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INFORMACIJSKO BOJEVANJE Z MEHKO IN TRDO MOČJO: PRIMER IZRAELA IN HAMASA

INFORMATION WARFARE BY MEANS OF SOFT AND SHARP POWER: THE CASE OF ISRAEL AND HAMAS

Povzetek   Informacijsko bojevanje je vrsta strateškega komuniciranja z modeli moči, kot sta mehka in trda moč. Raziskava je pokazala, da veljata teoretični okvir in domneva, da najpomembnejši modeli moči ne vključujejo le zmožnosti, zmogljivosti in namena, temveč tudi sredstva, metode ali tehnike držav in nedržavnih akterjev. Primer spora med Izraelom in Hamasom v Gazi, ki je trajal od decembra 2017 do marca 2018, kaže na to, da Izrael uporablja mehko, Hamas pa trdo moč. V članku analiziramo modele moči, nato pa z metodologijo pripovedi in protipripovedi Izraela in Hamasa predstavimo njihov način informacijskega bojevanja. Hamas si je kot nedržavni akter sicer pridobil naklonjenost javnosti, vendar tega ni znal izkoristiti za doseganje drugih ciljev. Zmaga v informacijski bitki z bodisi mehko ali trdo močjo namreč še ne pomeni, da je konflikt končan. V sklepu ugotavljamo, da nedržavni akterji, kot je Hamas, ki se bolj nagibajo k nadzoru kot k odprtosti, manj uporabljajo mehko moč. Namesto tega poskušajo odvračati pozornost s trdo močjo, tako da vplivajo na najpomembnejše načine izražanja ter manipulirajo z množičnimi mediji in občutljivostjo javnosti. V primerjavi z njimi države, na primer Izrael, za doseganje svojih ciljev uporabljajo privabljanje in prepričevanje, torej mehko moč. V obeh primerih je treba v zavest publike, kamor spadajo svetovni voditelji, splošno prebivalstvo in medijske hiše, le usidrati neko prepričanje, čeprav brez dejstev.

Ključne besede   *Strateško komuniciranje, informacijsko bojevanje, Hamas in Izrael, mehka in trda moč.*

Abstract   Information warfare is a type of strategic communication realized through models of power such as soft and sharp power. Investigation provides evidence sustaining the theoretical framework and premise that the essential models of power are not just the ability, capability and intent, but also the means, method or technique of both states and non-state actors. The example of a dispute between Israel and Hamas in Gaza, from December 2017 to March 2018, shows Israel wielding soft power and Hamas wielding

sharp power. This article reviews the models of power, then uses the methodology of the narrative and counter-narrative of Israel and Hamas to show their information warfare campaign. Hamas, a non-state actor, succeeded in gaining sympathy, but was unable to utilize this to further any other objectives. Winning an information battle by soft or by sharp power does not mean that the conflict is over. The conclusion shows that non-state actors, e.g. Hamas, that prioritize control over openness are deficient in soft power projection, so use sharp power to create distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of mass media and public sensitivities, rather than by the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states, e.g. Israel. In both, all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders, the mass population and media outlets.

Key words   *Strategic communication, information warfare, Hamas and Israel, soft and sharp power.*

Introduction   The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication which is waged by those means outlined in the descriptive models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model. The prescriptive research method of using these models provides sound, already proven, theoretical grounds. The logical process of analysis based on these models is further tested qualitatively in this article through data sets of the narrative and counter-narrative of two sides to a conflict, the non-state actor Hamas and the state of Israel.

The research process or approach to addressing the hypothesis of this article is first to define communication and strategic communication and explain the models of power in context to them. Then the data will be presented. The research question of why soft power is used by some and not others, why sharp power is used by some and not others, and why some cannot use either soft power or sharp power, permeates throughout the article.

This leads to the conclusions that link the hypothesis, the models and the data to the answer to the research question, which is that non-state actors, for example Hamas, which prioritize control over openness, are deficient in soft power projection, and so use sharp power to create distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities, rather than the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states, for example Israel.

The methodology of handling the data sets was to gather, process, interpret and analyze the narrative and counter-narrative of events deductively, using the models of power to ascertain when states and non-state actors utilize soft and/or sharp power in their information warfare in order to attain strategic communication objectives. The data were primary media material, prepared and delivered by each side, and quoted by

newspapers, TV, radio, and social media in their efforts to influence and sway opinion. The information provided by both sides was in three languages, English, Arabic and Hebrew. The analysis unveiled that there was the same content in all three languages.

The data of the narrative and counter-narrative were gathered systematically on the day of the broadcast and stored digitally, labelling the time of the broadcast and the time of data collection. The data were processed by looking at the narrative of each of the events and by summarizing the content. To consider the impact of the narrative, the counter-narrative or response was the second set of data gathered. This second set of data was also stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast and the time of data collection. The significance of date/time stamping was to enable interpretation of whether the narrative had had an impact by influencing or swaying opinion that was observed in the counter-narrative.

If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, that meant there had been an impact or sway of opinion and it was coded 1, and if not, then it was coded 0. Data that were coded 1 were interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with the model of each power.

This methodology of an analysis of the narrative and counter-narrative shows the techniques each side used to attempt to influence and sway opinion. The models of soft and sharp power have different techniques, so such an analysis deductively determined which model of power in information warfare was being used to attempt to achieve strategic communication objectives. In this manner the content analysis examining patterns in the narrative and counter-narrative was able to determine that Israel used soft power and Hamas used sharp power in their respective information warfare. The meaningful pieces of content in the analysis coded 1 were thus determined in accordance with the models of soft and sharp power.

The structure of the argument to achieve this was a content analysis of the narrative and counter-narrative of two sides in a conflict waging information warfare using the models of soft and sharp power which are elements of strategic communication. The analysis places the narrative of the two actors in the context of the different models of power, and within this context showed the relevance of information warfare and thereby the significance of the case of Israel and Hamas.

The sample of data used and described in this article was the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. This was the first pre-stage of regular Palestinian protests at the Gaza border fence in what has become known as "The March of the Return". The narrative is about the violence of both sides attempting to sway and influence the opinions of others about the events. An investigation into the events brought the United Nations Human Rights Council to debate and approve five anti-Israel resolutions on 22 March 2019. This included an arms embargo against Israel and the prosecution of the Israeli Defence Force for war crimes.

The dispute of Israel and Hamas is their ongoing military conflict on the border of Gaza. The Gaza Strip is 11 km wide and 51 km long at its maximum points and should have been part of the State of Palestine as proposed by a United Nations' General Assembly Resolution on 29 November 1947. Egypt controlled it from 1947 until the 1967 War, and then Israel occupied it until 2005. Israel had a unilateral disengagement and withdrew all civilians and soldiers and dismantled all settlements in 2005. An election in Gaza in 2007 led to the governance of Hamas in Gaza, while the urban areas in the other Palestinian territory, the West Bank, has been governed by the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the Palestinian Authority since the 1993 Oslo Accords with Israel.

There have been unsuccessful attempts to bring Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to national unity, as the former is in part an Iranian proxy and is also funded by Qatar and does not recognize the existence of the State of Israel, while the latter recognizes the existence of the State of Israel and is funded in part by the USA, the EU and local taxation. Since 2007 there have been constant violent exchanges on the border between Gaza and Israel; the firing of rockets and missiles by Hamas at cities in Israel and an Israeli armed response including significant campaigns or wars in 2008 and 2014. Israel maintains a land and sea blockage and embargo of Gaza. The ongoing dispute between Hamas and Israel is not confined to territory. This article shows that the dispute between the two is also being waged by information warfare to sway the opinion of others, be it world leaders or the general public.

The structure of this article continues by defining communication and strategic communication and explains the models of power in context to these through a review of their definitions. The article then presents the data gathered in the form of the narrative and counter-narrative, the interpreted data, and the deductive analysis. Such a methodology qualifies the link to the research question of why a state actor, Israel, wages information warfare by soft power and why a non-state actor, Hamas, wages information warfare by sharp power. The study concludes that the state, Israel, cannot use sharp power and that the non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power.

This leads to the conclusion that when waging information warfare non-state actors such as Hamas can cause distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities (sharp power), rather than the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states such as Israel. All that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders.

1 COMMUNICATION AND STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Strategic communication placed in the context of the model of soft and sharp power provides a better insight as to why any form of communication has long been accepted as integral to the conduct of warfare. Farwell (2012) provides examples of how this is the case through the principles of communication that throughout history have

made a critical difference to the outcomes of crises, conflicts, politics, and diplomacy across different cultures and societies. He shows how major leaders have moved audiences; figures in history from Julius Caesar to Winston Churchill, Napoleon to Hugo Chavez, Martin Luther to Barack Obama and Ronald Reagan have forged communication strategies to influence audiences. The strategic mindset is similar even if the technology is not; Obama used social media and the internet while Luther used the printing press. Now more than ever, an effective communication strategy is of paramount importance in the arenas of national security, diplomacy, and military operations. A 24/7 television, radio, and internet news cycle, paired with an explosion in social media, demands it (Farwell, 2012).

James Carey provides a synthesis of how communication in the military sphere has for many years mainly been viewed as a transmission system and an organizational function for production and distribution. Effective communication leads to improved performance. Well-designed communication programmes are essential for sharing strategic plans and providing other important organizational information which informs the goals, objectives and priorities that are integral to any military campaign (Carey, 1992).

Strategic communication as a sub-set of communication, according to Thorson (2018), has emerged as a mode of thought and practice promising to enhance state communication; encompassing long-established activities including public diplomacy, public relations, nation branding, and information operations. According to him the mode of power in the art of communication strategy sees concepts, doctrines, and activities employed which include psychological operations, military information support operations, propaganda, and public diplomacy that can be summed up as information warfare. Each of these use techniques observed in the models of soft or sharp power. In waging information warfare, be it by the soft power or the sharp power model, the objectives are to create and counter threats, such as propaganda, hybrid warfare, fake news, and election tampering, and it is often taken for granted that states are inferior to their non-state challengers in these domains, as non-state actors are less constrained by laws and regulation (Thorson, 2018).

The significance of this is provided by Steyn, who elaborates on how strategic communication is a critical organizational management process. The main driving force behind the increased interest in strategic communication is because complex changing environments require even more communication, and when functioning across international borders require legitimacy to operate (Steyn, 2003).

This is developed by Hallahan et al, who consider that strategic communication as a military tool ties objective to core values, with the mission statement as the blueprint for communication to sustain momentum and rationale and to spur innovation. To succeed it needs to convey a consistent message thread that is clear and simple in order to capture attention and engage a conversation that generates

support, motivates behaviours, and, through empowerment, allows the audience to participate in creating the change without alienating them. The audience may have multiple generations, gender, ethnicity, geographies and functional areas (Hallahan et al., 2007).

Argenti et al. show that effective strategic communication creates engagement and increases the likelihood of success in any conflict, considering that victory needs a positive post-conflict reception by the international community. Well-designed communication provides the tools for a stronger and more consistent expression of the brand that is *per se* the ideology of the victor. Storytellers need to communicate the message with authenticity, purpose and consistency, playing close attention to each audience's concerns, potential resistance, requirements and objectives (Argenti et al., 2005).

This means that information warfare needs to engage both populations and world leaders to influence and sway opinion from the onset of any conflict. Zerfass et al. show such developments in the rollout of an effective strategic communication programme which involves an education process that needs to be designed to build support, maintain strength and shift attitudes in accordance with the established objectives. They show how messages are most effective when communicated through more than one medium, using multiple communication outlets such as print, the internet, social media, town hall meetings and most importantly, face-to-face discussions. Their conclusions are that lasting impact requires two-way communication, so feedback must be sought in order to understand what is working and what is not working, and to make changes accordingly to reflect input (Zerfass et al, 2007). This article adopts this finding and codes the narrative and the counter-narrative of the data sets deductively as a measure of effect, and then classifies the technique in either the model of soft power or the model of sharp power.

1.1 The relevance of power to strategic communication

The research question of this article seeks an analysis of strategic communication by means of waging information warfare through two models of power, that of soft and sharp power. In order to explain this, the article continues with a review of the definitions of the different models of power, and then proceeds to show how Hamas, a non-state actor, uses sharp power in its struggle against a state actor, Israel, which uses soft power. In this aspect both are using communication in the strategic sense of waging war where the difference is in tactics or techniques, and this leads to different outcomes in the battle of information warfare.

In context, then, strategic communication is the umbrella of information warfare, and the models of power are relevant to non-state actors like Hamas, even though they were conceived as concepts and descriptors for state actors. The rationale of the emphasis on the state at the time they were conceived is explained by Mingst and Arreguín-Toft: because the Cold War arena was dominated by states and the bi-polar alliance system (Mingst and Arreguín-Toft, 2010). The rationale for also

looking at non-state actors after the end of the Cold War is provided by Muhittin, who explained that the bi-polar alliance system has ended, state borders have opened, and a process of globalization is going on that involves many other actors in addition to states (Muhittin, 2003).

2 MODELS OF POWER

Power has many definitions, according to the Merriam Webster Dictionary. One is the ability or capacity to do something or to act in a certain way. Another is the ability or capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. Both mean getting what you want when you want it. There are means, methods and techniques beyond that of the use of physical force, such as the threat thereof; you do not necessarily need to have the capability. All that is required is the perception that you have the capability. The essential difference then is not just the means, but rather the method or technique, the model or tactic.

This is significant in today's world, as noted by Carson, because news is distributed by social media and sometimes it relates to or denotes circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotions and personal belief. A population can be influenced by that which is not factual or fabrications of varying degrees, a.k.a. the buzzword "fake news" (Carson, 2019).

While there are many good reasons to have a critical view of generalizations, the idea of post-truth as described by Grathwohl captures important challenges about how power is exercised and information warfare waged (Grathwohl, 2017). In considering this, the article argues that non-state actors are as relevant as state actors, and that they wield power and wage information warfare. The more we research, the more we can distinguish between different models of power and how they are used and by whom, and in doing so we find that the same concepts and descriptors of power are applicable to both state and non-state actors.

In order to show this, the article will continue by detailing the main characteristics of each model of power to show the main differences between hard, soft, smart and sharp power. It will then discuss the case of a non-state actor, Hamas, showing that the descriptors of power originally used for states can also be applied to non-state actors.

2.1 Hard power and soft power

The field of international relations developing in the 20th century's Cold War brought Harvard Professor of Government Joseph Nye Jr to conceive the term "*hard power*" to describe the power interactions in the international arena. Hard power is a model of strategic communication that, according to him and those subsequently using the term, was based on coercion and was largely a function of a country's military or economic might through threat or payment. In other words, hard power meant a state getting what it wanted by waging information warfare by using or threatening to use force or sanctions, or by inducing compliance with rewards (Nye, 2009).

Technological evolution, the opening of borders, and increased travel and migration enabled people to communicate more than ever before. Communication was no longer just one-to-one such as over a phone, or one-to-many such as a radio or television broadcast. Communication was many-to-many, enabling a conversation and the mass population to express its opinions. It also enabled information warfare to be waged both by and against the mass population and non-state actors such as terrorist entities.

It was this new medium of mass two-way communication that brought Joseph Nye to coin the term "*soft power*" as another model of strategic communication, defined as a state or other actor waging information warfare to get what it wanted by attracting and persuading people through values, policies, institutions, and culture. The inference was that the new medium of communication could be used akin to a commercial advertisement or product branding in order to influence people (Nye, 2004).

Nye contrasted hard power and soft power when analyzing state activities. The latter, he said, is based on attraction (as opposed to the former which is coercion) and arises from the positive appeal of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies – as well as from a vibrant, independent civil society. It involves diplomacy, strategic communication, foreign assistance, civic action, economic reconstruction and development, as well as cultural influences such as art, literature, music, cinema, design, fashion, and even food.

Around the time that the US government began to acknowledge the importance of soft power in the mid-2000s, almost a decade after it was first voiced by Nye, Nye also realized that soft power is rarely enough on its own. When it is used to wage information warfare by states it is often to support or reinforce hard power. He therefore introduced "*smart power*" as an extension, a combination of hard and soft power where one reinforces the other. In other words, soft power when coupled with hard power would be a force multiplier in information warfare (Nye, 2009).

Nossel elaborates that smart power is also a model of strategic communication which is the careful calibration of hard power and soft power to achieve political objectives. It refers to an approach that underscores the necessity of a strong military, but also invests heavily in alliances, partnerships, and institutions at all levels to expand one's influence and establish the legitimacy of one's actions. Smart power is a useful term which provides a framework for analysis. It assists in showing when the framing of the information shades into deception, limiting the subject's voluntary choices and moving from persuasion to coercion (Nossel, 2004).

This is significant because smart power as a model of information warfare underscores the necessity of a state to expand its influence and establish the legitimacy of its actions. This highlights political objectives and military objectives against not only the state leadership but also the civilian population. This opens the door to considering how non-state actors also wield power to influence both state leadership and the mass population through social media, for example.

2.2   Sharp power

Yet another model of waging information warfare to achieve strategic communication objectives is "*sharp power*", as articulated by Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig in 2017. The intention was to provide a model that would explain the rising influence of authoritarian states in the democratic world as being something different to soft power, because the soft power characteristics of persuasion were not prevalent. They described it as a model of power that applies the deceptive use of information by authoritarian governments for hostile purposes employing subversion, manipulation, distraction, and lies. They provided the case studies of China and Russia, as examples of authoritarian states, who use information in a piercing, penetrating, or perforating manner in the political and information environments in the targeted countries, for example, a democracy like the United States. They demonstrated that this means, and method of influence is not soft (persuasion) or hard (coercion) but, in their view sharp (subversive) (Walker and Ludwig, 2017).

They provided cases to show how authoritarian states exploit freedoms in the Western world to covertly propagate their partisan and illiberal views, without engaging in a legitimate effort to share alternative ideas or broaden the debate. Authoritarian states can do this because they have not and do not play by the rules of governing democracies. They exploit the asymmetry of openness between their restrictive systems and democratic societies. The sharp power model is not principally about attraction or even persuasion; instead, it centres on distraction and manipulation. The means used to gain favourable public opinion are via sophisticated information technologies and social media with a reliance on subversion, bullying and pressure.

Sharp power is an excellent addition to the terminology. It does not make redundant the models of hard, soft and smart power, which are still very relevant to information warfare. Sharp power adds a model to help understand events that cannot be explained solely in terms of hard and soft power or their combined smart power. In other words, sharp power is when the target audience can no longer be discerning; it is determinism, where the target audience may not even be aware of it and so lacks the ability to be discerning.

3   NEW TERMS BUT THE SAME THREATS

The proliferation of terms, concepts and descriptors was very useful in understanding the wielding of power. These provide models that can be used to show how the waging of information warfare is to achieve strategic communication objectives. Each model also indicates a different means that could be contemplated to counter the threats posed. In doing so the model or the means used by actors, both state and non-state, also provide a methodology by which an analysis can be conducted to determine whether they were wielding hard, soft, smart or sharp power. While some means such as military or economic are clear to observe, as are their impacts and effects, it is not always easy to determine when or how an actor is using information and its impact

and effects. For example, hard power uses information to coerce, while soft power uses information to persuade – but both are using information to wage war. So, an additional way to differentiate them is to look at the responses of the target state or its population or the measures of effect, and not just at the means used.

For example, in using hard power, which is coercion or threat, there is no interest in what the target wants or thinks, because the objective is to make the target afraid, and so if it is afraid then hard power has been applied and has succeeded. Reassurance and mitigating the fear reduces the effectiveness of hard power. In soft power the adversary is trying to persuade the target to freely change. It could be described as voluntary change or voluntarism. In this case, everything depends on what the target wants or thinks, and there are a range of responses, none of which involve fear. If the target's opinions or actions change, then it has been effective.

So, measuring effect is an additional way to differentiate between the models of power, by looking at the responses of the target state or its population. This article does so by interpreting the counter-narrative as a response to the narrative of each side, after the narrative has been coded and then analyzed in the context of the models of power. This methodology of evaluating the means used, as well as the responses and measures of effect, makes it possible to determine whether soft or sharp power is being used.

Public diplomacy, for example, is soft power because it aims to persuade, but if the principle of voluntarism has been breached because the audience has been injected by fake news, that is sharp power, because the audience then lacks the ability to be discerning. Sharp power is offensive by piercing, penetrating, or perforating the political and information environments in the targeted countries. The techniques of sharp power involve psychological warfare and propaganda which are all very similar, and not too different from commercial marketing strategies. Product branding, advertising and market research clearly show how vulnerable and influenced any person is. The measures of effect can be determined quantitatively by surveys or qualitatively by responses in the sway of opinion.

Sharp power differs from soft power, which harnesses the allure of culture and values to enhance a country's strength. When actors use sharp power, it is accompanied by a determination to monopolize ideas, suppress alternative narratives, and exploit partner institutions. Sharp power and soft power are not mutually complementary. No actor can simultaneously use soft power attraction and coercive sharp power disruption and censorship against an open democratic society.

It is hard to counter both soft and sharp power in a democracy because the objective of the state is to permit and even promote openness, for example, the freedom of the press. But there are still watchdog authorities and censors that could limit deliberate deception. One way to counter both sharp power and soft power is to tarnish the wielder and to take an assertive posture on behalf of principles.

4   THE CASE OF HAMAS AND ISRAEL

As has been noted, the models of hard, soft, smart and sharp power were first coined in literature that used states as the case example. However, in war there are also non-state actors, which have progressively become significant in the wielding of power and the waging of information warfare. This article argues that the models of power are applicable and very useful to the analysis and understanding of the waging of information warfare between state and non-state actors, in their actions, the means and the outcomes, in order to attain strategic communication objectives.

This article proceeds to demonstrate this applicability of the various models of power in the context of information warfare as a means of strategic communication. This is achieved by taking the case of Hamas, a non-state actor, and Israel, a state actor, in their conflict during the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. This was the first pre-stage of regular Palestinian protests at the Gaza border fence in what has become known as "The March of the Return".

In order to make a solid determination of whether Israel the state and/or Hamas the non-state were successful in conveying their messages to their audiences, a secondary analysis of data after the information warfare campaign was necessary, and was undertaken in the research for this article and provided in the data sets of the narrative, the counter-narrative and the coding that is the measure of effect. In doing so this article will also show the value of the models of soft power and sharp power for the analysis of non-state actors.

4.1   Hard power, soft power and sharp power in a real-life example

The results determined and found in the research for this article were also determined and found in research undertaken by others. This mutual reinforcement sustains the conclusions by Frisch, for example, who details how there is no doubt that hard power was used constantly by both sides (Frisch, 2018). Polon elaborates on a protracted and ongoing exchange of fire that included the launch of rockets and burning kites and balloons across the border by Hamas into Israel, and the bombing by the Israel Air Force of targets in Gaza and the economic blockade of Gaza by Israel (Polon, 2018).

These also determined that there was an information warfare battlefield in addition to the geographical face-off between the armed forces. The narrative of events initially targeted each other's population through the global mass media and social media. The success or failure of this, or the measure of effect, is analyzed in this article as a counter-narrative which was also targeted at each other's populations, as well as at the international media and the global opinion both of leaders and the public. This was also through social media. The objective of both sides was to influence the other side, attain legitimacy for their own policies, politics and actions, and delegitimize the other side's policies, politics and actions. There was no indication that their own population was a target in this information warfare campaign.

Looking at how both sides battled in and for the international media, world public opinion and the support of world leaders shows how soft and sharp power were wielded, and how sharp power is an excellent model for the means used by non-state actors, in addition to that used by the authoritarian states which were the origin of the construction of the model.

4.2   The data sets

So far, this article has considered the aspects of communication, strategic communication and the models of power applicable in the waging of information warfare. The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication which is waged by those means described in the models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors such as Hamas wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors like Israel wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model.

The methodology is now to describe the gathering, processing, interpretation, and analysis of the data sets that tested this by deductively questioning which model of power was being used by which actor in the case example. The sample of data used and described is the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018. The data was primary media material, prepared and delivered by each side and quoted by newspapers, TV, radio, and social media, projecting their efforts to influence and sway opinion. The information provided by both sides was in three languages, English, Arabic and Hebrew. The analysis found that all three languages held the same content.

The data of the narrative and counter-narrative were gathered systematically on the day of the broadcast and stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast, the time of data collection and the type of content e.g. statement by official, official press release or report of an event. The data was processed by looking at the narrative of each of the events and summarizing its content. In order to consider the impact of the narrative or the measure of its effect, the response or the counter-narrative was the second set of data gathered. This was also stored digitally, labelling the time of broadcast, the time of data collection, and the type of content e.g. statement by official, official press release, report of an event or report of a response to the narrative. The significance of date/time stamping was to enable the interpretation of whether the narrative had had any direct impact by influencing or swaying opinion.

If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, i.e. if there was an impact or sway of opinion in the counter-narrative that related back to the narrative, then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was then interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with the model of each type of power. The models of soft and sharp power have different techniques, so by using such a method of analysis it was possible to deductively determine which model of power in information warfare was being used by each

side to attempt to achieve strategic communication objectives to try to influence and sway opinion.

The meaningful pieces of content in the analysis, coded 1, were thus determined in accordance with the models of soft and sharp power. In this manner the content analysis examining patterns in the narrative and counter-narrative was able to determine that Israel used soft power and that Hamas used sharp power in their respective information warfare. This interpretation also concluded that a state, Israel, cannot use sharp power, and a non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power.

4.3   The narrative of Hamas and Israel

The methodology of the narrative in considering the case requires sufficient data to show a coherent and consistent information warfare campaign, and to be able to determine a pattern that would enable the models of power to be interpreted and analyzed deductively. During a 121-day period, from 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018, a minimum of three newspaper articles from different newspapers, five radio broadcasts from different radio stations, and two TV news broadcasts from different TV stations three times a day (morning 8am, afternoon 1pm and evening 8pm), in addition to social media exchanges including YouTube clips, were gathered from each side. So, the data gathered for the narrative consisted of 1694 items plus social media content, which in the case of Hamas came to a data total of 2034 items, and in the case of Israel 2033 items.

The events described by both sides in the narrative relate to the use of hard power, that of acts of violence, by the other side. Differences in the wording and intonation, the type of language, between coercive (sharp power) or persuasive (soft power) was also made possible by looking at the styles of each narrative of each side to differentiate, for example, the use of adjectives, adverbs, hyperbole and rhetoric in addition to the content. With such a methodology it was possible to ascertain both the means and the objective of the provision of detail and information, and hence which model of power was being applied in the information warfare.

Following the interpretation, it could be seen that the underlying message in Israel's narrative, written in statements issued by the Israel Defence Forces and other Israeli government offices, is that Hamas was a ruthless and violent Islamic theocracy supported by a bellicose state, Iran, which constantly threatened and attacked civilians in Israel. The apparent goal of Israel's narrative was to persuade the other side's population, and world opinion, that Hamas was a terrorist organization that initiated and organized the protests and demonstrations, not a group of oppressed citizens, and that it was forcing suicide bombers to break through the border fence and perpetrate violence against Israeli civilians. In the case of Israel, the style of the narrative was written as public diplomacy to attract, i.e. soft power.

On the other hand, in the interpretation it could be seen that the underlying message in Hamas' narrative, voiced by their leadership, was that it was the elected government

of a desert enclave facing a humanitarian crisis because of a prolonged blockade by Israel, which despite withdrawing from Gaza in 2005 was still occupying another area of Palestinian territory, the West Bank, and was refusing to grant statehood to a nation. The narrative of Hamas presented its protests and demonstrations as innocent and peaceful, initiated by suffering citizens to protest their awful economic and social conditions. They wanted to show that the Israeli response was not proportional, and that civilians, including women and children, were being wounded and killed. The apparent goal in Hamas' narrative was to provide selective information to obtain condemnation of Israel by international bodies, such as the United Nations Council on Human Rights. In the case of Hamas, the style of the narrative was written to persuade, and to provide misleading information or deception by only showing and providing selective, out of context information, i.e. it was using sharp power.

Between 1 December 2017 and 31 March 2018 friction between the two sides escalated progressively. Hamas threw firebombs, shot at Israeli soldiers, put explosives on the border fence, and crossed into Israeli territory. Israel used riot control methods, including teargas and live fire. There were casualties on both sides. There was no success by either side in swaying the opinion of the population of the other side that, if successful, would have had an impact on the leader's decisions and actions.

In order to make a solid determination on whether Israel the state actor, and/or Hamas the non-state actor, were successful in conveying their messages to global audiences, a secondary analysis of data was necessary, as a measure of effect. This was undertaken by ascertaining whether any world leader's opinion was swayed towards supporting the other side. No evidence was found to sustain that the narrative of either side was in any manner achieving its objective. So, the first stage of the information warfare campaign, be it by soft power, Israel, or by sharp power, Hamas, failed on both sides. Nor did hard power succeed on either side, and the armed conflict continued.

4.4   The counter-narrative of Hamas and Israel

Given that the information warfare campaign failed, both sides had an immediate counter-narrative to the other side's narrative. This commenced on 2 December 2017. The same process of sample data gathering was used for the counter-narrative as was used for the narrative. The methodology of the counter-narrative in considering the case required enough data to show a coherent and consistent information warfare campaign, and to be able to determine a pattern that would enable the models of power to be interpreted and analyzed deductively.

During a 120-day period, from 2 December 2017 to 31 March 2018, a minimum of three newspaper articles from different newspapers, five radio broadcasts from different radio stations, and two TV news broadcasts from different TV stations three times a day (morning 8am, afternoon 1pm and evening 8pm), in addition to social media exchanges including YouTube clips, were gathered from each side. So, the data gathered for the narrative consisted of 1680 items plus social media content,

which in the case of Hamas came to a data total of 2002 items, and in the case of Israel 2003 items.

The target audience of both was not their own population. The content analysis used qualitative methods which analyzed content within texts, that is the words, the language, and the intonation in the spoken language. The content analysis of the techniques, means, objectives and outcomes in accordance with the models of sharp and soft power showed that as it went in the narrative, so it went in the counter-narrative. Israel continued to wage information warfare in accordance with the model of soft power, and Hamas in accordance with the model of sharp power.

The purpose of this interpretation of the counter-narrative relative to the narrative was to ascertain the measure of effect of the narrative. If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, i.e. if there was an impact or sway of opinion, then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power, in accordance with the model of each type of power.

In the counter-narrative both sides appealed to the emotion and personal beliefs of the other's population, but also escalated this to the world forum and global leaders, attempting to apply third party pressure on the other side or at least to tarnish its image and validity, and maybe delegitimize it.

The dominant theme in Israel's counter-narrative was that the Hamas narrative wanted to deceive, and that its acts on the Gaza border were an attempt to force Israel to respond by military means so as many Palestinians as possible would be killed, including women and children, in order to obtain favourable media coverage, sympathy in global public opinion, denunciation from world leaders, and condemnatory resolutions from UN bodies. The Israeli counter-narrative stressed that Hamas was using disproportionate means, namely violence, and media deception, whereas peaceful diplomacy would result in a lifting of its blockade of Gaza.

Israel employed public diplomacy techniques and associated means to attempt to attract and persuade the residents of Gaza not to engage in activities that Hamas promoted and its preferred means. The overriding message in Israel's counter-narrative was to show a better life than violence. In view of this it is possible to define Israel as waging information warfare in accordance with the model of soft power. Israel's narrative left the door open for the target audience to decide whether to support Hamas or not, and whether to condemn it nor not. Given this freedom of choice there was no evidence to suggest that Israel succeeded in swaying the opinion of anyone.

The dominant theme in Hamas's counter-narrative was that Israel was using media deception to hide the evidence that Israel was committing war crimes by intentionally shooting and killing peaceful demonstrators. Hamas' narrative did not offer a choice but called on the world to condemn Israel.

There was no evidence to suggest that Hamas in its counter-narrative attempted to attract or persuade Israel's citizens through values, policies, institutions or culture, or to aim to win through the positive appeal of its cultural and political ideals or by suggestions that these provide a vibrant, independent civil society. Hamas did not engage in foreign assistance, civic action, economic reconstruction and development, or cultural influences such as art, literature, music, cinema, design, fashion, or even food. So, in accordance with the models of power, Hamas was not waging information warfare by the model of soft power.

The interpretation of the content in accordance with the techniques of the models of power showed that Hamas' counter-narrative was waging information warfare in accordance with the model of sharp power. In this information warfare campaign, waged between 1 December 2017 and 31 March 2018, it was Hamas that succeeded and not Israel, for in accordance with the model of sharp power all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, which includes global leaders. Even though Hamas, a non-state actor, succeeded in gaining sympathy, it was not able to utilize this to further any other objectives. So, winning an information battle, be it by soft or by sharp power, does not necessarily mean that the conflict is concluded.

Other research has reached the same conclusions. For example, Clarke explained that Hamas succeeded in gaining support from third parties such as the United Nations Secretary General and the EU foreign policy chief (Clarke, 2017). Landau also detailed how the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, and the EU foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, called for an independent investigation into Israel's conduct (Landau, 2018). Similarly, Lyman showed how at the Vatican, Pope Francis lamented the killing of defenceless Palestinians (Lyman, 2018). The analysis of Baconi was also important, because it showed that a limited information warfare battle is not enough to further other objectives (Baconi, 2017). An investigation into the events brought the United Nations Human Rights Council to debate and approve five anti-Israel resolutions on 22 March 2019. This included an arms embargo against Israel and the prosecution of the Israeli Defence Force for war crimes.

Conclusions The general premise of this article is that information warfare is a type of strategic communication that is waged by those means described in the models of soft and sharp power. The explicit hypothesis within this is that non-state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the sharp power model, and democratic state actors wage information warfare in accordance with the soft power model.

The research process or approach to address the hypothesis of this article moved from the general to the specific, commencing with an introduction on communication and strategic communication, then placed the models of different types of power within this context, showing the relevance to information warfare. Thereafter the case was presented.

In presenting the case example the research to prove the hypothesis was explained as having been tested through data sets of the narrative and counter-narrative of events by Israel and Hamas for the period 1 December 2017 to 31 March 2018 in their conflict on the border of Gaza, the first pre-stage of what has become known as "The March of the Return". The data was gathered, processed and interpreted according to the differences in style and content of each side's narrative and counter-narrative, and the apparent objectives therein. The data was analyzed deductively using the models of power to determine when states and non-state actors utilize soft and/or sharp power in their information warfare to attain strategic communication objectives. In doing so the differences between the models of soft and sharp power were accentuated, thereby sustaining the theoretical underpinning of the hypothesis that the essential differences in the models of power are not just the ability, capability and intent, but also the means, method or technique of both states and non-state actors.

The secondary analysis of the data after the initial information warfare campaign, the narrative, was necessary and was undertaken by analysis of the counter-narrative that was also an information warfare campaign. The coding illustrated the measure of effect. If there was a link between the narrative and the counter-narrative, which meant there was an impact or sway of opinion. then it was coded 1, and if not then it was coded 0. The data that was coded 1 was interpreted by classification into soft or sharp power in accordance with each model of power.

The interpretation and analysis of the data for both the narrative and counter-narrative concluded that Israel, a state, wields soft power, while Hamas, a non-state actor, wields sharp power in their respective information warfare. The analysis of the counter-narrative concluded that when waging information warfare non-state actors such as Hamas can cause distraction by the key attributes of expression and manipulation of the mass media and public sensitivities (sharp power), rather than by the attraction and persuasion (soft power) used by states such as Israel. A state, Israel, cannot use sharp power, and a non-state actor, Hamas, cannot use soft power. Even though Hamas as a non-state actor succeeded in gaining sympathy, it was not able to utilize this to further any other objectives. So, winning an information battle, be it by soft or sharp power, does not necessarily mean that the conflict is concluded.

The analysis of models of power used in information warfare in the context of strategic communication from the data of the case example in this article offers certain conclusions. It shows that non-state actors that prioritize control and censorship over openness are deficient in soft power projection and success, so they fall to using sharp power. In an information warfare battle, be it by the model of soft power or the model of sharp power, all that is required is to instil a perception, even without facts, in the minds of the audience, be it the population or global leaders.

Given such a conclusion, which has also been demonstrated by others, there is therefore just cause to declare that the theoretical framework and premise of the models of power in information warfare, both soft and sharp power, are and have

been sustained deductively by empirical research. This thereby contributes to scientific knowledge and demands the analysis of further research and cases towards developing a paradigm on information warfare and models of power within the context of strategic communication.

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