STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IN SUPPORT OF MIGRANTS INTEGRATION IN HOST COMMUNITIES

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International actors, both states and supra-state organizations, face certain challenges in managing the migration phenomenon. Among these challenges, in the present paper, we have chosen to focus on those that may emerge following the relocation itself, starting from the premise that the way in which the integration of migrants takes place within the host community is a decisive factor for the type of effects that can be generated in the security environment. The purpose of the article is to identify the means by which the migration management system can be improved, in order to support states, governments and authorities in their efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace.

The analysis of the concept of strategic communication (StratCom) reveals aspects, dimensions, parameters and frameworks that indicate its relevance and usefulness in the smooth development of the process of social integration of emigrants, and the present study is aimed at identifying these characteristics as well as at modelling a StratCom framework that is generally applicable to any scenario, in support of governments, host communities and migrants alike. Finally, we will adapt the general working framework to a specific one, focused on the integration of Ukrainian migrants within the Romanian community, in the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict near Romania's borders, given the actual situation that needs to be managed by the Romanian state so that possible tensions between the two social groups can be avoided.

Keywords: strategic communication (StratCom); migrants; host community; social integration; Russia-Ukraine conflict;

INTRODUCTION

Motto: "According to archaeologists, almost all the people on the Earth are migrants (...).
People have always moved in search of better livelihood. It has always been like this and it will continue to be".
(Altner, 2006)

Migration is far from being a new phenomenon in the world, and regardless of the reason for relocation, a scenario where this process will end is highly unlikely in the near future; on the contrary, there are good reasons to believe that the number of international migrants will continue to increase (IOM, 2022, p. 10)[1], taking into account a number of factors, such as the trends of cooperation in the international space, which, regardless of being seen as the cause or effect of globalization, have increased people's desire and hope to start searching for the best place to live. At the same time, the security situations around the globe (conflicts, human rights violations, violence, persecution) continue to give rise to an ever-increasing number of people who are forced to leave their country of residence to protect their lives[2] (UN News, 2022) and, under these conditions, the authorities make constant efforts to develop a system (policies, procedures, legal basis, infrastructure etc.) to support these people.

Migration can produce a wide set of beneficial effects within the host society, such as: increase in the labour force, flexibility of the labour market, contribution to the economy of the state in question, development of human capital, technological progress etc. (OECD, 2014). However, debates are also launched in expert circles questioning whether the benefits are greater than the *"burdens"* carried by the states for the reception and integration of migrants (Dettmer, 2019;

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[1] The data contained in the 2022 report of the IOM (International Organization for Migration) reflect an upward trend in the estimated number of international migrants – from 173 million people or 2.8% of the world's population in 2000 to 281 million or 3.6% of the world's population in 2022.

[2] In 2022, a record 100 million people were forced to leave their countries of residence.

Tabaud, 2020). As a result of the expansion of such debates in the mass media, various opinions, perceptions and attitudes have been formed regarding the conceptual approach to the migration phenomenon, presented in studies based on polls (surveys) (Dempster, Hargrave, 2017; Dempster, Leach, Hargrave, 2020), which conclude that *"people have different and seemingly contradictory attitudes towards (im)migration – they can support restrictive policies while recognizing the positive economic and cultural impact of immigrants in their country"* (Dempster et al., 2020).

Strategic communication promises, in theory, to generate effects such as informing and educating the masses to shape attitudes, perceptions and representations of reality, in accordance with people's fundamental values, facts that completely suit the idea of "healthy" social integration.

The present paper starts from the idea that public opinions, perceptions and attitudes are defining factors for the way in which migrants get integrated into the host community and that the beneficial effects for the destination states can only be generated following a *"healthy"* integration, based on mutual respect, understanding, solidarity, cooperation and communication between the two social groups; otherwise, there is the risk of triggering tensions that can degenerate into conflict situations. Based on these premises, the purpose of the article is to identify the means by which states, governments and authorities can be supported in the efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace as well as to highlight the means by which the migration management system can be improved in terms of the integration of migrants into the host communities.

In parallel, the analysis of the concept of *strategic communication* has brought us to the point where we realize that the implementation of processes specific to the field can serve this approach, as it presents all the characteristics necessary to obtain the effects we are looking for. Concretely, *strategic communication* promises, in theory, to generate effects such as informing and educating the masses to shape attitudes, perceptions and representations of reality, in accordance with people's fundamental values, facts that completely suit the idea of *"healthy"* social integration.

These are the reasons why, in the following pages, we will analyse the hypothesis in which the migration management system will be improved with the support of StratCom processes, to serve not only the interests of the states but also the interests of the citizens of the world, who have migrated in search of a better place to live.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION – CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

Based on the idea that *everything is communication*[3], the actors in the international environment have exploited the potential of this process, focusing on the influencing function that communication can have in certain contexts (Mucchielli, 2005, pp. 114-124). Although the term *influencing* is generally used and understood with a negative connotation, being associated with manipulation and (deceptive) exploitation, influencing encompasses a series of activities that start from simple information and continue with education, persuasion, induction and even coercion – through words and actions –, being *"a ubiquitous and fundamental form of all social interaction, essential to cooperation as well as to competition or conflict"* (DoD, 2009). Under these conditions, we will focus on *strategic communication*, which we will place in the information area of the influencing spectrum.
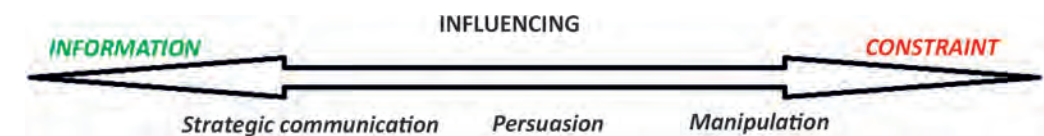

Figure 1: Influencing spectrum[4]

Strategic Communication (StratCom) is a concept that has been developed within multiple fields such as public relations, management, marketing, international relations, security and defence etc. In its broadest sense, the term refers to the way in which the communication process can promote the mission of an organization, with the help of a strategy based on desired effects (Thorson, 2018). In the field of international relations and security studies, *strategic communication* is a concept that was initially defined, in 2001, in the US *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, as the *"efforts to*

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[3] A statement that represented the core of the ideology of the school of thought developed by Palo Alto (California), demonstrated through a series of axioms on communication (Watzlawick, Bavelas, Jackson, 2011) and debated in numerous papers by Paul Watzlawick, one of the most prominent representatives of this school.

[4] The figure is the graphic representation of the result of an analysis conducted with the aim of classifying the most known public communication techniques and placing them in the sphere of influencing. (Cojocaru, 2022).

understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen, or preserve conditions favorable for the advancement of United States Government interests, policies, and objectives through the use of coordinated programs, plans, themes, messages, and products synchronized with the actions of all instruments of national power" (DoD, 2001, p. 515).

The concept was revised and explained in 2007, within the *US National Strategy for Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communication* (Policy Coordinating Committee/PCC, 2007) and later developed under the umbrella of NATO, which established, in 2014, a Centre of Excellence in Riga, Latvia (NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2020). The specialists here define strategic communication (StratCom) as *"the use of all communication activities and capabilities (of the Alliance), being an integrated part of the Alliance's efforts to achieve its political-military objectives"* (Ib.)

The evolution of modern technology has led to the emergence of numerous means of communication that allow the circulation of an almost unlimited amount of information, delivered by organizations, institutions and individuals alike. In other words, both organizations, public institutions (governments, political parties, officials, churches etc.), and individuals can become influencing factors (NATO, 2015, p. 4), and this fact has a significant impact on the information environment[5], since this is the main environment in which opinions are formed and decisions are made, being also the space where *"people and automatic systems observe, orient themselves, decide and act, based on information"*. (Ib.) (see *figure 2*).

StratCom is the process through which the information environment is understood and modelled, by engaging all means of communication (activities, images, words), in order to achieve the desired results (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, p. 6). Moreover, strategic communication is based on the understanding of the relationships between the physical, virtual and cognitive

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Figure 2: Information environment

[5] The *information environment* is the virtual and physical space in which information is received, processed and transmitted. It consists of actors, information itself and information systems. Actors include leaders, decision-makers, individuals, social groups and organizations. Computer systems include the materials and systems used to collect, apply or disseminate information (NATO, 2015, p. 4).
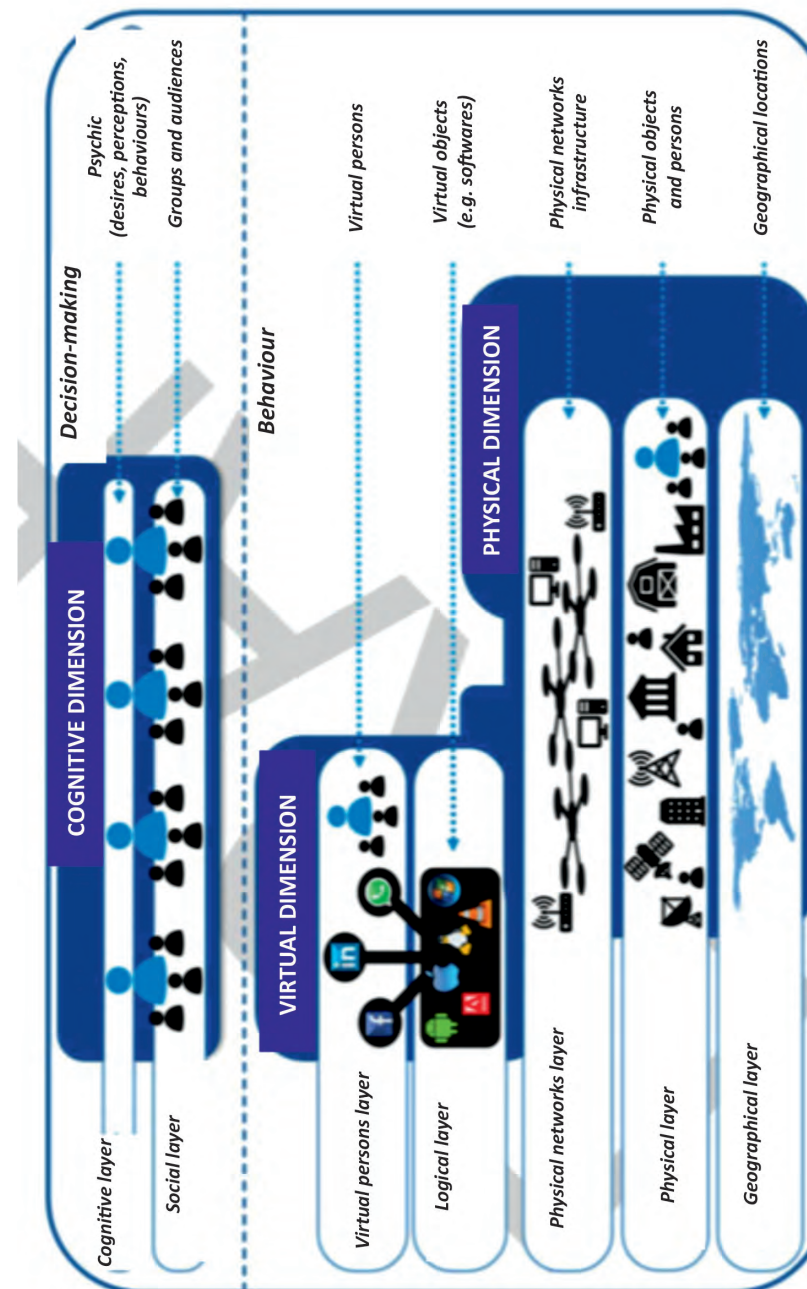
* Source: NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 7.

dimensions, entailing, at the same time, the understanding of the public/audience[6], of the information flow[7] and of the cognitive and behavioural changes[8].

In what follows, we propose a radiography of the concept of strategic communication, which is aimed at briefly presenting its goal, principles, characteristics and the way of operation.

❖ **StratCom goal** is to shape the attitudes, opinions, behaviours, perceptions and social representations[9] of a certain public in support of meeting the beneficiary's objectives (e.g. NATO) (NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 3).

❖ **StratCom principles** are equally applied to all types of activities (lethal and non-lethal; in peacetime, crisis or at war). They are as follows:

- *Values*-based foundation – all activities are based on the core values of the beneficiary.
- *Objectives*-based activities – activities are conducted according to the objectives, which derive from the narratives, policies and strategies issued in a political-military directive framework.
- *Credibility* – credibility and trust are vital attributes that must be protected.
- *Alignment* – words, images and actions must be aligned with each other.
- *Information* – understanding the information environment.
- *Integration* – communication is a collective and integrated effort.

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[6] Understanding the audience is necessary to achieve the desired effects. It entails the ability to identify the relevant audience and actors, as well as the understanding of the way they process information, by understanding their filters and their reference criteria (NATO STANDARDIZATION OFFICE/NSO, 2020, p. 9).

[7] Understanding how information enters and flows in the information environment is essential for shaping or reinforcing cognitive and behavioural norms (Ib.).

[8] Understanding how to monitor the information environment allows for the detection of changes that may occur within information inputs or within conversations between relevant actors, making it possible to interpret these changes to inform the decision-making process and the operational assessment.

[9] Social representation is a concept that is more complex than perception, as it represents *"a form of knowledge, developed and shared socially, having a practical purpose and competing to build a common reality for a social group"* (Seca, 2008). The concept is defined in close connection with communication, since *"individuals and groups create social representations in the course of communication and cooperation, and they should be seen as a specific way of understanding and communicating ... because social representation thus becomes a link that unites individuals".* (Botoşineanu, 2006)

- *Results*-oriented activities – achievement of the desired effect(s) and the desired outcome(s).
- *Power* – communication is empowered at all levels of command (Ib., pp. 33-34).

❖ **StratCom** essential **characteristics** are:

- *Audiences/public* – audiences refer to any individual, group of people or entity capable of observing the beneficiary's activity while being influenced by different actors. The public targeting is a way of classifying the actors, thus ensuring the communication activities planning that generates the most appropriate choices in relation to the target public. A simplistic segmentation results in three main public categories: hostile, friendly and neuter/not engaged. However, the segmentation is further detailed during planning, while target audiences are known[10] (Heap, Hansen, Gill, 2021, p. 27).
- *Narrative* – brief account of relevant events and information, arranged in a logical sequence, developed following a systematic assessment of the information environment, or a brief main message, to underpin the StratCom approach to be implemented (North Atlantic Military Committee, 2017, C-1). It is then used as a general *"story"* to orchestrate future activities.
- *Themes* – a theme is an overarching concept or intention that provides guidance for activities and communications. Themes are designed for broad application and differ from messages, which are strictly focused and directed at a specific audience (Heap et al., p. 41).
- *Effects* – an effect describes the impact (a perceptible change) on a target audience, usually articulated as a change in behaviour or attitude. Effects are the results of activities and they can be desired or undesired (sometimes called intended and unintended effects or second- or third-order effects) (Ib.).

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[10] The knowledge entails understanding different social segments within a target audience, cultural narratives, existing perceptions and beliefs, linguistic nuances, how information is received and processed by them, how information circulates within the respective public. It is also necessary to know their ability to influence the desired outcomes (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, pp. 8-9).

- *StratCom Objectives* – communication objectives focus on the general objectives, achieved through communication actions, which will support meeting the strategic objectives. StratCom objectives have to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART) (Ib.)

- *StratCom Framework* – the directives and guidelines in StratCom frameworks allow for the political guidelines to be communicated internally and for the execution to be developed up to the lowest level (Ib., p. 40).

In other words, StratCom functions as a common cognitive and working framework, which ensures unity in the understanding of the pursued political goal, in the directives that converge towards it, representing the binder of all the actions of the instruments of power. The most efficient approach to understanding the concept of strategic communication is the one that starts from effects[11], as the catalyst of StratCom processes is the desired political outcome. For a correct implementation, the outcome must be clearly defined and unanimously understood and, to that end, subsidiary objectives must be clearly formulated, based on strategic narratives that explain and support the objectives, as well as a consistent execution of the actions of all instruments of power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic), taking into account the whole set of effects generated in the information environment. (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 2020, p. 6). StratCom effectiveness is related to the political guidance and support, to the innovation level involved in these processes and to the timely and relevant response capability in a profoundly dynamic security environment.

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[11] We want to draw a parallel here between the effects-based approach to strategic communication and the effects-based approach to (military) operations* to emphasize that military strategic thinking already contains this way of working, meaning that the implementation of StratCom in the military domain is shaped on the already existing military cognitive backbone.

*Approaching operations from the perspective of effects aims to combine military and non-military actions that influence the general behaviour and capabilities of actors to achieve strategic objectives and the desired end-state. It entails military actions that are coherently harmonized with those of other international, governmental or non-governmental organizations operating in the area. These actions lead to achieving the desired effect on the system, especially cognitively, explicitly linked to the strategic objectives and the end-state (Marin, 2008, pp. 12-13).

Effects – the physical or cognitive consequences, at any level, within the strategic environment, of one or more military and non-military actions (Ib., p. 14).

COHESION AND INTEGRATION VS. REJECTION AND SOCIAL TENSIONS IN MANAGING MIGRATION EFFECTS

There are more specific categories of migration and, implicitly, of migrants, but in the present paper we will approach these concepts in a general sense. Thus, we will call *migration* any movement of masses and *migrant* any person who changes residence, regardless of the place, reason, period or legitimacy of relocation, aiming to outline a working framework that can be applied to all types of migration and migrants and that can be later developed for any typology, scenario or narrative, by adapting it to the specificity of the given context.

Although, currently[12], the percentage of migrants compared to the total world population is low, namely 3.6% (McAuliffe, Triandafyllidou, 2022), we cannot ignore the implications of these movements for the security environment, be they economic, societal or related to public order. We will focus on those risks involved by the social collision between immigrants and host communities, emphasizing also the beneficial effects a state can enjoy if migrants are properly integrated. Mention should be made that, in security studies, the most often challenges related to migration are: terrorism, international criminality and border control (Tallmeister, 2013).

We consider that these challenges can be prevented if specific methods are integrated in the migration phenomenon management, aimed at supporting the cohesion between the two social groups: immigrants and host community. This statement is based on the studies developed by experts in behavioural psychology, who conclude that there is a very close connection between social rejection and aggressive behaviour, presenting a series of arguments according to which these attitudes can be educated, in the sense of encouraging pro-social ones (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2021). In the present case, it would mean that the sense of rejection felt by migrants (and induced by host communities) can get materialized in aggressive attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, this process can become a perpetual one, given that citizens of the host community would respond in a similar way to such aggressive behaviours, coming from those initially rejected.

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[12] According to the latest report of the International Organization for Migration, published in October 2022 (McAuliffe, Triandafyllidou, 2022).

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Under these conditions, encouraging and, subsequently, developing pro-social attitudes is a key process in dealing with the issue of migrant integration.

Other references in this regard are the papers published by experts in security, who demonstrate the effectiveness of strategic communication in achieving the objective of immigrant integration and present the lessons learned in case studies – the successful example of Germany regarding the refugee crisis in 2015 (Shepherd, 2021).

The International Organization for Migration states that social inclusion[13] and cohesion[14] are essential factors for the *"healthy"* integration of migrants in the host communities, as they support the mutual adaptation of the two groups in contact (IOM, n.d.). Under these circumstances, international organizations and/or governments are responsible for the adaptation/formulation of the policies that promote migrant integration by consolidating the two processes. One of the greatest challenges is *"the fight against the negative image of migrants promoted in some parts of the media. These types of messages encourage intolerance, discrimination, racism and xenophobia towards those who seek new opportunities outside their home country. This rejection can have negative effects on the physical and mental health of migrants, on their contribution to work and to culture, which implicitly affects the benefits for host communities"* (IOM, 2022).

As it has been previously mentioned, strategic communication is the process that can inform the public and simultaneously shape perceptions, attitudes or even social representations. In this context, we will further identify the ways in which StratCom processes can be put into practice in support of migrant integration policies, following the working models and examples of such frameworks, suggested by specialists. Thus, we will attempt to put together the main elements of a StratCom framework, according to NATO vision and guidelines, by adapting a model advanced by the StratCom Centre of Excellence (for further details see Heap, Hansen, Gill, 2021, pp. 42-43). The purpose

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of outlining this general framework is to provide an overview of how a strategic communication campaign could be conceived to strengthen healthy cooperation between two social groups, whatever they may be, in such a situation.

StratCom processes have as catalyst the desired political outcome, which must be formulated in compliance with the concept specific principles. In the present case, cooperation and solidarity are *values* that are specific to democratic states, in line with the idea of social integration. Once it is established, the desired outcome must be clearly defined and, in this case, it can be succinctly translated into the following statement: *"The **purpose** of this endeavour is to provide directives and guidelines for a healthy social integration of migrants within host communities"*.

❖ **Narrative** – We want the social integration of immigrants in our country, to maintain public order and to gain the benefits of intercultural exchanges.

The constitution of our state is founded on values such as democracy, cooperation, solidarity and promotes openness to intercultural knowledge exchanges, from which our state can derive significant benefits.

❖ **Audiences** targeted in this (general) situation are:
- - *hostile*:
- - the public of hostile states, who promote conservatism, through messages likely to damage the image of the migrant, to produce insecurity, chaos, imbalance and contradiction in perceptions and, therefore, who create vulnerabilities within that society;
- - groups/individuals who promote messages that can deteriorate the migrant image;
- - groups/individuals (even among host communities) who try to incite immigrants from a particular region or cause them to have hostile attitudes and behaviours towards the host community;
- - *friendly*: groups of migrants.

❖ **Development context**

Global migration has currently an upward trend in terms of the number of people relocating beyond the borders of their country

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[13] Social inclusion refers to the process of improving the capacity, opportunity and dignity of disadvantaged people to be able to participate in society, based on their identity (IOM, n.d.).
[14] Social cohesion is related to the sense of belonging to a community and the solidarity and tolerance between its members (Ib.).

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of origin (regardless of the reason for relocation). In order to maintain public order and the state of security in the targeted area a healthy integration of these migrants into the society of the host community, into daily life and into the labour market in the particular state is necessary. To that end, the cooperation between the instruments of power, government(s) and ministries is essential in the development of policies that ensure the cohesion and connection between the two social groups.

Characteristics of the information environment – the constant and rapid evolution of the mass media, which makes possible the circulation of an undefined amount of information, which can come from multiple sources (from the individual to organizations, governments, other institutions) and which can change behaviours, perceptions, social representations, including regarding migration, as a phenomenon, or migrants themselves. At the same time, an increasing number of hostile (dis)information campaigns are identified, some of which are aimed precisely at shaping the attitude of the host communities to reject immigrants, which means the emergence of vulnerabilities to the security system in a particular region.

❖ **Risks**

• The escalation of tensions between the two social groups in conflict situations, with the potential of perpetuation over time.

• The manipulation of the opinion of a large number of residents of the host states to form influence groups to undermine the rights and freedoms of immigrants, as a result of the propagation of messages of hostile campaigns and, consequently, the violation of fundamental human rights.

• The development of terrorist groups, international crime, and the violation of border control rules.

Strategic objectives

• To maintain social cohesion.

• To deter hostile influences.

• To avoid the escalation of migration events towards conflicts.

❖ **StratCom objectives**

• To increase the level of empathy within the host communities in relation to the immigrants in their country.

• To deter the development of hostile information campaigns.

• To inform the masses about the mentioned intentions.

• To identify and disapprove hostile campaigns.

• o minimize the effects of hostile information campaigns.

❖ **Themes**

• Empathy and solidarity.

• Cooperation and communication.

• Vigilance.

❖ **Effects**

• *Desired effects*: Host communities are properly informed about the reasons why migrants arrive in their country, about their rights and obligations while they reside in that space, about the benefits that their communion with them can bring to society, and equally about the implications that the communion can have for both sides.

Host communities accept to live alongside migrants and offer them equal (or within the legislative limits) opportunities to participate in social activities such as education, activation in the labour field etc. and support them in this integration process

• *Undesired effects*: Exaggeration of (our) attempt to promote collaboration between the host community and migrants and its presentation/reinterpretation in the media in a note from which host societies understand that there are more (hidden) social risks than those presented in strategic information releases.

STRATCOM WORKING FRAMEWORK: INTEGRATION OF UKRAINIAN MIGRANTS IN THE ROMANIAN COMMUNITY, IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE CONFLICT

Considering that a campaign developed under specific circumstances requires for all contextual details to be acknowledged, in this chapter, we intend to model a specific StratCom framework for the integration of Ukrainian migrants into the Romanian community, based on the previously presented backbone as follows:

❖ *The **goal** of the present approach is to provide directives and guidelines for a healthy social integration of Ukrainian migrants into the Romanian community*.

Global migration has currently an upward trend in terms of the number of people relocating beyond the borders of their country of origin (regardless of the reason for relocation). In order to maintain public order and the state of security in the targeted area a healthy integration of these migrants into the society of the host community, into daily life and into the labour market in the particular state is necessary.

Host communities are properly informed about the reasons why migrants arrive in their country, about their rights and obligations while they reside in that space, about the benefits that their communion with them can bring to society, and equally about the implications that the communion can have for both sides.

❖ *Narrative* – We want to live in peace, order and cooperation in our society, alongside Ukrainian migrants, whom we support in their integration here.

Among the most significant values around which the Romanian state and the Romanian society have been formed are *"social democracy, human dignity, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the free development of the human personality...",* for which the state Constitution (Constituţia României) guarantees within the territory of this country. These values are in perfect accordance with the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, cohesion and respect for human rights and freedoms. Thus, the Romanians will welcome the Ukrainian immigrants with openness and empathy, understanding the reason and context that have brought them to Romania – the conflict that is unfolding in the Ukrainian territory – and, moreover, they will support them, to the extent of their own resources, for a healthy integration within their community.

❖ The **target audiences**:

- *hostile*: groups of individuals, Romanian citizens, who oppose the idea of accepting and integrating Ukrainian migrants within the Romanian society; governments, groups or individuals, from the country or abroad, who intend to destabilize the Romanian society cohesion by creating vulnerabilities as a result of rejecting Ukrainian migrants;
- *friendly*: groups of migrants; a part of the host community; national media;
- *neutral*: a part of the host community; international media.

❖ *Development context*

One of the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the migration of Ukrainian citizens out of the conflict zone either to protect themselves from possible life-threatening attacks or as a result of the destruction of their homes. Under these conditions, until 24 January 2023, 7,996,573 Ukrainian citizens (19% of the population of Ukraine) decided to leave their country of residence and look for new homes outside the borders (Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration, 2023), of whom a good part chose Romania as their country of destination (106,644 Ukrainian citizens, as of 15 January 2023; Statista, 2023).

Among the most significant values around which the Romanian state and the Romanian society have been formed are "social democracy, human dignity, the rights and freedoms of citizens, the free development of the human personality...", for which the state Constitution guarantees within the territory of this country. These values are in perfect accordance with the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, cohesion and respect for human rights and freedoms.

❖ *Risks*

The emergence of tensions or even conflicts between Romanian citizens and Ukrainian refugees.

❖ *Strategic objectives*

- To maintain social cohesion within the territory of Romania.
- To avoid the emergence of tensions between Romanian citizens and Ukrainian immigrants, which can result in destabilizing public order.
- To deter hostile influences.

❖ *StratCom objectives*

- To increase the level of empathy among Romanian citizens in relation to the situation of Ukrainian refugees.
- To properly inform Romanian citizens about the rights and obligations of Ukrainian refugees while they are within the territory of our country.
- To deter hostile information campaigns meant to generate tensions between the government and the state institutions, Romanian citizens, and Ukrainian refugees.

❖ *Themes*

- Empathy and solidarity: We understand the situation Ukrainian civilians are going through and the reason why they chose to leave their country, some of them seeking refuge within the territory of Romania. We want to welcome and treat them with the same attitude as we would like to be received and hosted in a similar situation.
- Cooperation and communication: We want to be constantly informed about the situation of Ukrainian refugees (needs, requests, possible problems), in order to provide answers or explanations in a timely manner, before possible tensions emerge.
- Vigilance: We identify hostile information actions and deter and combat them by informing the public about their existence, the actual situation (presenting concrete arguments/evidence to support this reality), as well as the way in which citizens can identify such hostile situations/attempts.

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To properly inform Romanian citizens about the rights and obligations of Ukrainian refugees while they are within the territory of our country is a major StratCom's objectives.

❖ *Effects*

- *Desired effects*: Romanian citizens are properly informed and understand the reasons that made Ukrainian refugees leave their country of origin and choose Romania as a country of destination. Moreover, they understand what their rights and obligations are while being within the territory of Romania, in this way increasing the level of empathy of Romanians towards Ukrainian refugees. At the same time, the benefits that the tension-free communion between Romanians and Ukrainian migrants can bring to the Romanian society are presented and understood.

Romanian citizens accept to live alongside Ukrainian refugees and respect their rights, offering them equal (or within the legislative limits) opportunities to participate in the entire set of social activities such as: education, health, activation in the labour field etc.; they also support them in the process of integration into the Romanian society, within the limits of the resources they have.

- *Undesired effect*: The exaggeration of (our) attempt to promote collaboration between the Romanian community and Ukrainian migrants and its presentation/reinterpretation through social networks as a threat and not as a situation per se or, at most, a challenge, a fact that could provoke *"xenophobic and racist attitudes, the exclusion of immigrant groups and their perception as ‹the others›"*, according to some experts in the field (Mavrokefalos, 2022).

FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The analysis conducted in this article presents a series of arguments that support the hypothesis formulated in the beginning, namely that *the implementation of StratCom processes can support the efforts meant to maintain the state of peace, in the context of the integration of migrants into host communities.* However, for its validation and for the construction of a theory, it is necessary to implement the suggested frameworks. That is why we consider the development of a series of comprehensive studies to complement and continue this approach as necessary.

In this way, we want to highlight the fact that understanding the security environment and managing the challenges that emerge are

no longer a matter for security and defence experts, and the optimal solutions to respond to various security situations can only come from a transdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approach, in which the skills and experience of specialists from related fields (such as the field of communication, public relations) interpenetrate, in order to develop the possible response scenarios in the most comprehensive and complex manner.

Thus, the identification of the compatibility between the StratCom processes and those necessary to achieve the objective of *"healthy"* integration of migrants within the host communities and the demonstration that it is possible to shape a working framework to serve this endeavour represent only the first step in the broader effort to prove the hypothesis that the migration management system can be improved, in the sense of supporting the government authorities in their efforts to maintain public order and the state of peace.

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Romanian citizens are properly informed and understand the reasons that made Ukrainian refugees leave their country of origin and choose Romania as a country of destination. Moreover, they understand what their rights and obligations are while being within the territory of Romania, in this way increasing the level of empathy of Romanians towards Ukrainian refugees.

The optimal solutions to respond to various security situations can only come from a transdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approach, in which the skills and experience of specialists from related fields (such as the field of communication, public relations) interpenetrate, in order to develop the possible response scenarios in the most comprehensive and complex manner.

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