

Mental Filters Used in Manipulating the Vote Through Electoral Posters Containing Religious Symbols

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I. Starting points

As we have shown in a previous study³, the Romanian parliamentary elections in 2016 highlighted the tendency of some political parties to use religious symbols in electoral campaigns and the electoral dispute in order to receive the vote of ordinary people. This represents the first starting point of our study, one that is mainly ascertainable, descriptive and generalizing.

Another starting point, this time with more theoretical load, taken synthetically from the same study⁴: the junction of the bio-psycho-social model of manipulation⁵ with the persuasion model of successful commercial advertising⁶ in building electoral posters with religious symbols in their content.

Starting from these models and from the method of critical analysis of the advertisement (from the perspective of critical thinking) that we

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³ G. Clitan, O. Barbu-Kleitsch, "La manipulation du comportement électoral par le biais des symboles religieux," in *Politique et religion au défi de la communication numérique*, ed. Mihaela-Alexandra Tudor, Gheorghe Clitan, Márcia Marat Grilo (Paris: Editions Harmattan, 2018), 166-169.

⁴ Clitan, Barbu, "La manipulation du comportement électoral par le biais des symboles religieux," 175-178.

⁵ G. Azzopardi, *Manuel de manipulation. Pour obtenir (presque) tout ce que vous voulez* (Paris: Éditions First, 2009), 9-10.

⁶ K. Hogan, *Psibologia persuasiunii* (Bucuresti: Antet XX Press, 1996), 105, 201-202.

have synthetically exposed in another study⁷, we will show then why - ultimately - the persuasive discourse in the posters mentioned above is predominantly manipulative not only from the psychological point of view (the psychology of persuasion and neurolinguistics programming), but also from a rational point of view (logical and critical thinking perspective).

II. How do we proceed?

The Critical analysis of the use of religious symbols in political campaigns involves three dimensions of the analysis of any advertisement (argumentative, comprehensive, informational), dimensions that we presented schematically in one of our studies already mentioned⁸.



Fig. 1. PSD Electoral campaign calendar⁹

⁷ G. Clitan, O. Barbu-Kleitsch, "Distorting the Message of Religious Symbols by Fallacious Reasoning in the Electoral Posters of Political Campaigns," in *Collective Capacity Building, Shaping Education and Communication in Knowledge Society*, ed. Simona Sava, Claudia Borca and Gheorghe Clitan (Leiden: Brill, 2020), chapter 4.

⁸ Clitan, Barbu, "Distorting the Message of Religious Symbols by Fallacious Reasoning in the Electoral Posters of Political Campaigns," 61-62.

⁹ Daciana Ilie, Elvira Gheorghita, *PSD și PMP distribuie în Argeș calendare* [PSD and PMP distributes calendars in Argeș], News.ro (Pitesti, 2016), <http://bit.ly/2LyfYT's> (accessed 09.11.2020).

We will not reproduce here the detailed presentation of how we applied the method to the way in which the distortion of the message of the electoral posters by misleading reasoning takes place. We will only summarize the remainder of the first step as this step precedes any poster analysis (electoral or commercial). The multitude of representations through which the content of any type of advertising poster (electoral or commercial) is transmitted requires the decryption of these representations in an inferential type verbal language.

Such an approach consists in inspecting or scanning the religious elements, representations and symbols in the content of the analyzed electoral poster, in order to first identify the possible units of significance that can play the role of premises and conclusion. The next step is to reformulate the main reasoning constructed and reproduced by the poster in a clear, intelligible, unambiguous natural language, indicating how the premises provide grounds for supporting the conclusion.

At a first reformulation in the form of premises and conclusion, the informational content of this electoral poster takes the form of an argument such as:

Vote PSD for the unconditional defense of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox calendar! Those who choose the PSD to defend the ancestral faith of orthodoxy listed in the calendar do so because the defense of orthodoxy by parties other than the PSD is very unlikely, if not impossible.

It can be seen that the structure of this kind of argumentation is fallacious, the deceptive (therefore manipulative) aspect being tacitly induced by the error consciously introduced in the last sentence of the argument (the phrase itself tacitly assumed since PSD demands the vote to the detriment of the other parties in the electoral competition.). The persuasive mechanism is of the same nature as that highlighted for commercial advertising by Kevin Hogan - from a psychological perspective - in the footsteps of David Ogilvy¹⁰.

Are we dealing with the same manipulation mechanism in political campaigns as in commercial campaigns? Our answer is: YES! When they take the form of advertisements or electoral posters (in our case) and not only (commercials, talk shows etc.), the advertising discourses of these

¹⁰ K. Hogan, *Psibologia persuasiunii*, 105.

two types of campaigns become manipulative. They seek to convince the public, in particular, of the efficiency and quality of products such as different items or goods for sale (in the case of commercials), or of various candidates - politicians, political parties - for positions in the state administration (in the case of political advertisements).

While the main purpose of commercial manipulation is to “sell”, that of political manipulation is to gain “votes”. By adapting Hogan-Ogilvy’s successful commercial advertising model to political advertising, we get the same persuasion mechanism. By changing the stakes of persuasion/manipulation from “sell” to “vote”, with everything that involves content, the Ogilvy-Hogan model of successful political advertising retains the form or structure of commercial advertising¹¹.

Some authors¹² interpret manipulation from a triple perspective: bio-psycho-social. Synthetically, the biological, psychological and sociological explanations given to the occurrence and the favorable factors of the manipulation we presented in our study from 2018¹³. For us, such a bio-psycho-social model of the sources of manipulation explains, in turn, why and how we end up being manipulated. But the bio-psycho-social model of manipulation is useful in another, heuristic sense, especially related to the purpose of the present study to explain how mental filters affect the meaning of religious symbols in electoral posters, but also to make the junction (in addressing the problem of manipulation in electoral campaigns) between the perspectives offered by critical thinking, psychology and neurolinguistics programming. We will see at the right time how they are linked.

Thus, viewed as integrating the bio-psycho-social needs of people into the inferential/rational structures trying to inoculate them in the public’s mind or thinking, the Ogilvy-Hogan model of successful commercial advertising shows that product addiction plays the most important role in commercial advertising structure, converted to dependence on the brand of the product (basically, an institutional dependency). In manipulation, such needs have the role of mental filters (thinking and/or behavior filters) firmly anchored or rooted in sets such

¹¹ Clitan, Barbu, “La manipulation du comportement électoral par le biais des symboles religieux,” 180-182.

¹² Azzopardi, *Manuel de manipulation. Pour obtenir (presque) tout ce que vous voulez*, 9-10.

¹³ Clitan, Barbu, “La manipulation du comportement électoral par le biais des symboles religieux,” 175.

as survival/protection/security/well-being (biological needs) and love/appreciation/self-esteem/institutional dependence (of course, psycho-social needs).

Starting from the successful advertising model and based on the meta-communication model provided by NLP, Kevin Hogan has built a persuasion model that is adaptable to our analysis of the manipulation mechanisms used in political campaigns. The model of persuasion proposed by Hogan fits (we will see below how) in the second segment of the explanatory scheme proposed by us for electoral posters as it emphasizes the role played by mental filters (meta-programs, values, beliefs, attitudes, decisions, memories) in modifying the message (distortion, elimination, generalization), changing moods (physiological, internal representations) and behavior (acts, actions, activities)¹⁴.

What did we achieve?

What are the mechanisms that blur or even remove the persuasive differences between commercial advertising and political advertising? As in the case of commercial advertising, on the one hand, they consist in transforming the bio-psycho-social needs of people into frames or mental squares that intervene manipulatively - by break-in - in the inferential structures (of reasoning and meaning) of the mind or audience judgement. Their discursive intervention is called “setting” or “framing” in NLP language. On the other hand, they function as mental filters of distortion, elimination or generalization of the moods and initial behaviors of voters / the public / the audience: by ideological coding and by distorting the initial meaning of the symbols used in electoral advertisements (in our case study the religious significance of the symbols in the electoral poster analyzed).

Framing is a complex process that we will not present or analyze here in detail, nor will we discuss the different variants of the theory of framing (frames, framing). We will only resume a few historical references and the most well-known definitions given to the Communication Sciences and NLP. The first elements of the framing theory and the first definition of ‘frames’ date back to the 1950s and can be found in Gregory Bateson’s study entitled ‘A Theory of Play and

¹⁴ Hogan, *Psibologia persuasiumii*, 201-202.

Fantasy' published in 1955¹⁵ then resumed in a personal volume of essays (Step to an Ecology of Mind, 1972¹⁶) that recognized Bateson as the father of "ecology of the mind." The concept rendered by the word 'frame', which this author tries to define, is not of a physical or logical nature, but of a psychological one. However, it has both an existential ground (including some notes on real existence) and a logical one (it works somewhat, paradoxically, like logical types) and plays an important role in abstraction. It is related to the one rendered by the word "context", but without being identified with it, even though sometimes expressions such as "physical frame" and "logical frame" fall into common speech with the meaning of context.

The concept of "psychological framework" of communication can be defined as a class (or a set) of messages (or acts of significance/actions) by which we give meaning to the expressions used in communication that function as an explanatory principle, exclusive, inclusive and metacommunicative. For example, in animal behavior - as well as in human behavior - there is a triadic system of relationship between messages: 1. messages that refer to mood or state of mind - mood-signs, functioning as signs of the state of mind; 2. messages that refer to the simulation of the mood, functioning as signs of mood/state of mind simulation; 3. messages that allow the receiver to differentiate between the messages/mood signs and the messages/signs to simulate the mood. The third type of message is illustrative for the psychological framework concept¹⁷. In other words, the psychological frameworks explain at the meta-communication level why some messages/meanings are included, and others are excluded from the message or significance classes used in a communication process.

From Gregory Bateson, the concept was taken over and developed in the '70s -' 80s of the twentieth century by various anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists and specialists in communication sciences, but - in the field of communication - the framing theory began to be more widely researched and put to work by Robert M. Entman.

¹⁵ G. Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy", in *The Game Design Reader. A Rules of Play Anthology*, ed. Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman (London: MITPress, 2006), 320-325.

¹⁶ G. Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

¹⁷ G. Bateson, "A Theory of Play and Fantasy," 320-325.

According to Entman¹⁸, selecting and highlighting in a message certain aspects of reality (perceived as relevant or memorable information for the audience) are the defining elements of the framing. Relevant or memorable information about the aspects of reality selected and highlighted in the communicated message become the framework in which the respective message fixes the communication and which functions as an organizational principle, persistent in time and commonly assumed from a social point of view. Working for interlocutors as an instrument of abstraction, the framework is effectively used by them as a symbolic means of communication, structuring and conferring meaning / significance to the social world in which they live¹⁹.

Framing theory has also made a career in interdisciplinary fields, such as that of neurolinguistics programming, since NLP appeared in the mid-’70s of the last century and up to the present day. The NLP refers to “frames of reference” in a sense more or less close to the meanings given over time of the term ‘frames’ or to framing theory. Today, from this perspective, the framing process is understood as a way of “putting things in different contexts (frames of reference) to give them different meanings”²⁰.

The frames intervene in the processes of thinking/mind abstraction and those of shaping the world, configuring our “mental maps” with the help of which we orient, act or behave in the world. These maps are about the “territory” of the world, they do not identify with it as reality, as something that exists objective (independent of us and “outside us”), but are internal, subjective (our “mental” programs: personal, collective representations) and social. “The map is not the territory”, Alfred Korzybski said for the first time in the period between the two world wars of the 20th century²¹. She can agree with “the territory” being able to reflect it and symbolize it more or less adequate. We build the maps using three processes of information shaping: deletion/omission, generalization and distortion. These processes are innervating in

¹⁸ Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Towards Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (1993).

¹⁹ Ibidem, 53.

²⁰ L. M. Hall, B. G. Bodenhamer, *Manual de utilizare a creierului. Vol. 1: Manual complet pentru certificare ca Practician în programare neurolingvistică* (Bucharest: Vidia, 2013), 142.

²¹ A. Korzybski, *Science and Sanity. An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics* (New York: 5th Edition, Ed. Institute of General Semantics, 1994), 58, 750.

abstraction, helping us to summarize the elements of the territory and to translate them mentally into a “representational map”²².

Deleting some information or omitting others are ways of processing information that occur for two reasons: 1. our nervous system is assaulted by billions of bits of information, being forced to selectively process it or 2. our sensory devices (sensory organs) do not have the ability to record all available data, which makes them selectively process. The omission function raises problems only when we delete or disregard the essential or important information. The overabundance of information is the expression of the complexity of the world we live in, a world we can only simplify through generalizations in order to know or understand it.

By generalizing (categorizing, organizing, abstracting and extracting information in the form of mental frameworks: cognitive experiences, action and behavioral experiences that are functionally repeated over time), we come to give the world order, meaning and intelligibility, practically to model it. By shaping the world, we inevitably come to distort things by deleting, omitting and generalizing data/information, putting them into patterns and processing them with the help of patterns. Patterns function as transition mental filters from perceptual levels of experience to higher logical levels, passage through which primary information is internalized in the form of “thoughts” (representation systems), and - at the logical / higher level - thoughts become beliefs, values and attitudes (called “higher order distortions”).

Thus understood, we consider that distortions are ways to grant meaning or value to a certain element of the world (the “territory”) in which we live, integrating it as a pattern of understanding in our mental map. The maps - which we have constructed and which have been constructed in this way - offer us mentally predetermined (knowledge, communication and action/behavior) paths through our life experiences encapsulated in the world from which we are part and we actively live. When we act, we do not operate directly on the world (territory), but on our maps of the world, through maps on maps on maps ... etc., entering into a representational process of metadiscursive progression and / or regression. When we communicate, we do not directly influence the behavior of the interlocutors, but we try to guide/guide them through

²² L. M. Hall, B. G. Bodenhamer, *Manual de utilizare a creierului*, 357, 360-363.

the maps that we determine (persuading, manipulating) to mentally internalize them and showing them the way we want to lead their behavior. When we manipulate, we intrude, through theft, into one's mind and, using our mental maps, influence their way of reasoning so as to make the decisions we want.

Adapting our approach to NLP's concept of mental maps and returning to the Ogilvy-Hogan model of successful advertising, we notice that the number of "higher order" distortions Kevin Hogan proposes includes - in addition to beliefs, values and attitudes – decisions, memories and so-called "meta NLP programs". As we have seen, Hogan retains the psychological role of mental filters of experience, but we consider that some of them (meta-programs, values, beliefs/beliefs, attitudes and decisions) fulfil this role also at the logical level, where they are inferential. At this level the filtering of "thoughts" or information takes place by means of special means of thinking called "notions/concepts", "judgments/logical propositions" and "reasoning/ inferences".

As the reasoning/inferences structurally include the other two, the study of their mental behavior can only be reduced to the inferential dimension of thinking or its logical, rational behavior. In the specialized literature they are studied either as logical forms/patterns of thinking, as reasoning abilities/filters (from the perspective of critical thinking, understood as a practice of argumentation), or as rational-emotional tools of persuasion (from the combined perspective of Rhetoric and Theory of argumentation/argumentation). The last two perspectives of approach are the ones that we will draw upon in the following, considering critical thinking as a form of "self-defense" against any rhetorical form of manipulation.

We find the main critical thinking skills classified in critical thinking tests: logical-argumentative skills (logical thinking - LT), comprehensive skills (comprehensive thinking - CT) and analytical skills (analytical thinking - AT). For example, in the LSAT (Law School Admission Test) these types of skills are evaluated using three types of items called Logical Reasoning (LR for LT), Reading Comprehension (RC for CT), and Analytical Reasoning (AR for AT) and structured in the form of multiple answer questions²³.

²³ *The Official LSAT Handbook* (Newtown, PA: Law School Admission Council, Inc., 2010), 2-4.

The sets of questions and answers in the structure of LSAT items aim to set in motion, in the form of inferences or reasoning, the mental patterns through which thinking normally works. With these patterns, we filter the information relevant to solving the stimulus problem: we anticipate, identify them, sort them, select them, pay attention to them by emphasizing and highlighting them from the multitude of available information, after which we organize and process them rationally / inferentially. In critical thinking tests, such patterns intervene mentally in the form of five distinctions (binary / dyadic, triadic, tetrads, pentads, hexads) rendered as five sets of mental filters.

From a psychological point of view, research has shown that the functional number of these distinctions (filters) can be “the magic number 7 +/- 2” as only so many “fragments” of information (patterns of experience) can be managed consciously at a given time. The other patterns of experience intervene unconsciously in guiding our behavior.²⁴ Using the graphical representation mode (“<----->”) used by Hogan in presenting the psychological filters he has highlighted starting from the structure of his persuasion model, we will review the most commonly used critical thinking filters used in rhetorical manipulation (rational-emotional manipulation), without justifying why and how we chose these and not others (this justification remains a subject for a further study).

From a Critical Thinking perspective, the filters that can manipulatively distort persuasive messages are:

- 1) **Logical filters (LF): A) NLP (MP) type metaprograms:** a) inference <-----> reasoning <-----> argument; b) deduction <-----> induction <-----> abduction; c) general <-----> particular <-----> individual; d) premise <-----> claim <-----> conclusion; e) explanation <-----> demonstration <-----> argumentation. **B) Values (V):** a) truth <-----> false; b) valid <-----> erroneous; c) conclusive <-----> fallacies; d) coherent <-----> consistent; e) clear <-----> intelligible <-----> unambiguous. **C) Beliefs (B):** a) assumptions <-----> presumptions; b) presuppositions <-----> assumptions; c) convictions <-----> commitments; d) implicatures <-----> dictums <-----> principles; e) authorizations /

²⁴ G. Miller, “The Magical Number Seven, Plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity to Process Information”, *Psychological Review* 63 (1956): 87-97.

empowerment <-----> legitimations <-----> entitlements. **D) Attitudes (A):** a) controversial <-----> dispute; b) authentic <-----> paradoxical; c) acceptance <-----> rejection <-----> abstention; d) grounding <-----> support <-----> undermining (in the logical sense); e) information (true / public) <-----> misinformation (false information) <-----> disinformation. **E) Information (I):** a) fundamental (main point) <-----> secondary (additional / supplemental); b) explicit <-----> tacit (implicit); c) of support <-----> of undermining; d) of surface <-----> in depth; e) “must be” information <-----> “could be” information.

- 2) **Comprehensive filters (CF): A) NLP (MP) type metaprograms:** a) occurrence <-----> type <-----> ideal-type; b) context <-----> situation (discursive) <-----> intervention (discursive); c) reference (as an entity) <-----> sense <-----> meaning <-----> significance; d) reference (as a relation / function) <-----> denomination <-----> meaning <-----> designation; e) analysis (deconstruction) <-----> understanding <-----> interpretation <-----> re-signification (reconstruction / synthesis). **B) Values (V):** a) relevant <-----> irrelevant; b) successful <-----> failed; c) proper (bun <-----> good <-----> fulfilment; d) well-being <-----> love <-----> happiness; e) significant <-----> exemplary <-----> illustrative. **C) Beliefs (B):** a) opinion <-----> persuasive belief ; b) assumed position <-----> shared point of view; c) conception (about something) <-----> vision (about something); d) consideration (versus something) <-----> remark (highlighting); e) evaluation (conferring value) <-----> appreciation (appreciation / recognition). **D) Attitudes (A):** a) agreement <-----> disagreement <-----> involvement; b) altruism <-----> sharing <-----> joy; c) distancing <-----> controversy <-----> indifference; d) appreciation <-----> celebration <-----> veneration; e) defense <-----> combat <-----> desiccation. **E) Information (I):** a) main ideas (main point / fundamental) <-----> derived ideas (additional / supplemental); b) signals <-----> signs <-----> symbols; c) intra-textual <-----> co-textual <-----> contextual; d) syntax (raw / statistical / mathematical data) <-----> semantic (meaning data) <-----> pragmatic (meaning in use); e) natural (from and about reality) <-----> cultural (for and about reality) <-----> technological (as reality).

- 3) **Analytical Filters (AF): A) NLP (MP) type metaprograms:** a) problem data <-----> conditions (problem requirements); b) structures of entities / information <-----> structures of relations between entities / information; c) contextualization <-----> relationship <-----> re-contextualization; d) putting / representing the problem in data (intelligible formulation / reformulation of the problem) <-----> formulas / ways of solving / solving the problem <-----> solutions / answers to the problem; e) designation <-----> sorting <-----> grouping <-----> space / time orientation. **B) Values (V):** a) obvious / pregnant <-----> flat / dim; b) concrete <-----> intuitive; c) exactly <-----> approximately; d) possible <-----> necessary <-----> impossible; e) general <-----> specific <-----> circumstantial. **C) Beliefs (B):** a) surety <-----> doubt; b) trust <-----> credibility; c) certainty <-----> uncertainty; d) fidelity <-----> confidentiality; e) intransigent <-----> malleability. **D) Attitudes (A):** a) objectivity <-----> subjectivity; b) assuming <-----> guarantee <-----> conditioning; c) predisposition <-----> disposition <-----> availability; d) reasonableness <-----> obligation <-----> authority; e) consistency <-----> principledness <-----> commitment. **E) Information (I):** a) data <-----> metadata; b) given information <-----> new information; c) foreground information <-----> background information; d) necessary / mandatory information <-----> possible / probable information; e) basic / fundamental information <-----> additional / additional information.

In addition to the filters of the three critical thinking components, mentioned above, there is a special filter, shared by all three components: **Decisions (D): decisions** (in a legal sense) <-----> resolutions; b) sentences <-----> verdicts; c) deliberations <-----> choices; d) judgments <-----> resolutions <-----> solutions; e) arational <-----> irrational <-----> rational <-----> emotional (affective).

After we have reviewed some of the critical thinking filters that can manipulatively distort persuasive messages, in the following we will try to show which of these are indirectly found in the Ogilvy-Hogan model of successful political advertising. We will then present how they work in the electoral poster analyzed by us. Why are they *indirectly* found in this model? Because, as we have shown, the model is built on the bio-psycho-

social basis of manipulation, using the three types of needs (biological, psychological and social) as authentic patterns / mental frames. They are then transformed into distortion filters of the voters' behavior (by selecting and highlighting certain aspects or information, by eliminating, omitting and generalizing other needs and by transforming them in the form of symbols).

Let us illustrate on the PSD Argeş poster how the three types of needs come into play as mental patterns/frames in the Ogilvy-Hogan model of successful political advertising:

1. You are not satisfied with what you currently have, who you are now or how you feel today. You can do, be or have, and feel better. <--- well-being, self-esteem
2. PSD / The genuine promoter and unconditional defender of a better life for people and of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox Calendar helps many people like you to reach this result. <--- \ <--- institutional dependence, self-esteem, well-being
3. Vote at least / once again PSD / The real promoter and unconditional defender of a better life for people, as is the ancestral orthodoxy. You have nothing to lose, but everything to gain. <--- \ <--- institutional welfare dependence, self-esteem
4. Other people / believers will respect you and appreciate you more because you vote for PSD / The true unconditional promoter and defender of a better life for people and of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox Calendar. <--- \ <--- institutional dependence, self-esteem, well-being
5. Imagine your future as you deserve to be. You can fulfil your dreams and achieve your goals, if you vote for PSD / the authentic unconditional promoter and defender of a better life for ordinary people and the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox Calendar. <--- \ <--- well-being, self-esteem, institutional dependence
6. PSD / The genuine promoter and unconditional defender of a better life for ordinary people and of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox Calendar is reliable, guaranteed over time by the large number of voters/believers, so you can easily make the decision now: vote PSD! <--- \ <--- institutional dependence.

We note, from the above, how the informational content of the PSD Arges poster takes the form of a larger argument than the one detected at a first scan, such as:

Vote PSD for the unconditional defense of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox calendar! PSD is the true promoter and unconditional defender of a better life for ordinary people and of the ancestral faith inscribed in the Orthodox Calendar. The PSD is reliable, guaranteed over time by the large number of voters/believers who chose to represent them. Those who choose the PSD to defend the ancestral faith of Orthodoxy inscribed on the calendar do so because the defense of Orthodoxy by parties other than the PSD is very unlikely, if not impossible.

As we have already shown, the structure of this type of argumentation is fallacious, being tacitly induced by the last sentence of the argument (itself tacitly assumed since the PSD party demands the vote to the detriment of the other parties in the electoral competition). Therefore, we are interested in the frames/mental frames used in the poster to suggest the PSD - Orthodoxy junction and how they mediate this junction.

III. Research results: Exemplification of the persuasive mental filters chain of intervention

In manipulation, we use a great variety of mental filters, including those by which we base it discursively from a bio-psycho-social point of view. At the end of our research, we will exemplify the argumentative chains of the bio-psycho-social manipulation filters in the polled electoral poster (of the PSD's Argeş) using the already agreed notations: "LF" for logical filters, "CF" for comprehensive filters, "AF" for analytical filters, "MP" for NLP metaprograms, "V" for values, "B" for beliefs, "A" for attitudes, "D" for decisions, "I" for information, "<---->" for direction and type filtering and "<----->" for filter distinctions. We mention again, here, that we do not take into account the NLP type psycholinguistic filters, but the logic-rhetorical filters of critical thinking.

I. The persuasive chain of intervention of mental filters used in the poster for the discursive establishment of the biological need for protection (security/survival/well-being):

- 1) certainty (in defense of the ancestral Orthodox faith by the PSD) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, AF \leftarrow I, V, MP) \leftarrow -----> trust (in PSD) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP);
- 2) trust (in PSD) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP) \leftarrow -----> credibility (of PSD) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP);
- 3) credibility (of PSD) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP) \leftarrow -----> guarantee (of the Orthodox faith and the security/well-being of the PSD voters) (AF \leftarrow B \setminus AF, LF \leftarrow MP);
- 4) guarantee (of the Orthodox faith and the security/well-being of the PSD voters) (AF \leftarrow A \setminus AF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> defense (of the orthodoxy and the interests of the PSD voters) (CF \leftarrow A \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> justification (of the Orthodox Christian electorate to vote PSD) (LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP);
- 5) justification (of the Orthodox Christian electorate to vote PSD) (LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP) \leftarrow -----> legitimacy (of PSD) (LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP) \leftarrow -----> authorization / empowerment (vote for a better life offered by PSD) (LF \leftarrow B; LF, CF, AF \leftarrow D, MP).

II. The persuasive chain of intervention of mental filters used in the poster for the discursive establishment of the psychological need of acquiring / growing / recognizing self-esteem:

- 1) welfare (offered by voting PSD party) (CF \leftarrow V \setminus AF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> better life (for PSD voters) (CF \leftarrow V \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP);
- 2) better life (for PSD voters) (CF \leftarrow V \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> life as fulfillment (to gain / to give) (for PSD and PSD voters) (FC \leftarrow V \setminus FC, FL \leftarrow MP);
- 3) life as fulfillment (to gain / to give) (for the political party and PSD party voters) (CF \leftarrow V \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> life as a celebration (celebration / veneration) (for orthodox PSD voters and for PSD members) (CF \leftarrow A \setminus CF \leftarrow I \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP);
- 4) life as a holiday (celebration / veneration) (for orthodox PSD voters and PSD members) (CF \leftarrow A \setminus CF \leftarrow I \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> life as happiness (joy / love of God and fellows throughout the country) (CF \leftarrow A&V \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP) \leftarrow -----> life as self-

esteem (appreciation / love / well-being of all fellows in the country) (CF ← A&V \ CF, LF ← MP);

- 5) life as self-esteem (appreciation / love / well-being of all fellows in the country) (CF ← A&V \ CF, LF ← MP) <-----> life as a way to succeed (to be / to live / to do by voting PSD political party) (LF ← V \ CF, LF ← MP) <-----> self-esteem as a way of voting (PSD political party) (LF, CF, AF ← D, MP).

III. The persuasive chain of intervention of mental filters used in the poster for the discursive establishment of the sociological need of institutional authority/subordination to authorities or institutions:

- 1) way to elect / vote (for PSD) (LF, CF, AF ← A, D \ AF, LF ← MP) <-----> assumed position (by PSD) (CF ← B \ AF, LF ← MP) <-----> shared viewpoint (by Orthodox Christians and PSD) (CF ← B \ LF ← I \ LF ← MP);
- 2) shared view (by Orthodox Christians and PSD) (FC ← C \ FL ← I \ FL ← MP) <-----> point of view (about faith, world and life of the political party) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP) <-----> vision (on welfare in a future life) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP);
- 3) vision (on well-being in a future life) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP) <-----> consideration (compared to Christian and humanistic values) (CF ← B, A \ LF ← MP) <-----> distinguishing (highlighting the Orthodox Christian faith and a better life) (CF ← B \ AF ← V \ LF ← MP);
- 4) distinguishing (highlighting the Orthodox Christian faith and a better life with the political party) (CF ← B \ AF ← V \ LF ← MP) <-----> evaluation (conferring an added value on life to Christian believers and other people by the political party) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP) <-----> appreciation (appreciation / recognition of the Christian life and of a better life by the PSD) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP);
- 5) appreciation (appreciation / recognition of the Christian life and of a better life by the PSD) (CF ← B \ LF ← MP) <-----> cherishing / recognition (of the ancestral Orthodox faith and of a better life protected and guaranteed by the political party) (CF ← B&A \ LF ← MP) <-----> Vote PSD political party! (LF, CF, AF ← D, MP).

Due to the article's page limits, we will illustrate below in a practical way how we formalized the persuasive chains of intervention of mental filters used in the poster for the discursive establishment of the biological need of protection (security/survival). /wellness):

1) certainty (in defense of the ancestral Orthodox faith by the political party) (AF ← B \ CF, AF ← I, V, MP) <-----> trust (in PSD political party) (AF ← B \ CF, LF ← V, MP);

AF ← B \ CF The position assumed by the political party in relation to the orthodox faith is one of support, which leads to the confidence in a shared view of its defense by the party and its voters.

The electoral object offered to the target audience is an orthodox wall calendar (I). It includes traditional holidays (Information-symbols) and has as the focal point of attention (MP-conditioning, I-symbols) the central area in which the Icon of the Lord's Mother and the party logo (MP-entities structures, contextualization) are positioned. The Orthodox icon and the logo of the political party are received as (I) information (main gods and symbols) of belonging to a community. Through contextualization, the party operates a hierarchical relationship between the two symbols: it can be seen that under the icon (MP-information, relationship, concrete value), the political party's logo was symmetrically arranged on similar dimensions (MP-relationship).

2) trust (in PSD) (AF ← B \ CF, LF ← V, MP) <-----> credibility (of the political party) (AF ← B \ CF, FL ← V, MP);

The logical filter operated inductively follows the comprehension of fallacious reasoning as conclusive: the assurance of the members of the religious community that the political party defends their interests by defending the orthodox faith. Thus, the adjacent but hierarchical arrangement of the two symbolic elements (the icon above the party logo) operates as a re-contextualization (MP) of the electoral object (MP-calendar contextualization) which aims to determine the confidence in the assumed mission of the party (appeal to beliefs) to defend the ancestral faith. The credibility of the intentions is suggested both by the assumed position of the political party explained above (FA ← C \ FC) and by the inductive reasoning of joining the logo of the political party

on a calendar of Orthodox religious holidays offered to potential voters as an electoral object.

3) credibility (of the political party) ($AF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP$) \leftarrow guarantee (of the Orthodox faith and the security/well-being of the PSD voters) ($AF \leftarrow B \setminus AF, LF \leftarrow MP$);

As mentioned above, through contextualization, the party operates a hierarchical relationship between the two visual symbols. On the one hand, the standard graphic layout for an orthodox calendar is replicated - the days of the month and their related saints' holidays arranged in 4 quadrants, having the Virgin Mary as a representative icon in the middle of the calendar (focus point - MP shooting).

On the other hand, it can be observed that under the representative icon for the Orthodox faith (MP-information, relationship, concrete value), the party logo was placed symmetrically and on similar dimensions (MP-relationship). Intuitively, the two symbols are related to each other, acting as premises in the process of re-contextualization. The calendar supports the political logo, and the latter supports the orthodox calendar, which guarantees the safety of the believers. Continuing inductively, if the well-being of the voters is also ensured by the security of their faith, then the political party assumes the guarantee of the well-being of the voters.

4) guarantee (of the Orthodox faith and the security/well-being of the PSD voters) ($AF \leftarrow A \setminus AF, LF \leftarrow MP$) \leftarrow defense (of the orthodoxy and the interests of the PSD voters) ($CF \leftarrow A \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow MP$) \leftarrow justification (of the Christian-Orthodox electorate to vote PSD) ($LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP$);

The party logo is repeatedly displayed on the electoral object: (1) central, under the religious symbol (A - assuming) and (2) at the bottom of the page, delimiting the New Year's wish "PSD Argeş wishes you a happy NEW YEAR" (FA - guarantee). At the level of the analytical filters the repetition forces a triad of filter distinctions: assuming \leftarrow guarantee \leftarrow conditioning. At the level of the comprehensive filters, the delimitation by the logo of the party from the bottom of the page suggests the desired involvement of the political party in the welfare of its voters.

On a symbolical level, the words NEW YEAR are written in capital letters, which supports the premises (MP) of a special New Year but also the presupposition of the importance of the voters' decision for this special electoral year. In this sense, the delineation of the wish by the party logo distorts its initial message (Beliefs) by tying it in a fallacious way to the assumed position ($C \setminus FC$): the welfare promised by the party. The political party becomes the guardian of welfare and so, the public becomes entitled to seek such welfare.

5) justification (of the Christian-Orthodox electorate to vote PSD) ($LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP$) \leftarrow legitimacy (of PSD) ($LF \leftarrow B \setminus CF, LF \leftarrow V, MP$) \leftarrow authorization / empowerment (a vote for a better life offered by PSD) ($LF \leftarrow B; LF, CF, AF \leftarrow D, MP$).

Considering the position assumed by the party in the poster regarding the orthodox faith as well as guaranteeing the well-being of the voters by guaranteeing the security of their ancestral faith, the party pursues a re-contextualization of the given information in pursue of the voters' decision: The public is entitled to seek a better life by giving their vote to the party that defends its rights and can assure a better NEW YEAR ($LF \leftarrow B; LF, CF, AF \leftarrow D, MP$).

IV. Instead of conclusions

We did not intend to answer in the study the question related to the advantages offered by the presentation of critical thinking filters; such an objective is related to a future study. However, we would like to point out that the notations used allow us to count and quantify the discursive interventions of the three types of fundamental needs on which manipulation is based. Thus, through these notations, the fallacious inferential structure through which using patterns/frames / filters of thought one gets to the discursive manipulation of the electoral behavior becomes more obvious. Moreover, they allow the elaboration of a language, even of a logical calculus, in other words, the development of a formalized representation for the manipulative discursive interventions. Therefore, this approach is paving the way for a computerized analysis of fallacious reasoning. This last stake opens a whole new range of research that we are looking forward to. Your feedback and collaboration on this topic is more than welcomed.

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