

A REEVALUATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY ON INTELLIGENCE ANALYSES

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Abstract: *The complexity of the contemporary world requires a multidisciplinary approach of the innovative processes and phenomena of the social scene. Diversification of security threats and, simultaneously, the multiplication of the sources of information require the adaptation of the tools specific to intelligence analyse, both on the operational and analytical level. In this context, this paper proposes a reassessment of established implications of social psychology on intelligence analysis to highlight their relevance in a world saturated of data, where the analyst plays a role more and more significant.*

Key-words: *psychology of analyses, cognitive biases*

1. INTRODUCTION

Although very young, even in the history of social sciences which are, however, of recent date, social psychology has gained a distinct place due to practical applicability and usefulness of the studies that decode human specific mechanisms and processes. Metaphorically, S. Moscovici (1994) defined social psychology as a "machine for making gods", i.e. a tool that can lead to the optimization of individual behavior.

The involvement of psychosocial mechanisms and processes in an extremely new field – intelligence - is recent, but inevitable in the lights of the previously mentioned aspects. In this paper, we try to highlight the main ways in which psychology can be a useful tool for the correct decoding of the meanings of national security data.

2. THE IMPACT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS ON THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of information is therefore an active process aimed at specific events/issues addressed from different perspectives, which allow competing hypothesis testing and understanding and also the explanation of the overall problem. In this equation, the essential role of the human factor is to give "value" to the primary data by integrating disparate data and interpreting them. Integration and interpretation involve making judgments that give meaning.

The full engagement of a person in certain life situations allow the progressive development of sustainable ways of relating to the world because of the accumulated experience.

Attitudes are generally characterized by a certain emotional coloration whose intensity scans on a continuum, moving from the most extreme one to the most favorable. Emotional experiences that are characterized by a high level of generality can be considered attitudes: for example, love for someone's own country, when is internalized becomes an attitude. However, there are times when attitudes are stronger than some emotional states: fear of snakes can be overcome if a friend life is threaten (there were times when people who could not swim endangered their life by throwing himself into the water to save someone else).

In 1967, Daryl Bem formulated the self-perception theory, which was a revolutionary hypothesis for that moment: when someone has not formed an attitude on the subject under review and has no clues to foreshadow, he concludes that the attitude towards the object is consistent with the way he acted previously in relation to it. In fact, when judging a particular item we all use this criterion. Usually, we believe that people's attitudes are consistent with the behaviors they exhibit. If our attitudes on a particular item is not crystallized, we tend to believe that they are the same with the behaviors that we have performed (even if there were contextual circumstances that dictated that behavior). Although this claim has been questioned, there are specialized studies (Chaiken & Baldwin, 1981) that certified its validity.

Some of the problems that may arise during the process of intelligence analysis are generated by specifically human mental processes. This is because the analysis of data is in itself a mental process, thus is

subjected to human biases and limits. Clichés, expectations, prejudices, cognitive laziness, mental sets, experience are all active filters for decoding and interpreting reality.

Deformations can be determined by the fact that the individual has only a few knowledge filters (structured by its own experience), but also because he lends those provided by other individuals. The fact that someone gives us information (correct or not) regarding social fact may, at least initially, to induce major distort of perception. Previous information we hold can profoundly affect how we evaluate the situation. In this context it is worth mentioning the significant impact of prior information on the way we interpret different situations.

In addition, people are building their own version of "reality" based on information provided by their senses, but this version of reality is mediated by complex mental processes that determine which information we comply and what is the significance attributed to them. What people perceive and how they process this information after receiving them is strongly influenced by past experience, education, cultural values, role requirements or organizational rules.

Personal opinions are neither good nor bad, they are inevitable.

By categorization of reality, analysts include in the same class of objects or persons, items of the same kind. The personal experience is structured and interpreted saving time and effort, and therefore the individual adapts to the surrounding reality without the cognitive process each item charged. Also, the organization of data into classes, according to the principle of economy of effort, facilitates access to further information received from the environment. Forming impressions is facilitated by the rapidity of perception and how the data are interpreted.

Judging others by contrast refers to the fact that each of us endow their own personality traits as being extremely important. On the other hand, evaluating other items, everything is minimized or despised. To consider themselves a benchmark for judging others is just as counterproductive as it is proven to be evaluating other cultures with the standards of their own culture. In this context, based on the idea of cultural relativism, I suggest, by analogy, the concept of **individual relativism**.

The existence of a majority of opinions and polarization of views can cause distortion of interpretation. It is enough for someone to notice that other people are criticized and he will keep to behave dissimilar to that category. In 2000, Janes and Olson proposed the concept of jeers pressure to describe the influence of the ironies made by people from our environment.

A related effect is the tendency to give more importance to the first information we have about someone, the following being considered less relevant. Similarly, when reading or hearing a text we tend to attach greater importance to the information presented at the beginning. The same line of ideas may be supplemented by operational failures resulting from an error typical of individuals: when you have some information, both positive and negative, the negative side of them is overevaluated.

At the same time, analysts' mood can greatly influence how they appreciate a situation. Although there are opinions that the wellbeing or unhappiness lead to increased empathy towards those in a similar position, a more vehement opinion is that in such situations, self-centered attitude (induced especially by negative moods) is an obstacle to understanding others (Radu, Iluț și Matei, 1994).

The evaluation reflection process refers to the fact that the individual assumes certain qualities or defects based on what others consider him to be. False consensus refers to the need to support their bad mental attitudes, opinions or actions by assigning to others the same preferences, attitudes, opinions. Thus, although individuals have no objective data to confirm their hypothesis, they consider their own analysis as normal, under the belief

that, in a similar situation, and others would do in a similar way.

Another relevant cognitive schema for social perception is the halo effect, when individuals extrapolate what is known regarding one person to all his behaviours. Halo effect is unlawful and inappropriate extrapolation of assessment of a sphere of personal behaviors, to others who objectively do not have the same level of quality.

Equally, the need for coherence and cognitive equilibrium determine unobjective search and selection of the information which confirms the initial assumptions on the other, which is - the confirmation of the hypothesis. Each analyst has cognitive and evaluative schema or theories, which represent filters applied in the current work. Subsequently, the information available will be unconsciously selected or modified so that the former hypothesis to be confirmed.

3. CONCLUSION

For each of us it is important to realize that the received information is a specific interpretation of the person providing the data and therefore each must realize the need to consider those being aware of the risk of exposing himself to various errors of others.

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