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An emerging and crucial change in the international security and defense community. Bringing the Socio-Cultural Perspective Back into the Intelligence Analytical Approach

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Abstract

According to the US National Intelligence Council (NIC) publication Global Trends 2030[1], the current and future world is and will be shaped by a number of influential factors:

– Individual empowerment is rising, thanks to the reduction of poverty, growing middle-classes, level of education, discovery and use of new technologies and improving sanitation.
– The patterns of global power will change, we are already observing an ongoing power transition from a hegemonic to a multipolar world, where states are and will not be the sole power brokers, other actors will step up on the international stage.
– Demography will demonstrate to be crucial, growing against ageing populations, statistics foresee a 60% of the global population living in urban areas by 2030 and migrations will stabilise as a constant and growing phenomenon.
– Moreover, the climate change and resources scarcity is and will be another difficult challenge to global governance.

All those trends will be integrated by other vectors of change such as economic instability, efficiency of global governance, development and use of new technologies, regional instability and conflicts creation and resolution.
Now, taking into account the totality of those factors, the trajectory of a common upward sloping aggregate curve may be drown, insecurity will increase and, even more importantly, it will be composed by a basket of new and different threats.
These new trends and menaces will need to be detected, understood, prevented and ultimately engaged, and obviously old knowledge, tools and strategies will never fit the feat.
We live within a liquid reality, featured by the concept of constant evolution, hence, the security and defense cadre will have to bear the tough effort to adapt to new and complex environments, a pretty difficult task.
Within this framework the concept and meaning of conflict is changed as well. Warfare may no longer be intended as a pure matter of states, brought about by the physical engagement of official and opposing armies. Since the end of World War Two, the international Law of Armed Conflict[2]

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[1] US NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL, *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, NIC, 2012, pp. 1-137
[2] A. CASSESE, *International Law*, second edition, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 399-481

already started to regulate a new set of actors: insurgents, national liberation movements, lawful and unlawful combatants. However, the transformation is much wider, this is the era of Hybrid Warfare[3]. This paper will present Human Dynamics and, more precisely, Sociocultural Intelligence (SO-CINT) as innovative and useful tools to face the new conflict scenario.

The need to deeply understand the field of operation, but more broadly the international environment with its different social and cultural contexts, political and legal features, economic conditions, groups composition and influence, is key, for the intelligence and the wider security and defense community. Not only to bring about successful operations in territories where military forces are engaged. The even greater advantage would be determined by the possibility to understand, control and dissolve threats before they turn into crisis.

This preventive effect, shows clearly how social sciences and the socio-cultural perspective must be applied not only to the military domain, rather, it is best suited for the most comprehensive intelligence spectrum[4].

Following the guiding principles expressed above, this paper is going to explore the re-employment of Human Dynamics as a source of revolution for the international Intelligence Community and its methodological and analytical angle. The work will be developed starting from the intelligence history underlining the past role and space of employment of social sciences, the subsequent step will regard the description of socio-cultural intelligence as a discipline, what it is (scientific background), how it works (methodology), and why it is important. Furthermore, the main international examples of socio-cultural Intelligence application will be provided.

Concluding, socio-cultural Intelligence material application will be discussed.

Keywords

Intelligence, human dynamics, counter-terrorism

   The need to deeply understand the field of operation, but more broadly the international environment with its different social and cultural contexts, political and legal features, economic conditions, groups composition and influence, is key, for the intelligence and the wider security and defense community, not only to bring about successful operations in territories where military forces are engaged. The even greater advantage would be determined by the possibility to understand, control and dissolve threats before they turn into crisis.

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[3] A sophisticated campaign that combine low-level conventional and special operations; offensive cyber and space actions; and psychological operations that use social and traditional media to influence popular perceptions and international opinions (Hoffman)

[4] To know more about the wider Intelligence spectrum please visit http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/texttrans/2012/01/20120110143416su0.9688488.html#axzz3n1HEbavv it is possible to find similar information comparing the National Security and Defence Strategy of various states, for instance https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61936/national-securitystrategy.pdf or http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/scrng-eng.aspx

This preventive effect, shows clearly how social sciences and the socio-cultural perspective must be applied not only to the military intelligence (COIN, support and stabilization), rather, it is best suited for the most comprehensive intelligence spectrum[1], that is composed of counter-terrorism, humanitarian relief, countering weapons of mass destruction, operating in cyberspace, maintaining a nuclear deterrence and deterring/defeating aggression, as well.

Following the guide principles expressed above, this paper is going to explore the re-employment of Human Dynamics as a source of revolution for the international Intelligence Community and its methodological and analytical angle. The work will be developed starting from the Intelligence's history, underlining the past role and space of employment of social sciences and then, focusing on present and future pivotal trends, getting momentum within the IC and representing a strategy to fix the current and ineffective environment.

The subsequent step will regard the description of socio-cultural intelligence as a discipline, what it is (scientific background), how it works (methodology), and why it is important. Furthermore, the main international examples of socio-cultural Intelligence application will be provided, describing experiments (employed in the military and civil Intelligence field) such as the Human Terrain Team, the Nawa District innovative operation, the Stability Operations Information Center (SOIC) and many others.

Concluding, a case study will be provided.

1. Intelligence past, present and future perspectives

Robert R. Tomes, adjunct professor of Security Policy Studies at the George Washington University and serving on the Board of the Council for Emerging National Security Affairs (CENSA), refers to socio-cultural Intelligence as: «an area of Intelligence collection, analysis, and reporting that atrophied in the 1980s and 1990s[5]».

Already since the nineteenth century, with the Great Britain Great Game[6] in Asia, and then throughout the World War II, social science were strongly integrated within military and Intelligence operations, the use of anthropologists to under-

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[5] R.R. Tomes, *Toward a Smarter Military*, Socio-Cultural Intelligence and National Security, The US Army War College Quarterly Parameters, Contemporary Strategy and Land-power, vol. 45, n. 2, 2015

[6] https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-asia/1980-03-01/great-game-asia, in which the Great Game identify the activities of the rival Great Britain and Russian intelligence contending the fate of Asia to each other, and the broader Anglo-Russian dispute over the Asian destiny

stand foreign cultures, such as the Human Relations Area Files at Yale[7] (an internationally recognized organization fostering cross-cultural studies of Human cultures) and the recruitment of local forces to support the national Army to fight enemy forces located oversea are just a couple of examples of the operations realized by the American then called Office of Strategic Services (OSS), as a branch of the broader Special Operation Forces (SOF).

The OSS[8], former Coordination of Information (COI), funded in 1942, gathered intelligence from almost every country in the world and conducted "black" propaganda operations (creating and using forged documents to embarrass, misrepresent and vilify the adversary) against the enemy. It was dismissed in 1945 and its approximately 7.700 cubic feet of analytical data, divided between the infant Central Intelligence Agency (CIA established in 1947) and the Department of Defense (DoD).

During the Cold War, the gathering of socio-cultural data were mainly used to detect possible breeding grounds of socialist ideology around the globe. An example of their application, in the military operational fields, is given by the support for the giant and famous Operation Cedar Falls[9] (Search and Destroy in the Iron Triangle), where intelligence activities were deployed to locate and understand enemy positions and behavior in a wide forested area close to Saigon.

Unfortunately and committing a big mistake, after the Vietnam War and on, in the 80s and 90s, the socio-cultural perspective was set aside, a much more technical approach was adopted, focusing on the development of new and more advanced technologies of detection (that are going to be discussed further) and the collection of technical data about the enemy's military capabilities (mostly nuclear arsenal). A functional and systemic analytical approach started to be employed, the Red light switched on and intelligence officers began to work more like bulls than analysts.

As it is clarified by the experts R. Kerr, T. Wolfe, R. Donegan and A. Pappas, along the 2000s and precisely in 2002-3, with the failure of the intelligence community (IC) to discover weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the S. Hussein's Iraq[10] (because of the use of old data, collected before 1998, strong hypothetical assumptions based on pieces of technical evidences and lacking any socio-cultural knowledge of the target), the wind of change began to blow over the IC, transforma-

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[7] *Ibid*. and http://hraf.yale.edu/

[8] To gather deeper information regarding the role and scope of the OSS please visit http://www.osssociety.org/; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/intelligence-history/oss/art03.htm and http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/oss/

[9] See B.W. ROGERS, Cedar Falls-Junction City: A Turning Point, Vietnam Studies, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 1989, pp. 1-160 and http://www.historynet.com/operation-cedar-falls-search-and-destroy-in-the-irontriangle.htm

[10] http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB80/

tions of collection methods, analysis, subsequent production and interaction with policy-makers needed to happen.

It must be said that after the Cold War, during which all the Intelligence efforts were focused on the Soviet Union (proving to be very effective due to a deep understanding of the target developed through years), the IC had to reorganize itself to face a new world of multipolar actors and threats, when governments, lacking big, evident and immediate menaces, decided to cut resources for Technical Intelligence (TECHINT) and Human Intelligence (HUMINT). All this, linked to an emerging crisis to crisis approach, that hardly fit the comprehensive perspective required by emerging and complex environments.

In fact, one of the biggest intelligence's mistake, at that time, was the separation between collection and analysis, giving collection the highest priority, with technical collection (enemy capabilities) largely overcoming socio-cultural collection.

Moreover, one of the most hazardous step taken by the analytical cadre, was the straight move from long-term/in depth analysis to short-term analysis, functioning as a fast take-away meal for decision makers, this inoculated within an organizational framework made out of independent centers, underlying a weak mental, issue by issue, approach to complex problems[11].

Writing about the excessive and unbalanced rise in importance of technical collection systems, it is again R. R Tomes to light up the matter[12].

First of all, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance systems (ISR) are air, space and ground sensors, people communication and ad hoc infrastructures needed to work with remotely sensed data. They (imagery and signal intelligence satellites, planes, drones and radars) are in evolution since the Cold war to improve international and national security.

Obviously, those devices are still crucial for today's gathering operations but, it may not be denied that, first: «Ninety percent of the intelligence comes from open sources. The other ten percent, the clandestine work is just the most dramatic. The real intelligence hero is Sherlock Holmes, not James Bond[13]», and second, we have to realize that, the reason why the discussed technologies were so successful in the past was thanks to the Intelligence element, or the existence of well trained and skilled professionals that were able to critically observe, connect and analyze detect-

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[11] R. KERR, T. WOLFE, R. DONEGAN, A.PAPPAS, *Collection and Analysis on Iraq: Issues for the US Intelligence Community*, Studies in Intelligence, Journal of the American Intelligence Professional, vol. 49, n. 3, CIA, 2005, pp. 47-54

[12] R.R. TOMES RAND, *Informing US National Security Transformation Discussions: an Argument for Balanced Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance*, Defence Studies, 3:2, 2003, pp. 20-35

[13] T.M. PAULSON, *Intelligence Issues and Developments*, Nova Science Publisher, NY, 2008, p. 78

ed information. The Human factor proved to be key. More advanced technologies does not mean more effective and realistic analysis.

Unfortunately, until today, there has been an excessive attention toward developing new and cutting-edge ISR technologies, leaving the improvement and teaching of analytical abilities apart. Fragment of detected information, interpreted by over-confident politicians have substituted professional and well researched intelligence products. What comes out clearly is the loss, happened along the 80s, of the *information dominance* definition's understanding and scope as: «a superior understanding of a potential adversary's military, political, social and economic structures, to include their strengths, weaknesses, locations and degree of interdependence, while denying an adversary similar information on friendly assets[14]».

We are currently facing the economic Law of Diminishing Returns in ISR investments (hence, the more you invest in ISR technologies, the less you gain from it), if a reverse trend is willing to be started, analysts must be trained and analytical skills linking the detection of the enemy's capabilities to the socio-cultural environment surrounding it, enhanced.

As H. Kissinger wisely said: «Since the mass of information available tends to exceed the capacity to evaluate it, a gap has opened up between information and knowledge and, even beyond that, between knowledge and wisdom[15]».

Keeping on describing present flaws of the current security, defense and Intelligence community, and trying to identify future trends and perspectives, Major General M.T. Flynn, Captain M. Pottinger and P.D. Bachelor (DIA), starting from their direct experience in Afghanistan in COIN operations, point out a set of crucial problems[16].

First of all, the Intelligence Community was and is too focused on detecting enemy networks, leaders and capabilities, without lending any attention to the geographical context in which operations are developed. Knowledge of social and cultural structures, economic and political features, religious influence and organization, enabling officers to understand the very motivation at the base of certain behaviors completely misses, so as so the support that is supposed to be given. Second, Intelligence on the socio-cultural context have the greatest strategic importance, a map to gain popular support and marginalize the enemy itself. Hence, to empower effective decision-making, a strong effort must be devoted to info collection and analytic brainpower employed toward new environments, at the regional, national

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[14] H.M. Sapolsky, B.H. Friedman, B.R. Green, *US Military Innovations since the Cold War: Creation without disruption*, Strategy and history, Routledge, US and Canada, 2009, p. 163

[15] H. Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, NY, 2001, p. 284

[16] M.T. Flynn, M. Pottinger, P.D. Batchelor, *Fixing Intel: a Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, Voices from the Field, Centre for a New American Security, 2010, pp. 1-24

and district level of understanding. Local politics, economics, power-brokers identi-fication, effective means of influence, levels of cooperation among the population and ongoing development programs must become the target instead of channeling all the resources exclusively over the enemy.

Third, quite often, vital information on socio-cultural context do not get to top-level analysts at regional bases or headquarters. Part of the issue may be ad-dressed to the non-existence of effective and updated networks of file-sharing[17] (inefficiency of INTELINK or different close networks), although the American Defense Connect Online[18] (DCO), a cyber tool allowing co-operation across the US Secret Internet Protocol Router Networks (SIPRNet) and the Unclassified but Sensitive Internet Protocol Router Network (NIPRNet), may be seen as a valuable model and step forward. Moreover, the cult of secrecy may take part of the respon-sibility but, to a greater extent, there is an excessive disparity, within Intelligence centers, between red (focused on enemies) and white (socio- cultural matters) ana-lysts, with senior analysts being reluctant to leave their chairs to go to the field, iden-tifying depositors of valuable data (local people, NGOs, IOs personnel and others), building up mutually beneficial relationships with them and bringing information back to the base, sharing adequately.

Concluding, fourth, the old functional approach, based on topics of concern (insurgents, terrorists, smugglers and so on) and only "Red" activity of the enemy must change, it needs to be integrated to a new geographic approach, focused on areas, featured by specific socio-cultural dimensions and including the direct adver-sary within the bigger picture.

An interesting example of a comprehensive geographical approach[19], applied to the US military organization, has been provided by Joel Lawton. He suggests the establishment of a socio-cultural intelligence, regionally oriented program at the Combatant Command (COCOM) echelon, being it already the confluence point of the NORTHCOM (North America), SOUTHCOM (South America), EU-COM (Europe), CENTCOM (Middle East and Northern Africa) and PACOM (the Pacific) branches (each branch would have its own analytical teams), it would be more beneficial than establishing a tactical unit in all operational environment.

A renovated "White" activity, best performed by the best and hungriest civilian analysts (they are better suited to create lasting relationships with a wide range of actors and do not have security clearance so they may easily travel from the regional

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[17] M.S. Burton, *Connecting the Virtual Dots: How the web can relieve our information glut and get us talking to each other*, Studies in Intelligence, Journal of the American Intelligence Professional, vol. 49, n. 3, CIA, 2005, pp. 55-62
[18] http://www.dco.dod.mil/
[19] J. Lawton, *How the Military Intelligence Community Has Failed to Incorporate Sociocultural Understanding of Their Operational Environment*, Small Wars Journal, 2014, pp. 1-9

base to the battleground and back), on the lines of the so called "civilian surge"[20], need to be stressed and started.

One of the main peculiarity of this SoSA approach is the channelization of analysis into three color-coded categories[21], red, white and green, where red is the dominant tone, and Fusion Intelligence: «as the process of collecting and examining information from all available sources and intelligence disciplines to derive as complete an assessment as possible of detected activities […] an all-source approach to intelligence collection and analysis[22]», looks more like a pretty red-centric intelligence, aiming at just capturing or killing enemy operatives, reducing the direct threat in the immediate time perspective (true), but remaining a weak long-term and effective solution.

Following the SoSA and color codification, red is the enemy, white is the population and green the target or host nation, and what is crucial and abominable is that the various actors falling within those watertight compartments, are supposed to always act coherently as a red, white or green subjects. This mistaken approach chains analytical thought up and wrongly eliminate the complexity of the various target socio-cultural environment, forgetting that people do not act rationally (pretty often) and they have multiple identities, hence, they do not interact in a foreseeable and mechanic way, they just chaotically interact, and the above described mindset loses interactions.

In accordance to B. Connable, the solution[23] of this structural problem would be the elimination of the color-coded model, shifting from the System of Systems Analysis of complex environments, to a much more *holistic* approach, where the socio-cultural perspective represents a fundamental element of a geographical (addressing areas, regions and districts), horizontal and comprehensive (taking into account the complexity and interconnection between actors, factors, actions and motivations characterizing those environments) approach, depicting an effective and realistic picture of the targeted reality.

Under this innovative framework, selected and properly trained analysts would be neither red and white, nor "man hunters" and "leaf eaters", they would be neu-

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[20] To know more about the civilian surge issue please see B.T. CARREAU, *Domestic Agencies, Civilian Reserves, and the Intelligence Community*, Centre for Technology and National Security Policy, 2009, pp. 135-162

[21] To have a better taste of the Intelligence methodological approach see R.J. HEUER JR, *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis*, Centre for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 1999, pp. 1-184 and J.R. COOPER, *Curing Analytical Pathologies: Pathways to Improved Intelligence Analysis*, Centre for the Study of Intelligence, CIA, 2005, 1-62

[22] U.S. JOINT CHIEF OF STAFF, *Joint Intelligence*, Joint Publication 2-0, Washington DC, 2007, p. II-11

[23] B. CONNABLE, *Military Intelligence Fusion for Complex Operations a New Paradigm*, Occasional Paper, RAND National Defence Research Institute, 2012, pp. 1-26

tral, omnivores[24], hungry and able to conduct true fusion and all-source researches, focusing on intent deception, identifying the real behavior of the various actors, and ultimately committing themselves to maintain or change it.

Obviously this innovation would represents an earthquake shake to the current military and intelligence doctrine, training and education, hence, it should happen gradually so that the *status quo* may be transformed into a completely revolutionized system passing through the required steps of specialization.

Despite this recommendation, the need to fix the security, defense and intelligence community[25] remains urgent, and the following sections will demonstrate and analyze the importance of undertake this revolution, centered around the Human Dynamics and the re-integration of the socio-cultural perspective.

2.   Taking off the Blinkers: Sociocultural Intelligence a New Perspective

Starting from the cornerstone to which the need of socio-cultural Intelligence is a lesson learned, at least for the American IC and basing the argument over the testimonies cited above and the Marines Corps publication *Small Wars Journal*, impressively rising this issue since 1940[26], it is striking to note how Human Dynamics are neither consistently part of the US Joint Intelligence Doctrine (being considered still a less important intelligence area), they only seem to have a relative degree of importance in the Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) [JP 3-07] section[27], with a strong focus on war deterrence and peace promotion, nor in the wider NATO perspective, where the commitment to establish a permanent Joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance System (JISR)[28], launched in Norway, in May

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[24] Regional Command West Stability Operations Information Centre, undated, p. 3

[25] I want to clarify that, on the one hand, the above discussion is focused on the sole Intelligence Community (for the most) but it serves as a model to reflect problems characterising the broader Security and Defence Community as well. On the other hand, the analysis is mostly based on documents coming from the U.S environment and this is due to a lack of similar publications regarding the wider Western framework and the forefront position that the U.S occupy (thanks to resources, knowledge and capabilities) in the field of security and defence.

[26] L.C.J.P. Coles, *Cultural Intelligence and Joint Intelligence Doctrine*, Joint Operations Review, 2005, p. 1

[27] US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, JP 3-07, IV-2, Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1995

[28] To know more about the NATO JISR visit http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_111830. htm?selectedLocale=en and http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_110351.htm?selectedLocale=en

2014 (UV14), is focused on «Maintaining NATO's technological edge[29]», developing new and more advanced ISR technologies, without making any reference about socio-cultural perspectives, knowledge and abilities. This represents the common technical paradigm started in the 80s, or the situation that needs to be changed.

Identifying the subject, a quite famous definition of cultural intelligence is provided, in the business environment, by David Livermore, as: «The ability to be effective across various cultural contexts – including national, ethnic, organizational, generational, ideological and much more[30]». Within the Security and Defense domain, despite the non-existence of a common definition, I prefer to use the Lieutenant Commander John P. Coles' one: «an analysis of social, political, economic and other demographic information, that provides understanding of a people or nation's history, institutions, psychology, belief (such as religion), and behaviors. It provides a baseline for designing successful strategies to interact with foreign people whether they are neutral, people of an occupied country, or enemies[31]». There are two very important implications within this description, first, socio-cultural intelligence gives information regarding the motivation of people actions, supplying invaluable preventive effectiveness in operations preparation and the strategic use of these motivations to stop or change certain behaviors. Predicting intents has become more urgent than obtaining insights on enemies' capabilities alone, given the danger represented by strongly committed and motivated individuals, willing to perpetrate attacks, making use of low technology or even rudimentary devices (capable of causing many casualties as well). Second, the understanding of every kind of activity happening into the targeted environment is crucial (hence, development programs, activities of NGOs, IOs and so on).

Furthering the discussion about socio-cultural intelligence's definition, it must include the analysis of socio-cultural data, be useful for decision-makers and represent theories and methods derived from social sciences[32], including the widest range of subjects (or all the sciences that study the behaviors of individuals, groups, organizations and societies), implemented depending on operational requirements. Besides, according to A. Speyer and J. Henning,

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[29] http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_110033.htm

[30] http://davidlivermore.com/blog/cq/

[31] L.C.J.P. Coles, *Cultural Intelligence and Joint Intelligence Doctrine*, Joint Operations Review, 2005, p. 1

[32] L. Friedland, G.W. Shaeff, J.G. Turnley, *Socio-Cultural Perspectives: a New Intelligence Paradigm*, Report on the Conference at the MITRE Corporation, MITRE technical report MTR070244, doc n. 07-1220, McLean, 2006, pp. 1-70

the socio-cultural understanding applied to intelligence is based over three layers of knowledge[33]:

– *Cultural Awareness*: or a basic familiarity with foreign behaviors, religion and language
– *Cultural Understanding*: or the focus over the reasons lied behind certain behaviors (mindsets, customs, attitudes, environmental factors...)
– *Cultural Intelligence*: that is the iceberg's tip, or the acquisition of the drivers and implications of those behaviors

Socio-Cultural intelligence is, thus, an all-source analysis, where all the three elements listed above must be developed comprehensively (no one may be excluded).

Having defined socio-cultural intelligence, the socio-cultural *analysis*, as applied by the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (OSDI) and the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), results to be both the analysis of socio-cultural data and scenarios, and, even more strategically the application of its perspective to the analysis of any type of data and scenarios, hence a cross-cutting analytic approach based on a true all-source intelligence to deeply understand foreign population and environments.

Now, writing about how socio-cultural intelligence works in reality, in terms of analytical features, there are some important elements, deserving profound attention.

First of all, before starting any socio-cultural intelligence analysis, analysts must be aware of their cultural breed and the way in which it affects the objectivity of their judgement[34] (ethnocentrism is an example of the kind of odds determined by one's cultural heritage). Secondly, socio-cultural intelligence is an all-source and multidisciplinary analysis, hence it requires the concomitant use of qualitative and quantitative analysis (such as Game Theory, Probability theory, Statistics analysis, Signal Detection Theory and others) and the much more complex to be realized, integration between different scientific

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[33] A. SPEYER, J. HENNING, MCIA's *Cultural Intelligence Methodology and Lessons Learned*, Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, paper presented at the Socio-Cultural Perspectives: A New Intelligence Paradigm Conference, Annex 1, McLean, 2006

[34] A. SCHEUNPFLUG, *Cross-Cultural Encounters as a Way of Overcoming Xenophobia*, International Review of Education, 43, n.1, 1997, pp. 109-116 and as references A. SIMONS, *The Military Advisor as Warrior-King and Other Going Native Temptations*, Anthropology and the United States Military: Coming of Age in the Twenty-first Century, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003; R.JOHNSTONE, *Analytical Culture in the U.S. Intelligence Community: An Ethnographic Study*, CIA Centre for the Study of Intelligence, Washington DC, 2005

dimensions as social sciences, behavioral sciences, engineering and physical sciences[35].

Moreover, one of the most crucial factor is represented by data collection, socio-cultural Intelligence needs information coming from the broadest variety of INTEL sources, making a comprehensive use of signal intelligence (SIGINT), human intelligence (HUMINT), imagery intelligence (IMINT) and open source intelligence (OSINT)[36].

Within this framework, HUMINT results to occupy the largest part, given the labor-intensive and qualitative nature of the info collected. Hence, socio-cultural intelligence is characterized by the key role of qualitative analysis, that, if properly employed, may be as objective as the quantitative one[37], obviously requiring the development of its own and adequate analytical tools.

Those tools may even be quantitative in nature, as computational models, given their usefulness to model and analyst complex problems, characterized by the presence of large amount of data. However, those instruments need to be calibrated[38] to develop effective socio-cultural analysis, on the one hand they are going to be filled up with a majority of qualitative data to which they have to adapt, on the other hand, they (usually framework models) need to be fixed in terms of specificity, addressing specific problems and time and space perspectives. Furthermore, socio-cultural data and environments may reveal to be extremely liquid, providing for changing data and uncertain realities, hence, the underlined instruments must address this kind of uncertainty and another kind, more structural in nature, depending on the modeler theoretical approach in relation to the problem that has to be solved[39].

Ultimately, the effective functioning of socio-cultural intelligence largely depends on, as deducted from the above implications, well structured qualitative analytic techniques (such as analysis of competing hypothesis, high impact/low probability analysis, social networks analysis and all the other approaches falling within this classification) that provide for fundamental alter-

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[35] L. Friedland, G.W. Shaeff, J.G. Turnley, *Socio-Cultural Perspectives: a New Intelligence Paradigm*, Report on the Conference at the Mitre Corporation, MITRE technical report MTR070244, doc n. 07-1220, McLean, 2006, pp. 1-70

[36] J. Bamford, *War of Secrets: Eyes in the Sky, Ears to the Wall, and still Wanting*, New York Times, 2002, September 8, Sec. 4, 5 and D. Blair, M.E. Leiter, *Intelligence Reform: The Lessons and Implications of the Christmas Day Attack*, Testimony before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, 111th Cong., 2d sess., 2010, 1-94

[37] G. King, R.O. Keohana, S. Verb, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1994, 3-230

[38] M.S. Morgan, M. Morrison, *Models as Mediators: Perspectives on Natural and Social Science*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1999, 1-388

[39] T. Nislen, T. Aven, *Modes and Model Uncertainty in the Context of Risk Analysis*, Reliability Engineering and System Safety, 79, n. 3, 2003, pp. 309-317

native modes of thinking[40], a very effective remedy for the attitude, well rooted within the IC, to see outcomes as the linear result of a logical chain of events, a never changing straight rail of causes and predictable effects. Analysts must learn to look out of the beaten track.

As a suggestion, according to Kiron K. Skinner, political science may be truly helpful to develop qualitative analyses[41], because of the application of its intimate Strategic Perspective[42], being used to take into account leaders (as individual), their decision-making, connecting it to influential factors provided by the national and international context in which they operate. This approach is extremely valuable to decode complex environments, deeply understanding the changing role (identities) and behaviors of actors and the influence operated by environmental factors and transformations.

However, the real application of SOCINT brings about problems of integration at different levels. On the superficial layer, as it has already been said, the socio-cultural perspective is composed by a mix of different scientific disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political science, economics, anthropology and so on, those disciplines are rooted on a diverse set of methodologies, theoretical approaches, data collection and analysis and tools. Hence the interdisciplinary coordination of the previous subjects, working harmoniously within a common perspective, requires mental openness and a great amount of constructive dialogue[43], that is often difficult to build up.

Beyond the surface, the biggest pool of Human Dynamics knowledge are stored outside the intelligence environment, hence the detection of these valuable resources and the cooperation with the detaining entities (business sector, academia, NGOs and others) are paramount.

Socio-Cultural Intelligence may reveal to be crucial to improve the effectiveness of the largest intelligence operational spectrum.

Starting from the military operational environment, with the first recent apparition during Counter-Insurgency operations (COIN)[44], such as the

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[40] R.J. HEUER, R.H. PHERSON, *Structured Analytic Techniques for Intelligence Analysis*, CQ Press, Washington DC, 2010, pp. 1-359

[41] K.K. SKINNER, *Qualitative Analysis for the Intelligence Community, Intelligence Analysis: Behavioural and Social Scientific Foundations*, Committee on Behavioural and Social Science Research to Improve Intelligence Analysis for National Security, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington DC, 2011, pp. 101-110

[42] Among many others see H.E. GOEMANS, *Fighting for Survival: The Fate of Leaders and the Duration of Wars*, Journal of Conflict Resolution, 44(5), 2000, pp. 555-579; G. CHIOZZA, H.E. GOEMANS, *International Conflicts and the Tenure of Leaders: Is War still ex-post Inefficient?*, American Journal of Political Science, 48(3), 2004, pp. 604-619

[43] W.S. BAINBRIDGE, *The Future of Social Sciences, Futures*, 35, n. 6, 2003

[44] To know more about COIN operations see G.P. GENTILE, *A Strategy of Tactics: Population-centric COIN and the Army*, 2009, pp. 5-17

Nawa[45] district in Afghanistan, Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, with the development of Afghan and Iraqi culture awareness among soldiers before of being deployed on the filed, by the Marines 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the Marines Corps Intelligence.

SOCINT is nowadays recognized to be functional in all the Population-Centric operations and, more broadly, for the general Department of Defense (DoD) Planning and Operations[46]: «the question is not whether to use social science or not, the choice is whether to use it consciously to achieve mission objectives across the full spectrum of conflicts or whether to use only the small portions of social science already employed by the defense community»[47]. Within this general operational framework, SOCINT is determinant for many reasons, it describes historical and socio-cultural conditions generating the need for a military intervention; enlightens key Human Dynamics that make the difference between victory and defeat, understanding the effects of military operations in foreign contexts, so that it may functionally establish relations with the widest set of local actors; develops a rich knowledge of the operational framework; detects, analysis and exploits changes in socio-cultural factors and, ultimately, grasps, predicts and supplies the background needed to eventually modify behaviors.

More specifically applied to individual field of operations, intelligence over Human Dynamics can be successfully applied to:

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[45] Nawa is an Afghan district of 70 000 farmers in the Helmand province, a location where the insurgent opposition was extremely hard and where the local population was totally subjugated by the Talibans. Here SOCINT was innovatively applied to understand the environment, identifying and building trust relationships with local populations, NGOs, administration and every valuable actor acting in the area. The operation was very successful in taking local control, with indigenous actors even reporting on and ostracising the Talibans, to have a better look at the issue see M.T. FLYNN, M. POTTINGER, P.D. BATCHELOR, *Fixing Intel: a Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan*, Voices from the Field, Centre for a New American Security, 2010, p. 13-15

[46] H. CABAYAN, D. ADESNIK, C. ARMSTRONG, A. ASTORINO-COURTOIS, A. BARLELKA, T. BOZADA, D. BROWNE, C. EHLSCHLAEGER, D. EYRE, M. FLYNN, J. FERRELL, L. HOWARD, R. JONES, D. KROOKS, A. McGEE, T. PERKINS, D. PLAFCAN, L. WHALLEY, *Operational Relevance of Behavioural and Social Science to DoD Missions*, Sarah Canna, NSI, 2013, pp. 1-15; M. FLYNN, J. SISCO, D. ELLIS, *Left on Bag: The Value of Sociocultural Analysis in Today's Environment*, Prism, 3, 4, 2012; J.A.GORDON, *Cultural Assessment and Campaign Planning, a monograph*, United States Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, Kansas, AY 03-04, pp. 1-43

[47] H. CABAYAN, D. ADESNIK, C. ARMSTRONG, A. ASTORINO-COURTOIS, A. BARLELKA, T. BOZADA, D. BROWNE, C. EHLSCHLAEGER, D. EYRE, M. FLYNN, J. FERRELL, L. HOWARD, R. JONES, D. KROOKS, A. McGEE, T. PERKINS, D. PLAFCAN, L. WHALLEY, *Operational Relevance of Behavioural and Social Science to DoD Missions*, Sarah Canna, NSI, 2013, p. 7

- *Stability Operations:* supplying profound knowledge of the environment and identifying effective conduits and structural limitations to peace creation. Comprehensively addressing the challenge to build up stability (solving various political, economical, security, social and other issues).
- *Deterrence and Compelling Operations:* giving insights over individual decision-making features, groups dynamics, motivations and principal drivers. A fundamental background to succeed in shaping the behavior of certain actors.
- *Shaping Operation:* identifying strategic local partners and planning effective strategies to influence them, creating mutually beneficial and long lasting relationships. A key move to avoid enemies gaining the favor of the local population, thus obstructing friendly forces freedom of action.
- *Support Operations:* constructing a basin of knowledge, tools and techniques to improve the quality of analysis, in a way to honor the greatest responsibilities of the IC, protection of people and help decision-makers to take as sound and effective decisions as humanely possible.

Furthermore, counter-terrorism is another operational field to which Socio-Cultural intelligence results to be extremely well suited. As the ARTIS director of research Scott Atran put forward:

> problems of radicalization and political and social destabilization leading to violent extremism are severe, threatening societies around the globe. These are social science problems in their very essence[48].

Then, he keeps on explaining that[49], first of all, a meaningful role in preventing terrorism is the creation of mutual and lasting trust with the population and ethnic groups most affected by extremism, understanding how to do it is crucial, requiring a truly deep knowledge of the environment, developed through a sincere partnership with NGOs, International organizations, the private sector and academia.

To be successful in the action, it must be taught how, actors not always act rationally and depending on context factors they might be pushed by different drivers than the simple costs and benefits evaluation. Intelligence over the Human factors may be able to discover those different values, driving the actions of certain targets.

Apart from having a comprehensive bigger picture of the operational framework, this innovative approach will disclose interesting historical traits,

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[48] S. ATRAN, *Briefing to the US Science Board on Countering Violent Extremism*, ARTIS Research, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, University of Michigan, Oxford University, 2012, p. 8
[49] *Ibid*, pp. 1-8

underlining creation and influence of certain groups, being aware of effective counter-values applied on culturally different, value driven and group-fused individuals. In this way, effective strategies of group-breaking and close-alternative value promotion will be laid down.

Ultimately, socio-cultural intelligence may provide extremely valuable information on the type of links (trust, brotherhood, friendship, knighthood and so on) cementing extremists' relationships, and so, helping other disciplines, such as SOCMINT for instance, to catch how they communicate, through what vehicles and codes.

Besides, the study of human dynamics demonstrated to be strongly linked to the development of an efficient information security[50]. The focus here is related to the precious help that SOCINT may give in understanding the "wetware" or, as discovered by Robert Axelrod and Ross Anderson, the biases of human social cognition that are able to elude the most sophisticated technologies. This definition led us to the central problem of social engineering[51], as the use of deceptive social and psychological methods, on the human element, in order to obtain protected info, access or influence behaviors toward those goals. A very low cost, high pay-off mean to circumvent complex cyber protections. Also in this case, technology has improved much on cyber security but, no attention was given to the human-based (the user) menace.

Social engineering is composed by four phases, research, developing trust, exploiting trust and using info obtained. Into this context, Socio-Cultural intelligence may supply knowledge about those deceptive methods, target weaknesses and attacks perpetrators.

Concluding the discussion over the practical applicability and effectiveness of Socio-Cultural intelligence, being this a fundamental part of my personal thesis, with the arguments provided above and the following ones, I want to demonstrate the outstanding relevance of this innovative approach to address the challenges developed by the national (regional or international depending on the kind of institution served) security as in its broadest sense as thinkable. The elements described along this chapter, when comprehensively applied and integrated to other intelligence disciplines (moving hand in hand) and due to their crisis preventive and decision-making positive in-

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[50] A.D. NELSON, *Patching the Wetware: Addressing the Human Factor in Information Security*, Graduate Research Project, Department of the Air Force, Air Force Institute of Technology, Air University, Ohio, 2011, pp. 1-62

[51] K.D. MITNICK, *The Art of Deception: Controlling the Human Element of Security*, Wiley Publishing, 2003; and T.THORNBURGH, *Social Engineering: The Dark Art*, InfoSec Conference 2004, ACM, 2005, pp. 133-135

fluential nature, may be used to help (they are not a kind of magic formula at all) solving structural and cross-cutting security dares[52] such as:

– *Pursue*: it reduces national and international threats, through the investigation of potential enemies networks, goals and activities. Here Socio-Cultural intelligence will analysis ambiguous, complicated and evolving information. Besides, it will deeply understand influential environmental factors linked to potential enemies *modus operandi* and how their behavior reveals superficially hidden intents and motivations.

– *Prevent*: it avoids menaces to turn into crisis. In this framework, Socio-Cultural intelligence will better catch emerging national, regional or global trends and threats, in addition to enemies' causes and processes of opposition, deriving from various and specific human factors. Thus, based on those precious data, effective strategies of prevention and opposition (such us disengagement or behavior modification for example) will be laid down.

– *Protect*: for professionals serving in the security field, it is and must be a vocation, a mission, centered around reducing vulnerabilities and increase resilience of the interested system. In this specific case, Socio-Cultural intelligence is key to identify suspicious behaviors within a wide range of contexts, developing analysis of behavioral indicators and meanings, connecting them to deep knowledge of environmental vulnerabilities. Moreover, it will enhance resilience and protection, promptly and effectively advising decision-makers.

– *Communicate*: effectively with a wide range of actors (the public, different stakeholders and communities). Communication is fundamental to create and increase security. Here Socio- Cultural intelligence, including the construction of mutually beneficial and long lasting relationships as a constitutive element, may provide interesting insights on how different actors communicate and react to certain messages, limiting dangerous misunderstandings, while, improving the overall communication within the Intelligence Community, benefiting an effective information sharing as well.

Examples of applied sociocultural intelligence:
1. *Human Terrain Teams System (HTTS)*[53]: This US military project started in 2005, when the military realized the urgent need of having a much deeper

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[52] UK OFFICE FOR SECURITY AND COUNTER-TERRORISM, *Countering the Terrorist Threat: Social and Behavioural Science, How Academia and Industry can Play their Part*, Directorate of the Home Office, Crown copyright, 2010, pp. 1-17

[53] M.VAROUHAKIS, *Challenges and Implications of Human Terrain Analysis for Strategic Intelligence Thinking*, Conference on Defence and Military Intelligence, Political Studies Associ-

socio-cultural understanding of the operational environment in which it was engaged, due to the strong opposition it was facing in those scenarios, precisely Afghanistan and Iraq.

The program, challenged by many odds such as methodological problems (in mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis), difficulties linked to the deployment of scientists (civilians) within high-risk combat areas and translation related troubles, demonstrated to be truly valuable and consisted on the deployment of social scientists teams, called Human Terrain Teams, within operational fields to provide the military with valuable socio-cultural insights regarding local actors and influential factors. The HTT's contribution was absolutely traversal participating to a wide range of operations including Village Stability Operations (VSO) and Special Operations Forces (SOP).

Despite one of the program's biggest challenge was represented by integrating HTT at a strategic level, in cooperation to Intelligence officers (not understanding the specialized expertise brought by social scientists, quite often), this integration realized great achievements in terms of adding strong methodological rigor and theory-based prediction to Intelligence analysis. In fact, probably the greatest success of the HTTS was gained incorporating Human Terrain Teams into Information Dominance Centers (IDC), showing the social science capacity to supply extremely qualitative long-term Intelligence analysis, rather than short-term, collection focused analysis.

Many pages[54] have been written on HTTS and it received a lot of criticisms[55], mostly from the American Anthropologists Association, due to the danger of sending civilian scientists to dangerous areas and ethical accusations such as the risk, for researchers, to harm their research subjects, if the info collected were used in targeting operations.

2. *The Stability Operations Information Center (SOIC)*[56]: this innovative commanders' tool, finding its origins in the Major General Michael T.

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ation, 2015, pp. 1-11

[54] See among others, M.Zehfuss, *Culturally Sensitive War? The Human Terrain System and the Seduction of Ethics*, Security Dialogue, 43 [2], 2012, pp. 175-190; M.Hill, *Terrorists are Human Beings: Mapping the US Army Human Terrain System Program*, Differences, 20 [2-3], 2009, pp. 250-278; M.Mcfate, F.Fondacaro, *Human Terrain System During the First Four Years*, Prism, 2[4], 2006, pp. 63-82

[55] http://www.aaanet.org/issues/AAA-Opposes-Human-Terrain-System-Project.cfm

[56] Coin ADVISORY AND ASSISTANCE TEAM (CAAT) HEADQUARTERS, *The Stability Operations Information Centres (SOIC): Comprehensive Understanding for Comprehensive Operations*, HQ ISAF, Afghanistan, 2010, pp. 1-18

Flynn bright idea, and recently applied during US operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, may have the potential to successfully face the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE), trying to supply the long awaited *holistic* approach.

SOIC is intended to create a broad civil-military information sharing organization to support COIN operations and more broadly Population-centric operations, it is not a Fusion Center (FC), it is a much broader information environment aiming at providing a truly deep environmental understanding of operational contexts through a multidisciplinary lens.

SOIC use to give large attention toward the development of ties with the widest range of local, national and regional actors, its activity may be defined as a multi-discipline intelligence and information sharing, with the aim of creating timely, realistic and useful reports, capable of efficiently advise decision-making. A very interesting feature of those centers is an organizational structure based on a team of teams system, pooling together various expertise, and focusing on a complex network of groups and cells, from the most important Population Support Group, dealing with environmental understanding and constructed around experts having different backgrounds such us social scientists, officers (locals and foreigners) traveling to gather direct information, and STRATCOM experts to; a Fusion Cell, made by intelligence collectors and analysts, having the crucial role to develop kinetic operations (targeting for instance) when necessary; a Support Cell, created by different kind of professionals such as communication systems maintenance, and dealing mainly with logistics and technical support; and an Exploitation and Co-ordination Cell, collecting a pool of Law Enforcement experts to operate forensic exploitation and criminal investigation, as an instance.

Also in this case, criticisms arose over the validity of the project, mostly about the segregation of "white" and "green" analyses[57], happening for a combined variety of reasons such as the inclusion of analysts not possessing top-secret clearance or the lack of physical space within classic Fusion Centers.

Furthermore, another interesting US project is represented by the Distributed Common Ground Station (DCGS)[58], storing, organizing, divulging and updating socio-cultural information coming from social science experts, to analysts and operatives.

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[57] B. CONNABLE, *Military Intelligence Fusion for Complex Operations a New Paradigm*, Occasional Paper, RAND National Defence Research Institute, 2012, p. 11
[58] http://dcgsa.apg.army.mil/

3. *Civilian Programs:* At a civilian level, some program has been established by a number of countries as an effort to address the flaws of the current IC structure, collection and analysis and the new challenges posed by the nowadays global complex reality, to national and international security:

– *MINERVA initiative*[59]: This program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), is a university-based social science research program, established in 2008, aiming at dealing with new topics (that were previously disregarded by the IC) resulting to be extremely relevant in terms of national security. The central goal is that of identifying and understand socio-cultural elements defining the identities of various world's regions and able to affect the present and future stability of these areas. This is developed through focusing the research efforts of the American top universities and research institutions to detect causes of present and future insecurity and provide qualitative analysis capable to effectively support present and future decision-makers. MINERVA is only one of the many US efforts to develop civil socio-cultural expertise, such as National Security Education Program, DoD Regional Centers and the Consortium for Complex Operations[60].

– *Academic Outreach Program*[61]: This Canadian Security and Intelligence Service-based initiative, established in 2008 and linked to the already present awareness and attempt (underlined by the Canadian Military) to enhance cross-cultural competences within the army[62], starting from the true integration of Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) within the intelligence analytical framework, aims at creating a multidisciplinary, cross-cultural and international network of different partners such as NGOs, academia and civil society, to take part in the Canadian SIS activities. In this case, the stated objectives are to empower a broad threats mitigation strategy, effectively channeling different analytical resources to tackle menaces that are more specific in nature, and to fix cultural biases and collection flaws in order to increase the quality of the analytical outputs, efficiently supporting decision- making.

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[59] http://minerva.dtic.mil/overview.html

[60] See http://www.nsep.gov/; http://www.dsca.mil/programs/dod-regional-centers and http://cco.ndu.edu/

[61] https://www.csis.gc.ca/pblctns/wrldwtch/2010/takngstck-en.php and https://www.csis-scrs.gc.ca/bts/cdmctrchen.php

[62] B.R. SELMESKI, *Military Cross-Cultural Competence: Core Concepts and Individual Development*, Centre for Security Armed Forces and Society, Royal Military College of Canada, 2007, pp. 1-27

– *Partnership for Conflict Crime and Security Research*[63] *(PaCCS):* This is a UK-based program, established through the Global Uncertainties Program by the UK Research Council, in 2008. Also in this case, the project establishes a cross-disciplines cooperation, including public, academic and private actors. The pivotal role is that of addressing and improve the understanding of current and future global security challenges, focusing on specific field of analysis, such as conflicts, cybersecurity and transnational crime, enhancing information sharing and effectively supporting leaders in taking sound, acknowledged and effective decisions.

3. Russia a Case of Study

Russia is absolutely well aware of the features of the innovative and NATO codified Hybrid Warfare and, as a smart and comprehensive strategy to fight it, it combines a variety of asymmetric operations and actors (economic, informational, diplomatic, military and so on), within which the human dynamics understanding and exploitation are well entrenched.

In the Socio-Cultural intelligence domain, Soft power rather than Hard power deserves the predominant attention, but what for the Western diplomacy is all about making themselves attractive, for the Kremlin means: «a matrix of tools and methods to reach foreign policy goals without the use of arms but by exerting information and other levers of influence[64]», that is a quite different understanding.

As the water described by the aforementioned Sun Tzu, the Kremlin makes use of a fluid ideology intruding nations, social movements and groups to manipulate them, using their own languages andchannels to serve its will.

According to the truly helpful and skilfully made analysis of the issue, provided by Peter Pomerantsev and Michael Weiss, Russia employs three main kind of hybrid arms, the weaponisation of information, money and culture/ideas, exploiting many strategic conduits such as media, political parties, group influencers, finance, private companies, NGOs, think tanks and cultural activities[65].

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[63] http://www.paccsresearch.org.uk/about/
[64] V. PUTIN, *Vladimir Putin on Foreign Policy: Russia and the Changing world*, Valdai, 2012
[65] P. POMARANTSEV, M. WEISS, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*, a special report presented by The Interpreter, Institute of Modern Russia, 2014, pp. 1-42

More specifically, *weaponisation of information* is used, as showed by the Al Jazeera documentary *Air Strikes and Media Misses*[66], under different circumstances and methods, not only by Russia but by many international actors such as the US, Turkey, Israel and India for instance.

The use of information as a weapon, is the heart of the Russian *dezinformatsiya* machine, developed through, first, the media and especially RT (the Russian international news channel) broadcasting in Russian, English, Arabic, Spanish and French, counting on more than 300 million USD budget per year, with the task of confusing the reality (the truth is everything but important, the new goal is to create the reality), making the West appear bad and supporting useful false stories and conspiracy theories, exploiting strategic communication channels such us Western voices.

Second, managing armies of "trolls"[67] to fight on social media, messing up social networks and their contents (again confusion and reality creation), and, third, infiltrating international media with advertisement and editorial inserts, making psychological pressure over and expelling undesired journalists as well.

Weaponisation of culture/ideas, funding and engaging many strategic conduits as intellectual influencers, think tanks, political parties (from far-right to far-left), as demonstrated by the strong effort to build stable relationships with European nationalist political parties[68] and religious and social movements worldwide. The aim is to make strategic use of the collected cultural understanding.

Weaponisation of money, here the game is played around diplomatic aggressiveness (menacing of cutting gas supplies for example), reiding (or stepping in a company through shares and using every available mean to take the business over) and corruption of companies' board, then operating favorable lobbying. The whole strategy is structured to exploit the so called asymmetric interdependence[69], or, making the enemy think to heavily depend on your resources.

To go deeper into the question, through an instance, and focusing on the activities in the Baltic States, and among various kinds of intrusions within the Baltic's political, economical and social spheres[70], the European Center

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[66] Watch the whole video on http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/listeningpost/ 2015/10/syria-air-strikes-mediamisses-151010110426139.html

[67] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house

[68] http://www.rferl.org/content/russia-france-national-front-loan-le-pen/26707339.html

[69] http://kms2.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ESDP/91773/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/9bdae328-1b65406a-8b40-863985f9690a/en/Power_Audit_EU_Russia _1107.pdf

[70] In order to have a more profound insight into these methods of influence, please see A.GRIGAS, *Legacies, Coercion and Soft Power: Russian Influence in the Baltic States*, The Means and

for Minority issues reported the following "strange" activities[71]: in order to get the public opinion ready for separation and make people aware of existing secessionist movements (that obviously did not exist before, they are created by the Kremlin as in the same wise as it constructs reality), flyers inciting separatist sentiments and actions and red paints on buildings' walls citing «NATO is terror» for instance, were found in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia[72] (in this case they were discovered in 2008, curiously only months after the Russian invasion of Georgia).

Interestingly, in Lithuania, red paints written in a precarious Lithuanian language citing «Russians go home» were seen on the walls of the Irina Rozova's daughter private house[73], and Irina is a pro- Russian minority politician, member of the "Russian Alliance" party.

Moreover, similar movements were registered on social media as well, Facebook pages calling for separatism were launched targeting strategic areas (usually dens of Russian inhabitants), in Estonia, where its North-Eastern region was renamed the Baltic Russian Republic and cut-off from the national map[74], in Latvia where the Latgale region was called the Latgalian's People Republic, even showing a new flag[75], and in Lithuania, that saw its Vilnius region becoming the People's Republic of Vilnius[76] and calling for the "green men" (Russian forces) to support the secessionist effort.

Those moves are not to be intended as sporadic and independent from each other, they are all co- ordinated, in fact all the on-line pages made references to separatist activities within other regions, and they are definitely part of a much broader project, counting on thirty secessionist movements in 12 states, aiming at re-taking control over the Eastern European lands, started in Ukraine in 2014, and serving the Kremlin's Eurasian Grand Strategy[77].

Ultimately, Russia plays different games in different regions: «In the Baltics it destabilizes; in Eastern Europe, co-opts power; in Western Europe, divides and rules; in USA, distracts; in Middle East and South America, fans

Ends of Russian Influence Abroad Series, Chatham House Briefing Paper, Russia and Eurasia Programme, 2012, pp. 1-16

[71] M. KUKLYS, R. CARSTOCEA, *Instigations of Separatism in the Baltic States*, ECMI issue Brief, #35, 2015, pp. 1-18

[72] http://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/klaipeda/miesto-pulsas/uz-provokacijas-byla-670664#.VXW-jEEakDcu

[73] http://www.lrytas.lt/lietuvos-diena/kriminalai/vandalai-isterliojo-seimo-nares-dukters-nama.htm

[74] https://www.facebook.com/BalticRussia

[75] https://www.facebook.com/pages/Wileńska-Republika-Ludowa

[76] http://www.delfi.lt/news/daily/lithuania/ispuolis-ar-nevykes-pokstas-agituoja-uz-vilniaus-liaudies-respublika.d? Id=67034814

[77] I. MELIANAS, *Mūsų laukia Vilnijos, Klaipėdos ir Ignalinos 'liaudies respublikų' įkūrimas? (Separatism in the Post-Soviet Space and its Instigators)*, Delfi, 2015

flames»[78]. The Kremlin uses its deep understanding of the enemy's socio-cultural environment to plan the strategy that best suits specific areas and regions and, interestingly to this research, it happens under the eyes of a Western Intelligence Community that is too focused on engaging the enemy target, for example detecting and shutting down cyber attacks, searching for hidden developments of innovative weapons, aggressive deployment of forces and other technical capabilities. In my opinion, if the socio-cultural perspective was already applied to the IC mind-set, these activities could have been timely detected and limited, including the still unclear aims and likely future developments of the Russian military build-up and offensive in Syria[79].

4. Conclusions

Concluding the paper and understanding the large amount of resources that are required by the discussed revolutionary Grand Design (obviously incorporating efforts related to Social Media Intelligence, operations and STRATCOM as well), individual countries, such as Italy for example, could find the effort as unbearable for the limited possibilities they may rely on, however, I strongly recommend, on a smaller scale, the application of the socio-cultural perspective to the national Intelligence structure and mind set, as a starting point. A goal that can be shared and achieved formally cooperating with specialized centers of research outside the pure Intelligence national bodies or enhancing the creation of the required skills and expertise through the development of a broader business intelligence project[80], at a national level.

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[78] P. POMARANTSEV, M. WEISS, *The Menace of Unreality: How the Kremlin Weaponizes Information, Culture and Money*, a special report presented by The Interpreter, Institute of Modern Russia, 2014, p. 24

[79] The US Congress launched an investigation over these flaws, see http://uk.business-sinsider.com/r-exclusivecongress-probing-us-spy-agencies-possible-lapses-on-russia-2015-10?r=US&IR=T and http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/10/09/ uk-mideast-crisis-syria-russia-propagand-idUKKCN0S325U20151009

[80] The IS use of this specific strategy, that is fairly demonstrated by the expertise with which it, to make just a couple of examples, communicates, approaches the international arena, finance itself and intrudes local, national and international groups, is well documented and explained on http://www.sicurezzaterrorismosocieta.it/ and http://www.itstime.it/, while, concerning China, it is very interesting to see how it employs its leading international think tanks, see OPEN SOURCE CENTRE REPORT, *Profile of MSS-Affiliated PRC Foreign Policy Think Tank*, OSC, 2011, pp. 1-34; Iran has been quoted because it has drastically increased its spending over cyber warfare capabilities, it is a country full of resources, its media are politically driven and it is currently developing strategic diplomatic ties, just to raise a bunch of thoughts on the issue.

Furthermore, taking up the American example, it is clear how this specific project might be better suited for the interests and possibilities of larger entities. Regional stakeholders for instance, such as the NATO alliance, whom is currently researching on and applying some of the discussed approaches such as Strategic Communication for instance, and may take the socio-cultural perspective as a new development frontier, benefiting of the comprehensiveness and uniform, in terms of methodology and material employability, that it currently lacks[81].

Besides, the EU and its, specifically interested by this research, Intelligence Analysis Centre[82] (INTCEN, being aware that a federation is not a union and of other relevant contextual and internal problems), might look at Human Dynamics as a valuable and effective paradigm and operational field as well.

Reminding the profound validity of the re-adoption of the social-cultural perspective and the broader advancement of Human Dynamics within the global Defence and Security domain, and in order to successfully face the challenges posed by the new phenomenon of *Hybrid* conflicts, the current international reality not only demonstrate but also loudly claim for the fulfillment of the urgent needs underlined along this research.

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[81] S. Tatham, R. Lepage, Nato *Strategic Communication: More to be Done?*, National Defence Academy of Latvia, Centre for Security and Strategic Research, Policy Paper n. 01, 2014, pp. 1-63

[82] To know little more about INTCEN see http://www.statewatch.org/analyses/no-223-eu-intcen.pdf and http://www.eeas.europa.eu/factsheets/docs/20150206_factsheet _eu_intcen_en.pdf

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