

i. Framing and the Meaning of Narrative

"If it is taken for granted that ideology is a function of domination, then it is assumed uncritically that ideology is an essentially negative phenomenon." - Paul Ricoeur[318]

In respect of audience autonomy, Entman[319] referred to the "dominant meaning" being the narrative that will capture a mostly susceptible audience most successfully (Zaller (1992, Kahneman and Tversky (1984, and Iyengar (1991), although he did acknowledge the tendency of some to reframe narratives they receive according to their own lights under certain conditions (Gamson 1992).

The philosopher Ricour (1991)[320] postulated narrative as central to thinking and identity. Narrative (the stories we tell ourselves)[321] shapes who we are and how we see our place in the world:[322]

> *"Narrative psychology is concerned with the structure, content, and function of the stories that we tell each other and ourselves in social interaction. It accepts that we live in a storied world and that we interpret the actions of others and ourselves through the stories we exchange. Through narrative we not only shape the world and ourselves but they are shaped for us through narrative."*

Gay[323] notes that Ricoeur saw in semiotics an unresolvable tension between the *"struggle for ideology and the battle for myth"*. An example offered by Gay is the phrase *"window of vulnerability"*

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[318] Paul Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences,* ed., trans. and intro. by John B. Thompson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) at p. 223.

[319] Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, 43.4: 51-58, 1993; https://www.unc.edu/~fbaum/teaching/articles/J-Communication-1993-Entman.pdf

[320] Ibid at p.97.

[321] Michael Murray, Chapter 6, "Narrative Psychology and Narrative Analysis", *Qualitative Research in Psychology: Expanding Perspectives in Methodology and Design*, Ed. Camic et al., 2003 at p.100; see also Part II, Chapter 8 at p.121; https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/facnatsci/schpsych/staffdocs/michaelmurray/Narratives,%20health%20and%20illness%20-%20Murray%20(2008).pdf

[322] Ibid at pp.98-99; see also p.101;

[323] William C. Gay, "Ricoeur on Metaphor and Ideology." *Darshana International* 32, n1 (January 1992): 59-70.; see Conclusion.

[324]used in US propaganda against the Soviets for a home audience which is a metaphor that plays with perception and ideology. Gay's breakdown of this simple metaphor used in a strategic context is as follows: 1) metaphor; 2) ideological; 3) creative and 4) distortive.[325]

ii. Structure, Analysis and Research

> *"we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change."* – Squire et al.

Murray[326]considers it important to locate narrative themes within an analysis of structure or framework that includes plotline. He describes the linguistic deconstruction of the "*core narrative*" as having the following stages: firstly, the breakdown into clauses followed by abstract and orientation; next is the central "*complicating action*"; finally, an evaluation and afterword. For any material to be included in the core it must have some material relevance to the complicating action. This systematic approach allows an analyst to "*grasp the interpretive orientation*" as well as the main action. Tellingly, it is *both* the issues that are included or left out that are important to the meaning of the narrative. Frye (1957)[327] classified narrative into 4 genres -comedy, romance, tragedy and satire. Plummer (1995) described basic plots as 1) taking a journey; 2) engaging in a contest; 3) enduring suffering; 4) pursuing consummation; and 5) establishing a home.[328]Gee (1991) added rhythmic poetic structure to these narrative tools.[329]

Squire et al. (2013)[330] highlight the challenges of undertaking research on narratives given that not only is the definition still disputed but, by contrast with content and theme analyses and structure, there is little in the way of guidance as to how to analyse the data itself:

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[324] Ibid at Conclusion.

[325] Ibid at Conclusion.

[326] Ibid Murray at p.105.,

[327] Ibid Murray at p.105 citing Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1957.

[328] Ibid Murray at p.105, citing Plummer, K*., "Telling sexual stories: power and change and social worlds*, London: Routledge (1995).

[329] Ibid Murray at p.105, citing Gee, J.P., "A linguistic approach to narrative", *Journal of Narrative and Life History,1*, 1991, at pp15-39.

[330] Corinne Squire, Molly Andrews and Maria Tamboukou, Introduction, "What is Narrative Research?" 2013; http://roar.uel.ac.uk/3469/1/2013_Doing_narrative_research-intro.pdf

"…..unlike other qualitative research perspectives, narrative research offers no overall rules about suitable materials or modes of investigation, or the best level at which to study stories. It does not tell us whether to look for stories in recorded everyday speech, interviews, diaries, photographs, tv programmes, newspaper articles or the patterned activities of people's everyday lives; whether to aim for objectivity or researcher and participant involvement; whether to analyse stories' particularity or generality; or what epistemological or ontological significance to attach to narratives."[331]

iii.   **Thematic analysis**

 Braun & Clarke (2006)[332] argued that thematic analysis in psychology that searches for themes and patterns *"offers an accessible and theoretically-flexible approach to analysing qualitative data."* This form of analysis is just as relevant to the analysis of disinformation narratives and counter narratives.

Content Analysis

Entman[333] emphasised that it is the "*salience*" of the frames or "*clusters of messages*" in a text that is vital to consider when doing a content analysis. Otherwise, a more mechanical analysis of the text, that makes facts equivalent in weight, will fail to identify the dominant slant that the audience receives. He also advocated that the biases inherent in framing, priming and agenda-setting should be identified as "*tools of power*" in a content analysis.

Smith (2000)[334] asserted that content analysis can be of both verbal and written material and can include the study of propaganda and psycholinguistics.[335] He identified the field of communications research as the one in which content analysis is used most citing the research summaries of Berelson (1954), Holsti (1969) and Krippendorff (1980) into propaganda techniques and

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[331] Ibid at pg.1.

[332] Virginia Braun, and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3 (2),* 2006 at pp. 77-101. ISSN 1478-0887 Available from: http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735; The publisher's URL is: http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa; Qualitative Research in Psychology is available online at: http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a795127197~frm=titlelink

[333] Robert M. Entman, "Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power," Journal of Communication 57(1), 2007, at pp.163-173;

[334] Charles P. Smith, Chapter Twelve: "Content Analysis and Narrative Analysis", from Reis, T., and C. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Social and Personality Psychology, Cambridge University Press,* 2000 at p.313; http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/css506/506%20Readings/Smith%202000.pdf

[335] Ibid at pp. 315-316. See Table 12.1 (social) at p.316.

"f. *the intentions and psychological states of persons and groups; and*
g. the attitudes, interests, and values of media audiences".[336]

He categorised the analysis of communications into 3 parts –

a) "*substantive or formal characteristics*";

b) "*inferences about the characteristics and intentions of communicators*"; and

c) *inferences about content and its effect on, or the characteristics of its recipients".*

He describes the step by step process of content analysis (see Appendix 2).[337]

iv.   Style: Magical Realism[338]

D'haen describes the features of the subversive style of magical realism as:

> *"self-reflexiveness, meta-fiction, eclecticism, redundancy, multiplicity, discontinuity, intertextuality, parody, the dissolution of character and narrative instance, the erasure of boundaries and the destabilization of the reader"[339]*

This is of particular interest to narrative-builders potentially, particularly the "*destabilization*" aspect. The deliberate disorientation of trance subjects and those undergoing interrogation, for example, is a fundamental precursor to shifting mindset and altering behaviour. He regards magical realism as a form that speaks to people from the margins – "*ex-centrics*" - and aims to

> "*create an alternative world correcting so-called existing reality, and thus to right the wrongs this reality depends upon".[340]*

For the disaffected or marginalised, who are drawn to terrorism or who are susceptible to disinformation that subverts their commitment to democracy, narratives that address their "*ex-centricity*", that free the mind and are engaging in unfathomable (and therefore uncontrollable)

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[336] Ibid at p.316.

[337] Ibid at p.318.

[338] Theo D'haen, "Magical Realism and Post-Modernism: Decentering Privileged Centers" in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community,* Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Wendy B. Faris, Eds., Duke University Press, Durham and London, pp.191-208, 1995; https://www.academia.edu/1450171/Magical_realism_and_postmodernism_decentering_privileged_centers

[339] Ibid. at p.4.

[340] Ibid. at p.7.

and disorienting ways, may have an appeal that mobilises them into an alternative reality than the one contemplated.

v. Counter Narrative Design/Building:[341]

A repeated refrain of researchers is that more studies are needed to develop effective alternative and counter-narrative models. A meta-model of models of both alternative and counter-narratives[342] may need to be investigated for its efficacy to streamline and expedite such studies. 'Reinventing the wheel' each time is inefficient and global responses are currently being 'back-footed' by Russian troll farms who have developed effective, fast and flexible narrative models that can be tailor-made for individuals. A sample meta-model is provided as a starting point only at Appendix I.

The key arguments utilised in the 2015 RAN Issue Paper[343]are directed at counter-narratives for terrorists. However, they are, arguably, equally applicable for Russian Disinformation counter narratives for the same reasons. Four main points are made: the gap between counter-narratives *by volume;* the lack of resourcing by government to civil society and industry; the need for funding models and public-private partnerships to support civil society and grass-roots innovation with evaluations of outcomes; and finally, the value of think tanks (in this case EU RAN CoE) as hubs for education and coordination.

341

1. Project Narrative: Ohio State University,

2. Narrative Builders, https://www.narrativebuilders.com/building-narratives/

3. RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network), Europe.

4. Kurt Braddock and John Horgan. 2015. "Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counter-Narratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39 (November): 381-404; https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116277; downloaded 3 October 2018; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/43/38

[342] Ibid. Examples: United States: RAND, Narrative Strategies**,** Narrative Builders; Europe: EU Radical Awareness Network, NATO Stratcom CoE.

[343] Authors: Institute for Strategic Dialogue in cooperation with RAN Centre of Excellence, RAN ISSUE PAPER Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives, October 2015 at p.2. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf

E.   'Weaponised' Narratives[344]

The 'weaponisation' of the internet and social media[345] offers both opportunities and significant challenges in the information war. Getting academic access to campaigns at the military/governmental level for study outside of military universities may be difficult depending on level of security clearance. But the West must respond with military-civil partnerships that leverage the knowledge and skill-set of both to these opportunities and challenges. Russia makes use of and exploits them very effectively and Russian trolls are very well-prepared specialists in internet communication; they utilise high quality cheap techniques and engage in a wide spectrum of activities using cyber, social media, bots and trolls and the internet. Facing this hostile and organised Russian propaganda, the West has to respond and consistently increase the resources it currently applies in order to strengthen its own strategic communication potential and effectiveness which is lagging. "Fighting fire with

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1.   The 'Weaponisation' of the Internet and Social Media: The Weaponized Narrative Initiative, Arizona State University; https://weaponizednarrative.asu.edu/

2.   Russian "Troll Factory" created by the Internet Research Agency (IRA) by their american department for the 2016 election: https://slate.com/technology/2018/02/what-we-know-about-the-internet-research-agency-and-how-it-meddled-in-the-2016-election.html

3.   How to Spot a Russian Bot: https://medium.com/dfrlab/botspot-twelve-ways-to-spot-a-bot-aedc7d9c110c

4.   Troll Tracker: https://medium.com/dfrlab/trolltracker-facebook-uncovers-active-influence-operation-74bddfb8dc06

5.   Robert Finklstein, Tutorial: Military Memetics," presented at Social Media for Defense Summit, 2011; https://ia800407.us.archive.org/17/items/MilitaryMemetics/MilitaryMemetics.pdf

        Cited in "Memes that Kill: the Future of Information Warfare", *CBInsights*, 3 May 2018; at Final Thoughts:
"The future of combating information warfare is uncertain but hopeful. The powerful cohort of DARPA, corporations, startups, non-profits, and universities are all making progress in the long-term fight against information warfare."
https://www.cbinsights.com/research/future-of-information-warfare/

6.   Present & Future Influence Ops & AI: Podcast: "The Influence Machine: Hacking Deterrence with Automated IO"; *Speaker: Major C.Telley, Naval Postgraduate School; Date: 15 August 2018;* 1:35/7:59 *180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe* https://nsiteam.com/the-influence-machine-hacking-deterrence-with-automated-io/

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345 P.W. Singer and Emerson Brooking, "Social Media is Revolutionizing Warfare", *The Atlantic*, 2 October 2018;
https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/10/likewar-internet-new-intelligence-age-flynn/571903/

fire" and increasing the usage of mechanised bots is typical counsel of military-based narrative strategists. Perhaps civil society may bring a closer focus to resilience-based narrative strategies which psychologists Lewandowsky et al.[346] have identified as highly effective.

G.   **The Deconstruction of Weaponised and Resilience Narratives:**

The Lewandowsky model[347] applied to both weaponised and resilience-building narratives has the following variables":

1.   Target audience: targeting hostile actors or community-building?

2.   Context: terrorist or subversive?

3.   Structure and style: semiotics[348] and magical realism[349] provide quantum leaps to and from reality and fantasy making these tools flexible for creative narratives that can address an inter-cultural and inter-ethnic space; learnable and non-learnable writing skill-sets;

4.   Themes and memes: weaponised[350] or resilience-building?

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[346] Ibid Lewandowsky et al.

[347] Ibid.

[348] Christine Keating, "Freeing the Feminine Identity: The Egg as Transformative Image in the Magical Realism of Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood", pp.19-26; https://www.academia.edu/13708441/_Freeing_the_Feminine_Identity_The_Egg_as_Transformative_Image_in_the_Magical_Realism_of_Angela_Carter_and_Margaret_Atwood

[349] Theo D'haen, "Magical Realism and Post-Modernism: Decentering Privileged Centers" in *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community,* Zamora, Lois Parkinson and Wendy B. Faris, Eds., Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995 at pp.

[350] Robert Finklstein, Tutorial: Military Memetics," presented at Social Media for Defense Summit, 2011; https://ia800407.us.archive.org/17/items/MilitaryMemetics/MilitaryMemetics.pdf

 Cited in "Memes that Kill: the Future of Information Warfare", *CBInsights*, 3 May 2018; at Final Thoughts: "The future of combating information warfare is uncertain but hopeful. The powerful cohort of DARPA, corporations, startups, non-profits, and universities are all making progress in the long-term fight against information warfare."
https://www.cbinsights.com/research/future-of-information-warfare/

5. Content that stimulates and engages;

6. Affect and tone:

7. Weaponised: sarcasm, aggressive tone and put-downs etc.;

8. Resilience-building: empathy, subversive humour, irony, positive messaging and affirmations;

9. Visual messaging:[351] visual propaganda;

10. Effectiveness: analysis of the effectiveness of sample narratives from various sources.

RAN GAMMA+ Model

Utilising the (Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Media, Action plus Monitoring and Evaluation).[352] Key findings are as follows: See Appendix for expanded form.

1. Do no harm; don't spread propaganda.[353]

2. Backfire effect/ Quantity of messages.[354]

3. Do no harm; don't spread propaganda[355]

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[351] Tom Bryder, CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS FOR A THEORY OF VISUAL POLITICAL PROPAGANDA. Psicología Política, Nº 37, 2008, 101-117; https://www.uv.es/garzon/psicologia%20politica/N37-6.pdf

[352] Ibid RAN Centre of Excellence ISSUE PAPER, RAN guidelines for effective alternative and counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+), 31/12/2017. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf

See also: Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN). (2017). RAN C&N ex post paper meeting 'How to measure the impact of your online counter or alternative narrative campaign'. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/homeaffairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/docs/pages/201702_ran_how_to_measure_impact_of_online_campaign_en.pdf

[353] R. Hornik, L. Jacobsohn, R. Orwin, A. Piesse, & G. Kalton, "Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths", *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(12), 2008, at pp.2229-2236; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC263654 1/

[354] Cook, J., & Lewandowsky, S. (2011). The Debunking Handbook. St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland; : https://www.skepticalscience.com/docs/Debunking_Han dbook.pdf

[355] Chan, M. P. S., Jones, C. R., Hall Jamieson, K., & Albarracín, D. (2017). Debunking: a metaanalysis of the psychological efficacy of messages countering misinformation. Psychological science, 28(11), 1531-1546; http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/09567976 17714579

4. Beliefs and identity[356]

5. Moral reframing[357]

6. Identity and values[358]

7. Narrative persuasion and transport[359]

8. Theory of change[360]

9. Delivering new narratives[361]

10. Target audience, disruption and quantity of alternative narratives and counter-narratives[362]

11. Uncertainty and authoritarian attitudes[363]

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[356] Kaplan, J. T., Gimbel, S. I., & Harris, S. (2016). Neural correlates of maintaining one's political beliefs in the face of counterevidence. Scientific reports, 6, 39589; https://www.nature.com/articles/srep39589

[357] M. Feinberg, & R. Willer, "From gulf to bridge: When do moral arguments facilitate political influence?" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(12), 1665-1681; 'From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?'

[358] S. Atran, A. Gómez, L. López Rodríguez, H. Sheikh, J. Ginges, L. Wilson, H. Waziri, A. Vázquez & R. Davis, "The devoted actor's will to fight and the spiritual dimension of human conflict", *Nature Human Behaviour,* 1(9), 2017, at p. 673; https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0193-3

[359] Melanie C. Green & K. Fitzgerald, "Transportation Theory Applied to Health and Risk Messaging", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication,* 2017; 'Transportation Theory Applied to Health and Risk Messaging'.

[360] Theories of Change, Policy Brief, *The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP),* 2015; : http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/FINAL-Theories-of-Change-inPB.pdf

[361] A. Beutel, S. Weine, A. Saeed, A. Mihajlovic, A. Stone, J. Beahrs & S. Shanfield," Guiding Principles for Countering and Displacing Extremist Narratives", *Journal of Terrorism Research,* 7(3), 2016; 'Guiding Principles for Countering and Displacing Extremist Narratives'

[362] Ibid European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. (2017). Countering Terrorist Narratives. PE 596.829.

[363] Rieger, D., Frischlich, L., & Bente, G. (2017). Propaganda in an insecure, unstructured world: How psychological uncertainty and authoritarian attitudes shape the evaluation of right-wing extremist internet propaganda. Journal for Deradicalization, (10), 203-229; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/88

G. **YARNS (Yeasty Affirmative Resilience Narratives)**[364]

Compelling and engaging narratives with particular structural elements that stimulate readers have been found to be most effective (see Appendix 5).

This approach might suffer from a perception or bias against its "positivity". It might be seen as an ineffective soft option. Further testing is required to assess whether that is in fact the case. However, it should not be too difficult to gain access to samples from the mid-level of civil society and public awareness campaigns. The sampling and analysis techniques undertaken by marketing experts may be invaluable.[365]

Finally, the problems identified by Reed, Ingram and Whittaker,[366] that of scope, ambiguity and variety of audiences, contexts and messages, may be overcome with the formulation of a meta-model[367] that applies to all contexts.

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[364] Acronym YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narratives"); 'yeasty' is the special ingredient X or spark of creativity that makes the story "rise" when populations are being undermined. The goal is to make citizens of threatened democracies 'rise', expand their knowledge, assert their values and become more resilient.

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[365] Ibid Narrative Builders

[366] Ibid Reed, Ingram and Whittaker at p.10.

[367] See Appendix 1.

CHAPTER 8: Summary of Findings

"talent and genius operate outside the rules, and theory conflicts with practice": Carl von Clausewitz

1. '*Non-material' realism* is a new theoretical basis for the maximisation of state interests against aggressors who utilise hybrid warfare;

2. Intellectual property needs investment and development at the same time as cyber capabilities; "IP *and* IT".[368]

3. There is a need for strategic narratives as an effective tool for defence against Information and Narrative Warfare;

4. Their re-prioritisation as an effective tool is urgent;

5. How they can best be crafted for what purpose and contexts is not well understood so further experimental research is needed;

6. Research into counter-narratives for terrorism may be a guide for structuring Russian disinformation counter narratives as their structures are similar in certain ways with key differences;

7. Interdisciplinary research and active collaboration is required;

8. An inter-country action plan is needed to coordinate strategic communications within the bounds of country security concerns.

It might be cynically suggested that narratives are mere propaganda or some other derisive description that serve only to manipulate people towards particular political agendas. If utilised unethically they are certainly capable of being so. What has been lacking until recently is a Code of Ethics for online platforms for countering online disinformation. This has just been rectified by the European Commission with the release of a self-regulated Code of Practice.[369]

There has been wide advocacy in the literature for not only the "cross-pollination" of research but also for increased investment in studies that deconstruct narrative effectiveness, identify what is a complete narrative strategy and connect it with advanced cyber warfare and AI

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[368] Thanks to my dissertation supervisor Dr. Stephen Noakes, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Auckland, for this apt aphorism.

[369] Statement by Commissioner Gabriel on the Code of Practice on Online Disinformation, Brussels, 26 September 2018; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-5914_en.htm

Code of Practice: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/code-practice-disinformation

initiatives to counteract the mechanisation of Information Warfare and Influence Operations by adversaries. It is a natural evolution of theory-building in this relatively new field to examine whether a meta-model would be helpful in synthesising various alternative and counter-narrative models developed in parallel. Two of the 3 elements of Elegant Theory, simplicity and importance (but not predictive accuracy), are addressed.

A.   Theoretical Value

(a)   An examination of the theories of structural, thematic, and content analysis and the semiotics of narrative in relation to narrative-building;

(b)   A proposal for the content analysis of the deconstructed components of both terrorist and Russian disinformation counter narratives has been advanced.

(c)   A structural comparison of counter-narrative models has been made against a model of effective narrative, 1.) to see to what extent the elements of both types of counter narrative match the narrative model ie whether they contain the complete elements or have deficits; and 2.) to see whether a beneficial crossover between terrorist and disinformation counter narratives is possible via the formulation of a narrative meta-model.

(d)   Neither qualitative or quantitative research has been undertaken but the paper contains some preliminary background for such studies including the key steps in a structural and content analysis of various narratives.[370]

(e)   It relies instead on thick description of a range of narrative types and the different contexts in which each narrative type (or some combination) can be utilised.

(f)   A wide spectrum of existing interdisciplinary theories (narrative, psychological, political, military, sociological and methodological) illuminates an exploratory process which moves towards a synthesis of narrative models

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[370] Charles P. Smith, "Content Analysis and Narrative Analysis", from Reis, T., and C. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Social and Personality Psychology, Cambridge University Press,* 2000; http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/css506/506%20Readings/Smith%202000.pdf

See Appendix 4.

that can lead to a more effective and faster response-ability to hostile adversaries without the disruption to societies that has recently witnessed.

(e)   The concept of '*non-material realism*'[371] is offered as an attempt to formulate an extension of the (arguably) out-dated realist political theory as a possible basis for the political theoretical umbrella for counter narrative research.

(f)   The Narrative Meta-Model (NMM)[372] advanced by the author serves as a conceptual unifier of these models (see Appendices 2-6) by extrapolating or "filtering" their common structural elements. The meta-model will enable the future compliance of other related relevant models. This is important for several reasons:

    i.   speed, parsimony and ease of use: no need to 'reinvent the wheel';

    ii.   streamlining and synthesising disparate but related research models developed in parallel and often without cross-reference to the other;

    iii.   a type of 'clearinghouse' that brings together and simplifies different branches of research and discipline so that learning can be expedited.

B.   Practical Value: Present and Future Influence Operations

i.   Applicability:

It has not been until this year that there has been a scholarly research finding (Communications scholar Jamieson 2018)[373] that Russia "*probably*" had an impact on the outcome. Her findings beg the questions, to what extent should media outlets be accountable to society by regulation[374]? Do they have a major role and responsibility to post stories that

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[371] Copyright author

[372] Copyright author.

[373] Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Cyberwar: How Russian Hackers and Trolls Helped Elect a President - What We Don't, Can't, and Do Know*, 2018.

[374] An example: Code of Practice: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/code-practice-disinformation;

warn of foreign influences? If Western democracies cannot afford to allow the weaponisation of media to progress unchallenged and unchecked, these questions require further study. It is timely and necessary to re-examine and clarify the role of the media in a democracy, to what extent has it been weakened, to what extent has its relentless search for profit weakened democracy, what part should media be required to play to strengthen it and how will that be achieved.

ii. **Future Influence Operations & AI:**[375]

In future innovative military personnel may be concentrating on and counting on automation to deal with the flood of disinformation. The emphasis of this paper however is on Intellectual Property *and* Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence. Neither IT or AI are autonomous (yet) and require a mindset to direct them that fully encompasses empathy, compassion, and comprehension of values, mission and the function of properly-targeted types of narrative.

C. **RAND Study (2017)**

A recent US-commissioned RAND study[376] has examined political warfare by both state and non-state adversaries today. The authors' recommendation was there be changes in approach to all types of warfare to address threats short of conventional warfare ie asymmetric hybrid strategies.

Statement by Commissioner Gabriel on the Code of Practice on Online Disinformation, Brussels, 26 September 2018; http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-5914_en.htm

[375] Podcast: "The Influence Machine: Hacking Deterrence with Automated IO"; *Speaker: Major C.Telley, Naval Postgraduate School; Date: 15 August 2018;* 1:35/7:59 *180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe180815-Telley-SMA-General-Website-Safe* https://nsiteam.com/the-influence-machine-hacking-deterrence-with-automated-io/

[376] RAND Arroyo Center, "Modern Political Warfare: Current Practices and Possible Responses"
The study was produced as the deliverable for an Army project titled "Theory and History of Political Warfare (POLWAR)

The key arguments utilised in the 2015 RAN Issue Paper[377]are directed at counter-narratives for terrorists. However, they are, arguably, applicable to Russian Disinformation counter narratives for similar reasons. Audiences may differ in many respects but the vulnerability, alienation and sense of grievance for different reasons of both make them ripe targets for those who wish to demoralise them further and recruit into seductive narratives that reflect their anger, despair and frustration.

D.   The Tension between Military and Political Leaders

> *"A commander-in-chief need not be a learned historian nor a pundit, but he must be familiar with the higher affairs of state and its innate policies; he must know current issues, questions under consideration, the leading personalities, and be able to form sound judgments.."* - Carl von Clausewitz[378]

Information Warfare (IW) and Information Operations (IO) strategies are not new. In 1993 a comprehensive strategy was released by the US Joint Chiefs of staff in a Memorandum of Policy:[379]

> "*C2W was defined as containing these five pillars: Destruction • Deception 15 • Psychological Operations • Operations Security • Electronic Warfare*".

US military theorists have been heralding the shift in the nature of both Information Warfare (IW) and Information Operations (IO)[380] since IO commenced in 1996:[381]

> *"IO is formally defined as "those actions taken to affect an adversary's information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems."*

The findings and recommendations of the RAND study are increasingly of interest to the U.S. military, the U.S. State Department, those in the executive and legislative branches charged with national security policy responsibilities, allies and others tasking with improving US

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[377] Institute for Strategic Dialogue in cooperation with RAN Centre of Excellence, RAN ISSUE PAPER Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives, October 2015 at p.2. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf

[378] Ibid NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS' GUIDE, AY 2008: CLAUSEWITZ I & II at II.C.d.

[379] Ibid at pp14 and 15.

[380] "*Information Operations: the Hard Reality of Soft Power*", Foreword Dan Kuehl, Information Resources Management College, National Defense University; at p.11: http://www.iwar.org.uk/iwar/resources/jiopc/io-textbook.pdf

[381] Ibid at pp.12-13 (at p. 11)

national security policy. The recent National Security Strategy (2017) and National Cyber Defence Strategy (2018) is opening an aperture for innovative counter-measures. However, US national security policy is in flux and somewhat unpredictable due to the inconsistencies of the current President. There is a significant need for much greater investment in "soft power" strategies by Governments to match let alone exceed the resources applied by Russia. The obtaining of State resources for large-scale studies, training and deployment ('on the ground' and across social media) of those with the necessary expertise to "weaponise" narrative and build narrative resilience in the information battlefield and at home, as well as of those tasked with deradicalization and reintegration, is an ongoing challenge. It is necessary to demonstrate the effectiveness of such "soft" strategies[382] in order to persuade those with the power to (1) comprehensively apply significantly more resources to the narrative and counter-narrative tasks for a "complete narrative strategy" in Influence Operations, and 2, conduct further outcome studies.[383]

Maley[384] analysed state communications in the context of terrorism and found that opinion leaders could create an "*information cascade*" that could lead to the internal collapse of a regime. Utilising both Churchill and Hitler as examples, he considers that such a cascade could be triggered by credible strategic communications and counter narratives targeted at adversaries. This insight could usefully inform both terrorism and disinformation counter narratives. The use of mechanised bots is one way to trigger such a cascade, and the Russians have already shown the way.

E.   Limitations

i.   Lack of security clearance

I do not have one so no access to secret programmes or intelligence has been available. Therefore, I don't know what I don't know. At the very least I have pulled together the state of the art as far as open source and published research goes. It may be in future that civilians can obtain temporary short-term clearance or the fast-tracking of the process may accelerate.

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[382] Edwin L. Armistead et al., Joint Command, Control, and Information Warfare School (JCIWS) instructors at the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC);

[383] Ibid. Bjorn Palmertz

[384] Ibid Maley at p.12.

CHAPTER 9: Conclusion:

"War is a fascinating trinity—composed of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; the play of chance and probability, within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to pure reason." - Carl von Clausewitz

Coming back to my 8 hypotheses,[385] I conclude that a renewed emphasis on intellectual property, as part of Information and Narrative Warfare and Influence Operations and any National Security, Cyber or Intelligence Strategy, is critical to their success. Realist political theory with its typical, with respect somewhat outdated, emphasis on external material forces has, arguably, overlooked the power of narrative meaning and the cognitive factors that drive populations which are the recipients after all of warfare strategies. It is their cooperation that is required to topple or trigger change within authoritarian regimes. An overemphasis on military strategy, hardware, sabre-rattling and Clausewitzian strategic thinking has marginalised narrative and Information Warfare generally. That is turning around with the new emphasis in the US National Defense Strategy 2018 and the National Intelligence Strategy 2019[386] on non-material aspects of defence.

The scope of this paper is limited to the identification of narrative models that can be synthesised into a meta-model that can be used as a guide to expedite narrative design. How narratives can best be crafted, and for what purpose and contexts, is still not well understood so further experimental research is needed. I have set out some areas for further exploration. The utilisation of artificial intelligence and cyber warfare capabilities must be harnessed to a

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[385] Ibid at p. 11, 37 and 89:

'Non-material' realism is a novel theoretical basis for the maximisation of state influence against aggressors who utilise hybrid warfare; Intellectual property needs investment and development at the same time as cyber capabilities; "IP and IT". There is a need for strategic narratives as an effective tool for defence against Information and Narrative Warfare; Their re-prioritisation as an effective tool is urgent; How they can best be crafted for what purpose and contexts is not well understood so further experimental research is needed; Research into counter-narratives for terrorism may be a guide for structuring Russian disinformation counter narratives as their structures are similar in certain ways with key differences; Interdisciplinary research and active collaboration is required; An inter-country action plan is needed to coordinate strategic communications within the bounds of country security concerns.

[386] Lawfare, Document: National Intelligence Strategy 2019
https://www.lawfareblog.com/document-2019-national-intelligence-strategy-0

coherent master narrative that is built *across country boundaries* if the "West" is to stay more than an historical fiction. An inter-country action plan or "hub" is needed to coordinate strategic communications within the bounds of country security concerns.

The scope of this paper is limited to the identification of narrative models that can be synthesised into a meta-model that can be used as a guide to expedite narrative design.

A comprehensive global platform or hub is needed to coordinate a collaborative effort to study and resolve the pressing issue of what is the most effective narrative response to Russia's active measures. More qualitative and quantitative research needs to examine outcomes and claims of effectiveness. There are difficulties given the obfuscation and deception strategies involved and the multiplicity of data. However, although a mammoth task, it must be undertaken sooner than later. The era of "post-truth" is weakening the knowledge base and institutional knowledge of societies and creating a hall of mirrors-type confusion in populations. That has increased their susceptibility to the propaganda of hostile adversaries. The risk to fair elections and democracy is very high and to combat it is draining of state resources.

The challenges appear to lie in comprehending what drives people to be susceptible to anti-democratic propaganda, what narratives appeal and mobilise behaviour in certain directions and what do not. Populations under threat still do not have available to them easily accessible material on which to judge truth from fake news, a fact from a lie, and a half-truth from a genuine account. There needs to be an increased focus on mass education and awareness campaigns at both civil society and governmental level if disinformation is to be countered effectively.

The building of community resilience to election interference and the undermining of faith in democratic institutions, may be the most sustainable and effective long-term strategy to counter Russian Influence Operations. In addition, weaponised approaches should target Russia's vulnerable "*centre of gravity*"[387] (to use a Clausewitzian term) - its civil society, repressed population, elites and key oligarchs with different messaging.

 'Weaponised' defensive entanglement in oppositional narratives may or may not neutralise overt and covert aggressors as much as YARNS or positive alternative narratives. Narratives with cultural sensitivity that assert and affirm democratic values and norms in engaging ways

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[387] Ibid Clausewitz at I.3.7.f.

could be combined with strategic and influence strategies that reach the Russian people. Both may be necessary however. It is likely that Clausewitz would approve given that his ultimate maxim is that war is a volatile mixture of "*violent emotion, chance and rational calculation*".[388]

A preparedness to utilise more aggressive and innovative strategies and personnel combined with new cyber technologies may be the most effective approach to counter unpredictable non-traditional warfare strategies. Passionate and committed "top-down/bottom up" whole-of-society resilience approaches, backed by coordinated and unequivocal messaging from world leaders, are more likely to be effective in immunising populations from attacks on their identities and values, and the undermining of their faith in their own societies.

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[388] Ibid.

APPENDIX 1

NARRATIVE META-MODEL

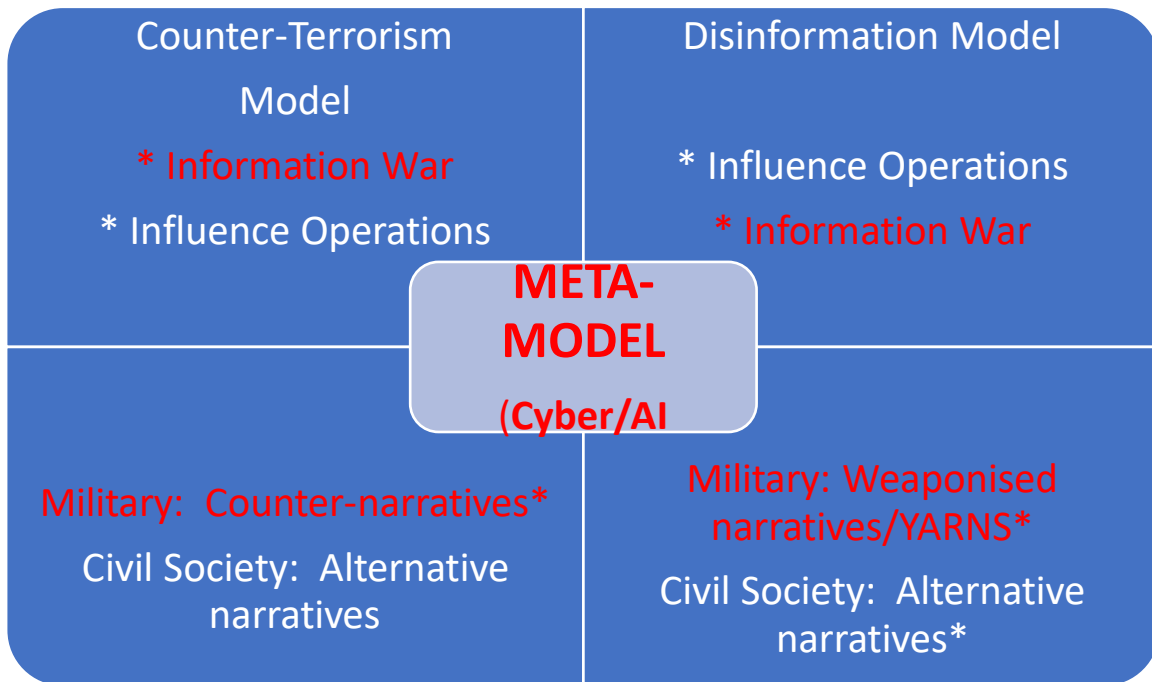**Information Warfare (IW) and Influence Operations (IO)**

Hard Power   **Soft Power**

TERRORIST NARRATIVES   RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA

GOVERNMENT-LEVEL STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Master Narrative

Counter-Terrorism Model	Disinformation Model
* Information War * Influence Operations	* Influence Operations * Information War
META-MODEL (Cyber/AI	
Military: Counter-narratives* Civil Society: Alternative narratives	Military: Weaponised narratives/YARNS* Civil Society: Alternative narratives*

Community Resilience

*Counter-narratives=designed by military society   *Alternative Narratives=civil

*YARNS=PSYOP

ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE META-MODEL:[389]

Effective YARNS[390] and Counter-Narratives[391]

A hybrid amalgam of models[392]drawn from the fields of psychology, narrative theory, social science, political science research into terrorism alternative and counter-narratives, communications theory, and persuasion/propaganda models of disinformation counter-messaging.

SMART Goals and Objectives: disrupt, compete or confront adversary; narratives generating alternative and counter-narrative effects in alignment with the master narrative.

YARNS (or alternative narratives) = compete obliquely; **Counter-narratives** = confront directly.

- **Audience, message, medium, context, messenger, messengers, media**
- **Overall communication plan or meta-narrative:** reflects major themes of messenger identity;
- **Audience:** identify audience target; know the intentions and psychological states of persons and groups and the attitudes, interests, and values of media audiences; know identities, issues, socio-cultural status, roles, political and religious beliefs, emotions, preferences; attitudes and behaviour; know local political myths[393].

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[389] Author asserts tm and copyright over Matrix Meta-Model concept: a hybrid extraction from and amalgam of models and effective narrative elements developed by the following sources:

[390] Author asserts tm and copyright

[391] For an excellent detailed analysis of the structure and content of counter-narratives see Jan-Jaap van Eerten, Bertjan Doosje, Elly Konijn, Beatrice de Graaf & Mariëlle de Goede, *University of Amsterdam*, September 2017, at 4.3.1 at pp.48-73; https://www.wodc.nl/binaries/2607_Volledige_Tekst_tcm28-286136.pdf For dissemination see 4.4.3 at p.74; Conclusion at 115:
"Another potential future direction might be to examine what happens to narratives and counter-narratives in a virtual world running computer simulations, for example in terms of social network analyses. These simulations might inform us how narratives and counter-narratives might evolve in the long run. However, critically, in order to arrive at reliable estimates of such processes over time in computer simulations, we need to have a clear understanding of the most important factors at play in this context. At the moment, unfortunately, this understanding is far from complete. As such, such computer simulations may be fruitfully explored in a (near) future when this understanding is more advanced."

[392] Grateful acknowledgement for the model structures and narrative elements incorporated into the 'Matrix Meta-Model' to the following theorists and researchers cited elsewhere within this paper - Ritzmann and Meines (RAN Gamma+, Guidelines); RAN PVE model, Paul and Matthews (RAND), European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, ISD, Project Narrative, Murray, Plummer, Narrative Builders, Hornik et al., Lewandowsky et al., Chan et al., Green and Fitzgerald, Kaplan et al., Feinberg and Willer, Atran et al., Braddock and Horgan, Charles L. Smith, Oliver Schmitt.

[393] Olivier Schmitt, "When are strategic narratives effective? The shaping of political discourse through the interaction between political myths and strategic narratives", Center for War Studies, University of Southern

- **Create alternate, legitimate narratives:** ethical; exploit multiple identity issues (national, political, personal, social); single master narrative; meaning not truth; call to action;
- **Principles of online navigation:** "transparency of online news, media and information literacy; empower users and journalists to foster a positive engagement with fast-evolving information technologies; safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the news media ecosystem; promote continued research on the impact of disinformation"; increase flow of persuasive information;
- **Core narrative structure and style:** formal characteristics; inferences about the characteristics and intentions of communicators; inferences about content and its effect on, or the characteristics of its recipients;
- **Content analysis:** frame analysis, structures, forms and schemes that influence individuals' interpretations of issues, facts, groups and ideas and 'determine' the choices people make; enables prediction of future actions; reconstruction of a country's strategic and operational objectives;
- **Content creation:** stimulating, engaging, relevant, credible messaging; unifying framework of explanations; clear, realistic and compelling mission purpose; themes and memes; target cultural norms and values as well as interests; have legitimacy; match cultural and public norms and values seen by relevant publics as justified; consistent presentation; visual messaging; learnable and non-learnable writing skill-sets;
- **Linguistic means:** metaphors, idioms and labels to amplify images;
- **Affect and tone:** simplicity, emotionally-satisfying appeal, authenticity; optimism; empathy, subversive humour, irony, positive messaging and affirmations;
- **Narrative hierarchy:** why, how, offer, proof;
- **Rules of Intention:** protect the targeted; motivate audience to take action; do not spread propaganda
- **Message alignment**
- **Strength**
- **Hybrid narratives (cross-cultural or internarrative[394]);**
- **Digital:** amplification; production budgets and schedules;
- **Manner of transmission:** chain, high quantity; professional and sophisticated use of social media; bots; AI;
- **Monitoring and evaluation components:** reliability and validity assessment; evaluate the measures taken by different actors and constantly adjust the necessary responses; qualitative and quantitative analysis;

[394] Ibid Maan at p.

Flow Chart: Narrative Meta-Model of 2 Divergent Narrative Contexts in Influence Operations[395]

S.M.A.R.T. NARRATIVE GOAL

Terrorism/PVE   **Disinformation**

Master Narrative: meaning

Compete/Confront   **Disrupt/Compete**

Target Audience: context, roles, status, emotions, beliefs

Disaffected_____ ***** _____**Democracies**

Audience Identities   **Audience Identities**

Radicalised/PVE_____ ***** _____**Elites/Non-Elites**

Narrative Type   **Narrative Type**

Counter-Narrative/ Resilience_____ ***** _____**YARN/Counter-narrative**

- structure, means, content content

        - structure, means,

Medium   **Medium**

Social Media_____ ***** _____**MSM**

Information Technologies Technologies

Information

Messenger Type   **Messenger Type**

Monitoring   **Monitoring**

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[395] Author asserts tm and copyright

Evaluation Method   **Evaluation**
Method

Research Studies _____**qualitative/quantitative**_____ **Research Studies**

APPENDIX 2

Model of Narrative Requirements:[396]

A. Core Narrative:

- **breakdown into clauses**
- **abstract**
- **orientation**
- **central** *"complicating action"*
- **evaluation**
- **afterword**
- *"grasp the interpretive orientation"*
- **issues that are included or left out (important to the meaning of the narrative)**
- **4 genres: comedy, romance, tragedy and satire**
- **basic plots:**

  1.taking a journey; 2. engaging in a contest; 3. enduring suffering; 4. pursuing

  consummation; and 5. establishing a home.[397]
- **rhythmic poetic structure[398]**

B. Hybrid Narratives Across Cultures[399]:

C. Narrative Builders[400]

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[396] Project Narrative, Ohio State University; https://projectnarrative.osu.edu/about/what-is-narrative-theory

[397] Ibid Murray at p.105, citing Plummer, K*., "Telling sexual stories: power and change and social worlds*, London: Routledge (1995).

[398] Ibid Murray at p.105, citing Gee, J.P., "A linguistic approach to narrative", *Journal of Narrative and Life History,1*, 1991, at pp15-39.

[399] https://english.appstate.edu/research/writing-between-cultures-study-hybrid-narratives-ethnic-literature-united-states

[400] Narrative Builders, "How Narrative Warfare is a lot like digital marketing gone rogue, National Academy of Science Workshop, February 2018;
Understanding Narratives for National Security Purposes: A Workshop, January 24, 2018**,** Decadal Survey of Social and Behavioral Sciences for Applications to National Security;

"a great narrative helps people connect to what you are saying emotionally and intellectually"

Common Elements of Narrative Warfare and Digital Marketing

1. Narrative Construction: stories differ from narratives; a structured master narrative is more efficient than many stories

2. Digital Amplification:

D. Narratives and Power- the 5 criteria

"A Narrative is an interconnected set of beliefs that influence how we interpret the meaning of things"[401]

- **Presentation**

- **Clarity**

- **Resonance**

- **Shareability**

- **Organisation**

E. The Narrative Hierarchy

1. Why: What is the big vision? Why does it matter?

2. How: philosophy, methodology or point of view;

3. Offer: What are you selling? What are you motivating them to do?

4. Proof: trust, credibility and corroboration

F. Marketing Experience Can Inform Methods

Marketers: use narratives

Terrorists and Russian trolls: use toxic narratives (usually lies)

Terrorists and Russian trolls: *"have the intention of sowing discord and amplifying tensions in society"*

G. Mobilising Narrative: *"GRU Information Ops look just like digital marketing"*

- **Targeting: similar to "prospecting" for clients; Russian propagandists seek people with low cognition and low information [402]who do not question**

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[401] https://www.narrativebuilders.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Slide2-300x169.jpg

[402] Paul-Olivier Dehaye, "The Micro-targeting of low information of voters", *Medium.com Personal-io,* 30 December 2016; https://medium.com/personaldata-io/microtargeting-of-low-information-voters-6eb2520cd473

information; political and media figures; those on the extremes with divisive views;

- **Align message: message aligning creates rapport and involves pacing people's values, interests, vocabulary and imagery;**
- **Strengthen: ROI of narrative strength assessment -see the 5 criteria;**
- **Amplify: hiring trolls with fake identities and bot accounts; Hamilton 68 Dashboard[403] which tracks bot activity on Twitter;**
- **Chain:**

H. Counter Measures

1. Identify and block toxic campaigns;

2. Inoculate population;

3. Create alternate, legitimate narratives.

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[403] Ibid the Alliance for Securing Democracy, under The Marshall Fund.
http://dashboard.securingdemocracy.org/

APPENDIX 3

A. Model for Terrorism Counter Narratives: RAN GAMMMA+[404]

Comprises the following key elements: Goal, Audience, Message, Messenger, Media, Action plus Monitoring and Evaluation.

Annex 2 provides a tangible overview of the key findings for effective alternative and counter-narratives from recent relevant research.

RAN GAMMMA+ Essentials: Effective Communication Campaigns:

- **Goals that are clear, realistic and measurable;**

- **Promoted messages are relevant and the target audience considers the messengers credible;**

- **Campaign works with the target audience's preferred medium or online platforms and is also present when the audience communicates offline;**

- **Narrative campaigns in the form of monologues are unlikely to meet the needs of an audience that wants to talk or is upset or outraged about a real or perceived injustice;**

- **Campaigns should offer a call to action for those wishing to become involved in the issue at hand, which will facilitate monitoring and evaluation;**

- **Campaigns aiming to change minds and behaviours offer opportunity for sustained dialogue (both online and offline) with those in their audience who wish to talk;**

- **Campaigns which ensure they have monitoring and evaluation components in place from the start can then adjust ongoing activities if needed, and once completed, can learn whether they had the desired impact;**

- **Campaigns that produce a constant stream of content for their target audience to interact with increase their chances of having an impact. Authenticity and quantity are more relevant than technical quality;**

- **Alternative narratives promote positive alternative perspectives, courses of action and role models, and foster critical thinking.**

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[404] Alexander Ritzmann and Marije Meines, Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN CoE), Chapter 9, footnote 295.

- **Counter-narratives**, which aim at debunking extremist propaganda, should only be directed at a **well-researched and understood audience** which is **already engaged** with extremist content.

B. RAN Guidelines for Effective Alternative and Counter-narrative campaigns (GAMMMA+), RAN Centre of Excellence, Issue Paper, 31/12/2017[405]

- **Do no harm; don't spread propaganda.[406]; Backfire effect/ Quantity of messages;[407]**

  Do no harm; don't spread propaganda[408]

- **Beliefs and identity;[409] Moral reframing;[410] Identity and values[411]**

- **Narrative persuasion and transport[412]**

[405] Ibid Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-c-and-n/docs/ran_cn_guidelines_effective_alternative_counter_narrative_campaigns_31_12_2017_en.pdf

[406] R. Hornik, L. Jacobsohn, R. Orwin, A. Piesse, & G. Kalton, "Effects of the national youth anti-drug media campaign on youths", *American Journal of Public Health*, 98(12), 2008, at pp.2229-2236; https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC263654 1/

[407] Cook, J., & Lewandowsky, S. (2011). The Debunking Handbook. St. Lucia, Australia: University of Queensland; : https://www.skepticalscience.com/docs/Debunking_Han dbook.pdf

[408] Chan, M. P. S., Jones, C. R., Hall Jamieson, K., & Albarracín, D. (2017). Debunking: a metaanalysis of the psychological efficacy of messages countering misinformation. Psychological science, 28(11), 1531-1546; http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/09567976 17714579

[409] Kaplan, J. T., Gimbel, S. I., & Harris, S. (2016). Neural correlates of maintaining one's political beliefs in the face of counterevidence. Scientific reports, 6, 39589; https://www.nature.com/articles/srep39589

[410] M. Feinberg, & R. Willer, "From gulf to bridge: When do moral arguments facilitate political influence?" *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(12), 1665-1681; 'From Gulf to Bridge: When Do Moral Arguments Facilitate Political Influence?'

[411] S. Atran, A. Gómez, L. López Rodríguez, H. Sheikh, J. Ginges, L. Wilson, H. Waziri, A. Vázquez & R. Davis, "The devoted actor's will to fight and the spiritual dimension of human conflict", *Nature Human Behaviour,* 1(9), 2017, at p. 673; https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0193-3

[412] Melanie C. Green & K. Fitzgerald, "Transportation Theory Applied to Health and Risk Messaging", *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication,* 2017; 'Transportation Theory Applied to Health and Risk Messaging'.

- **Theory of change**[413]

- **Delivering new narratives**[414]

- **Target audience, disruption and quantity of alternative narratives and counter-narratives**[415]

- **Uncertainty and authoritarian attitudes**[416]

C. The Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Issues Paper of 1 October 2010:[417]

- **identified the key elements of the effectiveness of Daesh/Is' social media campaigns that rely on emotion to galvanise young people into radicalisation**:[418]

  "*The following questions are addressed:* •*How do counter-narratives and alternative narratives1 play a role in prevention of radicalisation?* •*What do successful counter-narrative and alternative narrative campaigns look like?* •*What are the obstacles to designing and delivering effective campaigns from an industry, government and practitioner perspective and how can they be overcome?* •*How can and should success be measured?* •*What can stakeholders offer to boost counter-narrative and alternative narrative campaigns?*

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[413] Theories of Change, Policy Brief, *The Alliance for Peacebuilding (AfP),* 2015; : http://www.allianceforpeacebuilding.org/site/wpcontent/uploads/2015/03/FINAL-Theories-of-Change-inPB.pdf

[414] A. Beutel, S. Weine, A. Saeed, A. Mihajlovic, A. Stone, J. Beahrs & S. Shanfield," Guiding Principles for Countering and Displacing Extremist Narratives", *Journal of Terrorism Research,* 7(3), 2016; 'Guiding Principles for Countering and Displacing Extremist Narratives'

[415] Ibid European Parliament Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs. (2017). Countering Terrorist Narratives. PE 596.829.

[416] Rieger, D., Frischlich, L., & Bente, G. (2017). Propaganda in an insecure, unstructured world: How psychological uncertainty and authoritarian attitudes shape the evaluation of right-wing extremist internet propaganda. Journal for Deradicalization, (10), 203-229; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/88

[417] RAN Issue Paper* "Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives Introduction", *RAN Centre of Excellence*, 1 October 2015.t https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/issue_paper_cn_oct2015_en.pdf [accessed 28 May,2017]

*This Issue Paper was provided in support of the European Commission's preparatory EU IT Forum, 'Countering Violent Extremism: Online Communications', held on 27 October 2015. The following questions are addressed: •How do counter-narratives and alternative narratives1 play a role in prevention of radicalisation? •What do successful counter-narrative and alternative narrative campaigns look like? •What are the obstacles to designing and delivering effective campaigns from an industry, government and practitioner perspective and how can they be overcome? •How can and should success be measured? •What can stakeholders offer to boost counter-narrative and alternative narrative campaigns?

[418] RAN Issue Paper "Counter Narratives and Alternative Narratives Introduction" at p. 2.

- **Exposure to extremist propaganda – both online and offline – is critical; popular extremist propaganda often includes: high production value, the use of fast-paced editing, music and a charismatic narrator, and a call to action. The professional and sophisticated use of social media by ISIL in particular has been a game-changer."**

- **Extremist narratives are effective because of their simplicity, their use of scapegoating, and their emotional appeals to fear, anger, shame and honour;**

- **Messages are crafted to exploit identity issues that many young people may be experiencing;**

- **Manner of transmission is equally vital.**

APPENDIX 4

Model of Counter-Narrative Structure[419]

"Know the intentions and psychological states of persons and groups and the attitudes, interests, and values of media audiences" - Charles P. Smith [420]

A.   Analysis of Communications into 3 parts:

a) "substantive or formal characteristics";

b) "inferences about the characteristics and intentions of communicators";

c) inferences about content and its effect on, or the characteristics of its recipients".

B.   Steps in Content Analytic Research

- Deciding on type of material to be analysed (archival, naturally- occurring, elicited;

- Sampling (material and sources): non-probability sample may be used if research is exploratory or involves theory development;

- Sampling conventions for communications research: see Berelson (1954): publications or other sources, issues or dates, content within issues; take into account geographical location, frequency of publication, time of publication (morning or evening), target audience and size of circulation. See Holsti (1969 and Krippendorff (1980) for greater detail.

- Cross-cultural research: see Kalin, Davis and McClelland (1966).

- Projective methods pose complex issues.

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[419] Charles P. Smith, Chapter Twelve: "Content Analysis and Narrative Analysis", from Reis, T., and C. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of Research Methods in Social and Personality Psychology, Cambridge University Press,* 2000, at pp.318-327; http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/css506/506%20Readings/Smith%202000.pdf

[420] Ibid Charles P. Smith at p.316.

- **Sample size: for qualitative research consider reliability and precision (see Patton, 1990).**

- **Content analysis (coding systems): computerised quantification of qualitative material; develop manual**

    o **Information to be obtained;**
    o **Definition of units of material**
    o **Categories or dimensions of classification**
    o **Rules for applying system**
    o **Deciding on or devising coding systems**
    o **See Table 12.2 for examples of coding systems for social science research.**

- **Intercoder agreement: reliability of coder as measuring instrument and frequency and scores derived for quantitative research.**

- **Coder training: manual, ample practice materials and ability to consult experienced scorer about coding decisions.**

- **Computer-assisted coding and statistical analysis: large amounts of material, large numbers of variables, contingencies, patterns, analysis of coding categories and context.**

- **Reliability and validity assessment.**

C. Braddock and Horgan: "Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counter Narratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism" (2015)[421]

Narrative =

- "*a simple unifying, easily-expressed story or explanation that organises people's experience and provides a framework for understanding events*" **(Kilcullen, as cited by Schmid, 2014, p. 3);**

- **deeply rooted in culture;**

- **can in turn encourage specific types of personal action (Corman, 2011);**

- **powerful because they hold the pieces of the story and "ring true" for members of the target audience (Goodall, 2010);**

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[421] Kurt Braddock and John Horgan, "Towards a Guide for Constructing and Disseminating Counter-Narratives to Reduce Support for Terrorism." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 39 (November): 381-404, 2015. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1057610X.2015.1116277; downloaded 3 October 2018; http://journals.sfu.ca/jd/index.php/jd/article/view/43/38

- **Schmid: one of the keys to understanding the ascendance of al-Qaeda's ideology is understanding the extent to which it functions as a single narrative:**

  "[It is] a unifying framework of explanations that provides its followers with an emotionally satisfying portrayal of the world in which they live and their role in it, offering them a sense of identity and giving meaning to their lives (**2014, p. 5**).

Ingredients of an effective narrative: Schmid (2014, p. 29)

"1. articulate a clear, realistic and compelling mission purpose without getting entangled in sub-goals and details, but keeping the focus on long-term, overarching goals that have to be related to cultural norms and values as well as interests;

2. have legitimacy in that it matches cultural and public norms and values and is seen by relevant publics as justified;

3. hold the prospect of success and provide a feeling of progress towards its goals;

4. presented in a consistent manner in order to be effective and withstand the attacks of counter-narratives that might cost it public support; and

5. must fit within an overall communication plan that reflects major themes of our own identity." (at p.59)"

Counter-messaging Analysis:

Braddock and Horgan[422] cite the "*spectrum*" analysis of Briggs and Feve (2013)

- "government strategic communications, which essentially involve "getting the message out......raise awareness of what it is doing and to forge positive relationships with key constituencies;

- alternative narratives, positive stories about "social values, tolerance, openness, freedom and democracy (Briggs & Feve, 2013, p. 5).

- Schmid (2014) maintains that alternative narratives should be able to bridge the "us" versus "them" divide that is fostered by extremists and bring together people from all sides; focus more on "what we are for" and less on "what we are against".

- Whereas strategic communication is the purview of government, alternative narratives may be issued both government and civil society activists and groups.
- Finally, counter-messaging may be realized through counter-narratives. 2015, p.58."

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[422] Ibid Braddock and Horgan at p.58.

D. Institute of Strategic Dialogue (ISD)

COUNTER NARRATIVE TOOLKIT[423]: Resources to Create and Manage Campaigns to Counter Violent Extremist Narratives Online[424]

Clear Goals and Objectives: audience, message, medium, messengers

Content Creation: Best Practice Guide[425]

Identifying Content Creation Needs

Making Engaging Content

Production Budgets and Schedules

Testing Content

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[423] ISD Counter Narrative Toolkit: the Toolkit was funded by Facebook and was inspired by a pilot project with Jigsaw (formerly Google Ideas). The project aimed to work with credible messengers to curate, disseminate, and analyse counter-narrative content.

[424] ISD Counter Narrative Toolkit, www.counternarratives.org

[425] Ibid http://www.counternarratives.org/custom/create/best-practices

APPENDIX 5

A. Model of Resilience Narrative Structure

Psychologists Lewandowsky et al.[426] have identified resilience narratives as highly effective strategies. In deconstructing and testing such narratives, there are several parts that interlock with variables such as:

1.) Target audience; 2.) Context; 3.) Structure and style; 4.) Themes and memes; 5.) Content that stimulates and engages; 6.) Affect and tone: the use of empathy, subversive humour, irony, positive messaging and affirmations; learnable and non-learnable writing skill-sets; 6.) Visual messaging; 7.) Effectiveness: analysis of the effectiveness of sample narratives from various sources.

B. Model of YARNS[427] (Yeasty affirmative narrative strategies)

YARNS ("yeasty affirmative resilience narrative strategies") incorporate the structural elements of effective narratives. They evoke the campfire, comfortable chats and non-threatening casual communication. They contain "yeast" – that magic ingredient that makes buns rise and elevates stories into compelling narratives with many layers of meaning. YARNS are metaphorical grassroots stories with layers of meaning - powerful yet oblique narrative devices that can speak to all the identities of an individual and provide an instant heuristic that has the inherent capacity to manage intrapsychic change without the need for direct confrontation. Written well they will engage, entertain, teach, motivate, train, inspire and delight. They can make us laugh. They can change us – our perceptions, mood, and behaviour. They can also defend democratic populations by boosting populations that have been deflated, undermined and confused

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[426] Ibid Lewandowsky et al. at p.

[427] Copyright Author

by hostile, divisive and contradictory narratives. They may also serve to subvert illiberal democratic regimes.

1. Ethics: know ethical 'story' (yarn); fighting 'facts'/ 'truth' unimportant; ethics is.

2. Identity: know your audience and what is meaningful for it; its psychological age and identities; its biases and prejudices;

3. Issues: know its ordinary everyday as well as ultimate issues: what it avoids, obsesses about, leans towards and what it likes and dislikes.

4. Status: know its socio-cultural status, roles;

5. Beliefs: know its political and religious beliefs;

6. Emotions: know its fears, what makes it angry or sad, laugh, cry, entertains or bores it;

7. Preferences: know what soothes or arouses it: relaxes or keeps it awake at night.

APPENDIX 6

A. Models of Russian Disinformation Structure and Response

i. **Paul and Matthews (2016)** [428] **of RAND** describe the Russian propaganda model as:

1. **high-volume and multichannel,**

2. **Rapid, continuous, and repetitive**

3. **Lacks commitment to objective reality**

4. **Lacks commitment to consistency.**

Counter-narrative Model:

- **a stepped-up approach**

- **building resilience by "increasing the flow of information" in competition with Russia;**

- **active hostilities when sources of propaganda are targeted.**

5 suggestions utilising the metaphor of a "firehose":

1. **Don't expect to counter the firehose of falsehood with the squirt gun of truth.** [429]

2. **Find ways to help put raincoats on those at whom the firehose of falsehood is being directed.** [430]

3. **Don't direct your flow of information directly back at the firehose of falsehood;**

4. **Increase the flow of persuasive information and start to compete, seeking to generate effects that support U.S. and NATO objectives;** [431]

5. **Turn off (or turn down) the flow.** [432]

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[428] Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, "The Russian "Firehose of Falsehood" Propaganda Model Why It Might Work and Options to Counter It", RAND Corporation, 2016 at p.2; https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE198/RAND_PE198.pdf

[429] Ibid at p.9.

[430] Ibid at p.10.
[431] Ibid at p.10.

[432] Ibid at p.10-11.

ii.   Cobaugh:[433] A Five-Point Strategy to Oppose Russian Narrative Warfare (US)

1.   **Build resilience in US audiences that aids in recognizing and resisting influence.**

2.   **Apply CYBER tools proportionately, both offensively and defensively.**

3.   **Regularly disseminate effective alternate and counter-narratives.**

4.   **Message by all available and appropriate means, messaging in support of US narrative strategy.**

5.   **Deterrence or rather: demonstrate by action that aggression will be firmly resisted.**

B. Model of Disinformation Counter Narrative Structure

Principles of Response:[434]

- **"enhance transparency of online news, involving an adequate and privacy-compliant sharing of data about the systems that enable their circulation online;**

- **promote media and information literacy to counter disinformation and help users navigate the digital media environment;**

- **develop tools for empowering users and journalists to tackle disinformation and foster a positive engagement with fast-evolving information technologies;**

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[433] Paul Cobaugh, *"A Five-Point Strategy to Oppose Russian Narrative Warfare", Narrative Strategies,* April 2018. https://medium.com/@paulcobaugh/a-five-point-strategy-to-oppose-russian-narrative-warfare-56e0006aab2a

[434] Ibid

- **safeguard the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem and promote continued research on the impact of disinformation in Europe to evaluate the measures taken by different actors and constantly adjust the necessary responses."**

C. Table 1 (RAN PVE Model):[435] a template for the key considerations of the Disinformation Model of YARNS, counter-narratives and government strategic communication.

Countering Russian Disinformation: key considerations of YARNS and counter-narratives:

What	Why	How	Target
Initiator			
Alternative narratives (YARNS)			
Counter-Narratives (CN)			
Government Strategic Communications			

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[435] Used as a guideline: Preventing Radicalisation to Terrorism and Violent Extremism: Delivering Counter- or Alternative narratives, 2018 Edition, Table 1. at p.4; https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/delivering_alternative_narratives_en.pdf

Citing at fn 8: Adapted from Hemmingsen, A.S and Castro K.I (2017) "The Trouble with Counter-Narratives" http://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/almdel/reu/bilag/189/1729101.pdf and from Briggs, R. and S. Feve. (2013) "Review of Programs to Counter Narratives of Violent Extremism: What Works and What are the Implications for Government?" London, UK: Institute for Strategic Dialogue; http://www.strategicdialogue.org/CounterNarrativesFN2011.pdf p6

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