Subversion

Subversion (Latin *subvertere*: overthrow) refers to a process by which the values and principles of a system in place are contradicted or reversed, in an attempt to transform the established social order and its structures of power, authority, hierarchy, and social norms. Subversion can be described as an attack on the public morale and, "the will to resist intervention are the products of combined political and social or class loyalties which are usually attached to national symbols. Following penetration, and parallel with the forced disintegration of political and social institutions of the state, these loyalties may be detached and transferred to the political or ideological cause of the aggressor".[1] Subversion is used as a tool to achieve political goals because it generally carries less risk, cost, and difficulty as opposed to open belligerency. Furthermore, it is a relatively cheap form of warfare that does not require large amounts of training.[2] A **subversive** is something or someone carrying the potential for some degree of subversion. In this context, a "subversive" is sometimes called a "traitor" with respect to (and usually by) the government in power.

Subversion, however, is also often a goal of comedians, artists and people in those careers.[3] In this case, being subversive can mean questioning, poking fun at, and undermining the established order in general.[4] When a comedy or comic is referred to as being subversive, it is as much of a compliment to their work as it could be an accusation,[5] from comics like Charlie Chaplin, Lenny Bruce, Andy Kaufman and Stephen Colbert to writers like Paddy Chayefsky, Larry Charles and Mel Brooks, to activists like Abbie Hoffman, and Michael Moore, to artists like The Yes Men and monochrom. Satire is one of the most potent forms of subversion for artists and comics, and it can take shape in films, television, books, and even political protest.

Terrorist groups generally do not employ subversion as a tool to achieve their goals. Subversion is a manpower-intensive strategy and many groups lack the manpower and political and social connections to carry out subversive activities.[6] However, actions taken by terrorists may have a subversive effect on society. Subversion can imply the use of insidious, dishonest, monetary, or violent methods to bring about such change.

This is in contrast to protest, a coup d'état, or working through traditional means in a political system to bring about change. Furthermore, external subversion is where, "the aggressor state attempts to recruit and assist indigenous political and military actors to overthrow their government by coup d'état".[7] If subversion fails in its goal of bringing about a coup it is possible that the actors and actions of the subversive group could transition to insurrection, insurgency, and/or guerilla warfare.[8]

Iraqi troops put up a poster of wanted insurgents.

The word is present in all languages of Latin origin (see seditio), originally applying to such events as the military defeat of a city. As early as the 14th century, it was being used in the English language with reference to laws, and in the 15th century came to be used with respect to the realm. The term has taken over from "sedition" as the name for illicit rebellion, though the connotations of the two words are rather different, sedition suggesting overt attacks on institutions, subversion something much more surreptitious, such as eroding the basis of belief in the status quo or setting people against each other.

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Definition

The problem with defining the term **subversion** is that there is not a single definition that is universally accepted.[9] Charles Townshend described subversion as a term, "so elastic as to be virtually devoid of meaning, and its use does little more than convey the enlarged sense of the vulnerability of modern systems to all kinds of covert assaults".[10] What follows are some of the many attempts to define the term:

> "**Subversion** is the undermining or detachment of the loyalties of significant political and social groups within the victimized state, and their transference, under ideal conditions, to the symbols and institutions of the aggressor."[11]

"**Subversion** — Actions designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a governing authority."[12]

"**Subversive Activity** — Anyone lending aid, comfort, and moral support to individuals, groups, or organizations that advocate the overthrow of incumbent governments by force and violence is subversive and is engaged in subversive activity. All willful acts that are intended to be detrimental to the best interests of the government and that do not fall into the categories of treason, sedition, sabotage, or espionage will be placed in the category of subversive activity."[12]

"**Subversive Political Action** — A planned series of activities designed to accomplish political objectives by influencing, dominating, or displacing individuals or groups who are so placed as to affect the decisions and actions of another government."[12]

Subversion — "A destructive, aggressive activity aimed to destroy the country, nation, or geographical area of your enemy... [by demoralizing the cultural values and changing the population's perception of reality].[13]

Subversion — Roger Trinquier defined subversion as a term that could be lumped together under the name modern warfare, "as being interlocking systems of actions, political, economic, psychological and military that aims at the overthrow of established authority in a country."[14]

Conceptual understanding

Defining and understanding subversion means identifying entities, structures, and things that can be subverted. Furthermore, it may help to identify practices and tools that are not subversive. Institutions and morals can be subverted, but ideology on the other hand cannot.[15] The fall of a government or the creation of a new government as a result of an external war is not subversion. Espionage does not count as subversion because it is not an action that leads directly to an overthrow of a government. Information gathered from espionage may be used to plan and carry out subversive activities.[16]

To gain an understanding of what is considered to be subversive requires understanding the intent of those taking action. This makes defining and identifying subversion a difficult process. As Laurence Beilenson points out, "to criticize a government in an effort to reform it or to change its policies is not subversion, even though such criticism may contribute to overthrow. But criticism intended to help a projected overthrow becomes subversive without regard to whether it is right or wrong."[17]

Types

Subversion can generally be broken down into internal and external subversion, but this distinction is not meant to imply that each follows a specific set of unique and separate tools and practices. Each subversive campaign is different because of the social, political, economic, cultural, and historical differences that each country has. Subversive activities are employed based upon an evaluation of these factors. This breakdown merely clarifies who the actors are. While the subversive actors may be different, the soon to be subverted targets are the same. As Paul Blackstock identifies, the ruling and political elites are the ultimate targets of persuasion because they control the physical instruments of state power.[18]

Internal subversion is actions taken by those within a country and can be used as a tool of power. In most cases the use or threat of force is the last step of internal subversion.[19]

External subversion is actions taken by another country in cooperation with those inside the subverted country and can be used as a tool of statecraft. Foreign volunteers from another country are not enough to qualify for external subversion.[17] The reason for this is that the individuals may legitimately share the cause of the internal subversive dissidents and have legitimately volunteered. Only when the government itself furnishes a nation with money, arms, supplies, or other help to dissidents can it be called external subversion.[20]

Tools and practices

Subversive actions can generally be grouped into three interrelated categories:

- Establishing front groups and penetrating and manipulating existing political parties
- Infiltrating the armed forces, the police, and other institutions of the state, as well as important non-government organizations
- Generating civil unrest through demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts.[21]

Other factors, while not specifically falling into these categories, may also be useful to subversive dissidents. Additionally, many tools may overlap into other groups of tools as well. As an example, subversives may infiltrate an organization for cultural subversion more so than for control. Civil unrest may be used to provoke the government into a violent response.

Infiltration and establishing front groups

In order for a group to be successful in subverting a government, the group itself and its ideas must be seen as an acceptable alternative to the status quo. However, groups that work toward subverting a government, in many cases, follow ideas and promote goals that on their surface would not receive the support of the population. Therefore, "to gain public credibility, attract new supporters, generate revenue, and acquire other resources, groups need to undertake political activities that are entirely separate, or appear separate, from the overtly violent activities of those groups. Sometimes this is achieved by infiltrating political parties, labor unions, community groups, and charitable organizations".[21] Infiltrating organizations is an important tool because these institutions are already seen as legitimate in the eyes of the people and provide a platform to express their ideas. When infiltrating, the dissident identifies needs of the organization and then links those needs to solutions that his ideology can provide. This was a technique that the Communist Party USA employed. Once the organization has been co-opted, the dissident can

then move on to establishing ties with other groups.[22] Furthermore, in addition to gaining possible legitimacy for its ideas the infiltration of these groups can, "bolster political allies, attack government policies, and attract international support".[23] If some organizations are too difficult to infiltrate, it may be necessary to create new organizations that appear to be independent but are actually under the direction of the subversive group.

The infiltration of state organizations can provide subversive groups the opportunity to do many things to achieve their goals. The infiltration of security forces can provide information about the government's capabilities and how they plan to address the group's activities. Infiltration also provides the opportunity to plant false information, lead the government to misallocate resources, to steal funds, weapons, equipment, and other resources, and ultimately aid in weakening and delegitimizing the government.[24] The targets of infiltration are not limited to the groups and institutions mentioned above. Economic industries and universities have also been the target for infiltration. In the case of universities, the liberal arts departments are more prone to subversion than the hard sciences.[25]

Russian and French methods

Dominique Poirier, former employee and specialist in communication warfare in the French intelligence service, DGSE, describes extensively subversion in a book on the practices and methods of this agency, published in 2019,[26] yet he rarely uses the noun "subversion," remarkably. While presenting and describing extensively the Russian and French methods of subversion and counter-subversion, he explains that the French intelligence community in particular uses the term *guerre de l'information*, or "information warfare". Then information warfare subsumes a number of other nouns, sometimes of Russian origin, each denoting a specific action that may actually describe an action of subversion or counter-subversion. Coming to add to the latter difference in perception of the action of subversion, he further says that information warfare in the French intelligence community is ruled itself by active measures that the DGSE, acting as leading intelligence agency in France, adopted as an "all-encompassing" doctrine. Indeed, active measures in France would regulate not only all intelligence and counterintelligence activities, but also foreign affairs and diplomacy, domestic politics, and even the activities of the major industrial and business companies and groups in this country, since a period he locates between 1980 and 1982. For all the latter would be logically called to partake in a common and coherent effort in intelligence, counterintelligence, influence, and counterinfluence on the French soil as abroad. Actually, the French intelligence community, and the DGSE in particular, always use the nouns "interference" (*ingérence*, in French) and "counterinterference" (*contre-ingérence*) to name "subversion" and "counter-subversion" respectively. The DGSE and one other intelligence agency of this country at least are particularly active in subversive activities abroad, often in a joint effort with the Russian foreign intelligence service, SVR RF, with a focus on the United States, Dominique Poirier specifies from firsthand knowledge and experience spanning the years 1980 to circa 2001. In the latter context, the main methods of subversion he presents as "actions of influence" and their expected results are the followings.

Most French and Russian actions of subversion, and of domestic influence alike, actually are governed by the notion of minority influence as initially defined by social psychologist Serge Moscovici. However, the DGSE in particular designs all such actions in accordance with fundamentals of a scientific approach akin to behaviorism, called "behavioral biology" (*biologie comportementale*, in French) initially established in the early 1980s by French military scientist Henri Laborit. Additionally, the narrative, or "formal aims" of the action of subversion — when there is one, as behavioral biology focuses on acting on the unconscious, or id, locating in the reptilian brain as defined by Paul D. MacLean — is defined in accordance with fundamentals in epistemology, another Russian import in French information warfare and active measures. In the latter context, minority influence unfolds in five stages that Dominique Poirier describes as follow.

1. The stage ***revelation*** ... aims to influence the majority in favor of / against something (social / political / economic / cultural issue). It is initiated by a small minority that spreads the message of the cause. The majority is caught by surprise, but it listens to it because it wants to know what the fuss is about, exactly.

2. In the stage ***question*** ..., the majority listened to the message, and it reacts negatively to it because the arguments are absurd, excessive, and clash with the dominant scale of values, conservative therefore. Consequently, the majority takes some distances with the minority it now holds in contempt. Yet the minority is unabashed and continues trying to rally more people to what it holds as "the cause" (be it rational and justified or not, regardless, in the present explanation).

3. In the stage ***incubation*** ..., the minority rallied to its cause a few people only, yet endowed with authority, in addition to others who are respected for their sole fame and notoriety, such as film actors, columnists, recipients of prestigious prizes, etc. All those people are opinion leaders, therefore. The motives of those opinion leaders range from sincere, selfish, to opportunistic, because a need for greater notoriety and other stakes motivate them. The latter detail is unimportant to the minority in the absolute, since what matters to it is that "the cause" be heard. In sum, the voice of the minority now has a potent echo chamber that validates its cause. At this stage, a psychological phenomenon settles. The cause takes a new form that dismisses any further need to prove the validity of its substance. Many in the majority think that they can no longer ignore the minority, although its cause is now reducing to a few crafted slogans that repeat.

4. The stage ***conversion*** marks the moment at which many in the majority begin to acknowledge the rightfulness of the cause of the minority, even if not sincerely since the arguments supporting its message did not change, or evolved and now are different, or even are no longer mentioned. In reality, the volte-face is largely motivated by a misperception that is a belief in an already ongoing adjustment of values in the majority, or "peer pressure per proxy" initiated by the few celebrities and the media. At this point, the action of influence really transforms into a manipulation.

5. The last stage ***innovation*** is reached when the cause of the minority has been widely acknowledged, to a point of being seen now as "a norm universally accepted in the country," even though this is untrue in the facts. The hardheaded people who stick to the old values together are the new minority. Those who are embracing the cause believe sincerely that they are not straying nor are influenced. Quite on the contrary, because they ever stick to the scale of values of their country, "which obviously changes along the natural and normal evolution of the society," they think. Besides, they assume that they are not granted any authority great enough to oppose the voices of the many who together are the public opinion, nor have the nerve to question a cause that famous and respected persons endorse. Moreover, the people of the former majority now see the remaining dissenters as "excessively conservatives, hardheaded, or even reactionaries," thus turning the issue and its pro and con arguments upside down. The change does not lay on an understanding of the cause and of the validity of its arguments, since that is not what brought the change of values to happen, but truly and unconsciously on an innate and therefore hardly repressible *need for belonging / belongingness* that originally was a herd instinct caused by a need for safety.[27]

Formally speaking, the narrative that is the message of the cause actually is an action of influence, whose substance is strictly regulated, as explained below.

Establishing an action of influence claims the three following elements, plus a fourth when the circumstances are favorable.

1. The **context**, which is the political / social / economic / cultural situation(s) of the target country.

2. The **expectation**, which is the need / claim or object of the discontent of the minority or majority.

3. The **message of influence**, which are the myth and its narrative that the specialists of the intelligence agency design according to what 2. specifies, and to the actions chosen for spreading / voicing them.

4. The **echo chamber**, which of course consists in making other media relaying the action defined in 3.

Then the action of influence must include the following four steps.

A. **Victimization** of the minority or majority, which must be presented in terms chosen to arouse passionate feelings in the masses.

B. "**Culpabilization**" of the ruling elite or assimilated to it, which is the first goal of the action to be reached.

C. **Call for redemption**, addressed to the ruling elite or assimilated, which is the second goal of the action to be reached.

D. **Mending** / **reparation**, which must be elicited from the ruling elite or assimilated, final goal of the action.

It is understood that the action in four steps above actually is a manipulation of the masses rather than an action influence. Its objective is to force the ruling elite or assimilated to comply to the demand of the minority, since the former collectively is the only one that is not fooled. As the action is all about passion and at no point about reason, reaching successively and successfully each of its four steps consists in winning the minds of the masses along three successive objectives called "battles," explained below.[28]

a. The **battle of ideas** or **logos**, which is an over-simplification or reformulation of "the cause" / claims, designed by the experts in influence of the intelligence agency to be easily assimilated by masses of people. The messages are slogans therefore, by opposition to their elaborate forms that would claim long sentences or even an entire paragraph, unsuitable to an action aiming to arouse passionate feelings. In other words, the *battle of ideas* is about caricaturing an issue rather than just putting strong emphasis to it. The targeted politician or ruling elite or / and their actions are criminalized instead of being simply questioned, and the "concerning situation" must be transformed into an "emergency".

b. The **battle of emotions** or **pathos**, which must arouse feelings or moods among the masses, such as anger, shame, joy. The emotions are triggered with meta-communication, such as crying or expressing sorrow in a convincing manner when presenting the narrative. Music and songs conveying the narrative, associated to pictures in a video, theatrical demonstrations, shows, and use of arts and symbols, also trigger emotions. Of late in 2018-2019, actions of influence and disinformation are done by manipulating or indoctrinating young teenagers or even preteens, in order to elicit the same emotions from the masses. In other words, the *battle of emotions* is about transforming a worry into a dramatic situation, and changing concern for hysteria in the minds of the masses.

c. The **battle of values** or **theos**, consists in doing acts meant to show to the masses that the cause / aims do not limit to spoken and written words, pictures, music or songs, demonstrations, and shows, and that commitment to the myth and its narrative indeed extends to physical realities. Therefore, those acts can be striking physically against anti-riot police forces, throwing eggs against a politician, burning one's voting card or a flag before a journalist cameraman, destroying a statue before a crowd, suing the State or a president, etc. All such acts that consist in transforming the thought into action in the sense of motion also are relevant to meta-communication, and they call for physical action by relying on meme. The involvement of people in the battle of values is the ultimate form of commitment to the cause / aims, and it is an important stage that is needed when the masses who committed to the cause / aims at some point start to tire of words and are expecting real effects. In other words, the *battle of values* is about pushing the masses to "excommunicating" the ruling elite or the politician instead of simply asking for a change of attitude.[29]

Dominique Poirier insists on the fact that since the expected effects of the methods of subversion as described above are all defined by fundamentals of behavioral biology, they limit to an alternative with three basic reactions only, which are,

1. **fighting**,

2. *fleeing*, and

3. *inhibition*, or *inhibition behavior*.

The order in the enumeration above is logically understandable, even though the unconscious part of the brain that orders them does not process logics. When in the face of any impediment, threat, or aggression, first, we fight; second, we flee if we cannot fight; and third, we yield to inhibition when neither fighting nor fleeing is possible. The thoughtful process of conversion of these drives into actions is largely conditioned by logic in Man, but much less so when he acts in a group because this other factor greatly stimulates "herd instinct," a by-product of the need to being, as we shall see in several chapters of the Part II. Anyway, knowing this allows predicting accurately the response of someone to his manipulation, regardless of his intellectual capacities. It is even possible to improve further this accuracy, or even to transform it into an inescapable outcome, by arranging circumstances that will deny to this individual his options to *fighting* and to *fleeing*. Therefore, this will leave him with one option only, which is *inhibition behavior*.[30]

Dominique Poirier presents a number of other types of actions serving subversion abroad and domestic influence, indifferently, about all sophisticated in their principles because they address the unconscious and do not call for any thoughtful process to occur in the minds of masses they aim. He specifies that some of the latter methods are highly effective due to a difficulty to identify them formally as actions of subversion, and resulted in successes in the French-speaking regions of Belgium and Switzerland in the 2000s and 2010s.

Finally, while talking specifically about actions of subversion abroad serving political influence and cultural influence, which he subsumes this time in the field of psychological warfare, he describes their actions and expected reactions as follow.

The ruling elite of the attacked country is collectively tormented with a set of particular techniques, methods, and tricks, which all aim to overwhelm its members, to weaken them morally, and to demonize them in the eyes of the nations they lead, in order to justify their "elimination" in the end. These techniques, methods, and tricks are the followings, …

1. All the following methods must be used in fashions allowing their plausible denial at any time. Therefore, the latter concern claims suitable efforts focusing on the rallying of third parties, which mainly are individuals fit to act as opinion leaders, generally unaware of the real aims they serve. Those opinion leaders are supported by promotion given from distance to them and to their actions, relying on conventional and more exotic media. In general, the methods rely on communication in all its possible forms.

2. Rallying the masses around causes designed to arouse passion, and avoiding causes calling for reason. Causes based on reason are poorly energetic, harder to promote, and difficult to spread quickly among the masses, therefore. Then the nature of a cause may be either positive ("for") or negative ("against"). The preference must be given to negative causes, because they call for a violence necessary for the expected change to occur, and because they aim a short-termed goal. Arousing thoughtless passion and fighting reason among the targeted masses are cardinal rules in influence, agitprop, and disinformation.

3. The negative causes can be very varied, ranging from true facts selected in the biographies and political and economic records of the members of the ruling elite to be attacked, or they can be fabricated; they aim to demonize them anyway. Therefrom, the negative causes can be true isolated facts, whose gravity must be suitably emphasized and presented as generalities, inclinations, and vices. Entirely fabricated facts must be avoided, although the regular releases of various false negative facts (*i.e.* disinformation campaign) together have a proven effectiveness, for constant repetitions of facts, true, false or both, regardless, overwhelm the thoughtful process in the minds of the masses. When numerous and varied false negative facts are publicly released with a fast frequency, people give up quickly in their efforts to check them one by one, and they are inclined to believe that "they cannot all be false" due to their number. Furthermore, the credit popularly given to the attacked ruling elite decreases as its members feel forced to disprove a too important number of facts one by one and on a row, regardless of their authenticity.

4. Strong emphasis added on negative facts transforms them into strong arguments. In the latter case, the effort in the disinformation campaign actually focuses on the added emphases rather than on the facts themselves, which truly are of minor importance and disproportionate to the claims when considered objectively. Yet the masses never do the latter effort, nor are ready to give time enough to themselves to enquire on the validity of an accusation; they rely entirely on the media and on rumors instead.

5. Positive facts about the attacked ruling elite must be ignored / dismissed rather than challenged. Challenging positive facts is also making them better known than they are already.

6. Creating "toxic" friends and allies for the attacked ruling elite. Finding out third parties with images and notorieties that the masses perceive negatively, or creating such parties claiming closeness in values / opinions / ideas with the attacked ruling elite (*i.e.* demonization by association).

7. Arranging and then recording "toxic" relations and encounters between members of the attacked ruling elite, in order to transform their records into clues / evidences suggesting / supporting a fabricated rumor about anything is clashing with the scale of values of the masses (*e.g.* sex, corruption, collusion, particular / exotic political or religious ideas, disputable statements, stances, and postures with respect to conventions, etc.).

8. Driving morally the targeted ruling elite into "a corner," to forcing them into doing anything is thoughtless, and then treating the move / statement / attitude with the method #4 (*i.e.* demonization).

9. Finding out isolated negative facts, excerpts in texts and selections in pictures and video putting the attacked ruling elite at its disadvantage, and treating this material with the method #4.

The objective of the basics above limits to bringing political changes in the target country. The other basics below are relevant to information warfare and to cultural influence, essentially. They must be used either in association with those above when the goal is an effective but more or less official takeover of a country, or not necessarily when the goal limits to weakening this country in preparation to its ulterior takeover (*i.e.* warming up the masses of the attacked country, or *awareness raising*).

10. Overall, the main objective of this second set of actions limits to sowing and to breeding doubt in the minds of the masses about everything is positive in the perception they have of their country and of its scale of values in general, and not necessarily about their feelings for their ruling elite. Therefore, it is not about making the masses endorsing a cause, but only about undermining their confidence, to the point of making them feeling less safe and comfortable in their country than they were until then. In turn, the ill feelings must gradually evolve toward incredulity, and then doubt, especially towards the core values of their country since the goal is to prepare the masses to the acceptance of new values ultimately.

11. Challenging and questioning the scale of values of the masses of the target country through persistent and various actions of cultural influence ...

12. Breeding doubt in the masses about facts and news by insisting on the negative perception that anyone may have of them. Media hyping true negative news that are poorly or not at all reported in the attacked country (*i.e. awareness raising*). Doing the same with positive facts and news about other countries and culture and / or their scales of values challenging those of the target country (*i.e.* importing foreign white propaganda). Overt black propaganda must be avoided altogether, since success with this method largely relies on subtle disinformation and *information dosage* and fuzzy logic.

13. Sowing discord among the masses by dividing them into minorities over issues that can be either fabricated or that are already existing in an inchoate form (*i.e. awareness raising*). Those issues may be of minor importance or even imagined regardless, because the goal limits to weaken or to eradicate feelings of unity around core national / cultural values in the attacked country. The worrying issues, however, and preferably, must have in common to be or to appear to be caused passively or actively by the ruling elite, its current politics, rules, and regulations. Thus, each of the minorities and their particular causes will breed inescapably common resentment aiming the ruling elite and its current politics, rules, and regulations, and thus, together they will make up for a majority federated by a common discontent.

14. Infiltrating permanently all political parties of the attacked country with a focus on the most popular and on those whose popularity are rising. The political color of a party to be infiltrated is unimportant, because the goal is to secure in it a capacity in influence over politics, public services, and the military, once it will be in power, if ever. Moderately extremist parties (*i.e.* far right and far left) are of particular interest: first, due to their greater dynamism, and second, because of the easy reversibility of their programs, and stances of their grass rooters. Far extremist parties and their hardliners are of poor interest, because they attract small minorities only, whose members are unable to access positions of responsibilities and power, typically.

15. Whenever possible, founding new political parties, associations, labor unions, and liberal masonic grand lodges and lodges in the attacked country, by recruiting its citizens having suitable profiles. Recruiting or assisting / helping discreetly leaders of minority parties, associations, and labor unions, that are already established and whose views are clashing with the orthodoxy enforced by the ruling elite and the dominant / conservative scale of values. The goal with those leaders and the collective bodies of individuals they lead is to use them as media / proxies voicing suitable messages of influence and disinformation. A focus must be given on women, because they are more receptive than men are to the *call for passion*. More than 50% of women in all countries are more receptive to progressive values and stand by them.

16. Spotting public servants whose views may serve the attack, and helping / assisting them rise in their respective hierarchies. The same must be done with people who, in general, have positions and professional notorieties that endow them the status of natural and influential opinion leaders (*e.g.* experts, politicians, senior officials, religious leaders, scientists, journalists, artists, etc.). The main characteristic of interest in those people is their sincere commitment to a cause, idea, belief, or concept that may serve the attack in some way. In this respect, exactly as in advertising, women preferably young and handsome are recruits of greater interest, due to their superior ability to seduce. Then women often demonstrate greater aggressiveness and determination than men in adversity. Additionally, independently of genre, selecting recruits who visibly are from third-world countries regardless of their generations, because the interest in such opinion leaders is their natural capacity to inhibit opponents, lest of accusations of racism or xenophobia that always prove potent additional means of defense causing further inhibition / inaction.

17. In universities, spotting talents whose views are similar to these presented in #16, and helping them gaining positions of interest with respect to the aims. In general, penetrating and influencing the educational system of the target country is of particular interest when this is possible, and often fruitful. Schools and universities where the future elites of the country are customarily taught are prime targets.

18. In the methods #1, #15, #16 and #17, note that recruiting those types of individuals as *conscious agents* is not the goal, and must be avoided, therefore. Instead, the suitable method is to make profit of their natural qualities, opinions, and known stances, in order to shelter them effectively against all suspicions of collusion and accusation of espionage and foreign influence. Interactions with them must never be direct (*i.e.* working them through *screens*), and must limit to their manipulations and to anonymous helps / assistance / promotion / media-hype. Moreover, influencing them must be avoided because they must be selected according to the quality and strength of their natural opinions, precisely. For the record, 1. the best agent is someone who ignores that he is one; 2. never try to change the ideas and beliefs of someone meant to be recruited to serve this type of operation, and find a way to use them and their opinions advantageously, instead.

19. In general, arousing resentment against the dominant scale of values and the ruling elite among already existing minorities, regardless of what they are and what their claims may be, to thus making them natural allies in the attack. In other words, the silent frustrations of those minorities must be aroused enough to give rise to spoken claims (*i.e. awareness raising*). In this goal, identifying all natural social and cultural minorities, and influencing them into claiming a distinct identity. All societies are made of minorities, and arousing resentment in each against the scale of values maintained by the ruling elite makes them together a powerful majority, yet all along unaware of the real aims that thus they serve.

Special operations of the kind and scale presented above focus on influencing the masses by manipulating a limited number of individuals in reality, who thus are all made *unconscious agents*. For the very high stakes and sensitivity of such operations forbid the explicit recruitment of citizens of the attacked country as agents, under-agents, *contacts*, or *sources*. The exception to this rule concerns journalists, because, 1. they are legally allowed to investigate on sensitive matters, 2. the strong alibis of freedom of speech and freedom of the press shield them against all accusation of influence and propaganda, 3. the two latter points put them in capacity to serve consciously the interests of a foreign power, as agents or *sources*, without running the risk to fall under the accusation of intelligence with a foreign power, except in certain authoritarian regimes.

When the explicit recruitment of opinion leaders as agent is undertaken, then the goal is to serve the methods #6 and #7. In this case, the desired effect is to discredit and to demonize a prominent party representative and his party, therefore, because their existence and action are impingements in the unfolding of the operation.

In general, in the French and Russian doctrines in intelligence, a rule says that a recruiter must look for people whose ideas likely to serve the objectives are "natural," and that the recruiter must never attempt to change their natural opinions and beliefs. Nothing and no pattern in their biographies, records, investigation, and possible interviews that may be led by the local counterintelligence must give rise to suspicions of collusion or recruitment by a foreign intelligence agency or assimilated to it.[31]

The expression "awareness raising" "was a Soviet import that occurred in France during the preparatory stage of the riots and general strikes of May 1968. It happened in the early months of the latter year, first as a sophisticated technique in agitprop known in the Soviet KGB under the name сенсибилизация ("siencibilizatz'iya"), otherwise used in the other field of epistemology in Soviet Union. In France, the latter Russian word was given definitively the translation *sensibilisation* (without equivalent in English) circa March 1968, as this word, sounding similar, already existed with other meanings in this country. The latter facts explain why *sensibilisation / awareness raising* is the same in its principle as the other method of *minority influence* in agitprop."[32] "An action of *awareness raising* in active measures may aim to influence the opinion of the public in one's own country or that of a foreign country or both, and its goal is to make masses of people receptive to a concern that may be either true and founded, or false and ill-founded in reality, or neither entirely true and founded nor entirely false and ill-founded but "somewhere between these two absolutes". The latter hypothesis, which often is expected in active measures, is explained and ruled by the disciplines of fuzzy logic and chaos theory, and generally aims to breed doubt, confusion, or inhibition, and then angst, discontent, or fear in the minds of people.[33]

Remarkably, French experts in domestic influence and subversion use colloquially the noun "sleepwalkers" (*somnanbules*, in French) to call "all ordinary people composing the masses. The reason justifying the choice of this noun, pejorative in a sense, is that an overwhelming majority of 'ordinary people' is unable to make the difference between neutral and objective information (news) and influence and propaganda. As seen from the viewpoint of specialists, the whole population behaves as millions of *sleepwalkers* ready to believe anything the media, authors, and agents of influence tell and write, indifferently. The reason explaining the naiveté is that people tend to believe at its face value everything is formally published and broadcast, by wrongly attributing some official and unanimously approved virtue to media such as print and audiovisual periodical publications, books, and similar. Then the greater the number of people truly or apparently involved in the publishing / broadcasting of a fact or fallacy is, the truer it seems to be in the understanding of the masses. Additionally, the greater the known number of people who watched, listened, or read the fact or fallacy is, the greater the probability is that 'it is true indeed,' still in the understanding of the masses. ... Moreover, in France, specialists in influence and counter-influence are tasked to prevent the masses of people / *sleepwalkers* from "waking up" and understanding that they actually are thus fooled permanently, and by which methods and tricks they are so, since their own country fabricates and spreads fallacies for them either. In other words, about the latter explanation, teaching the masses on methods and techniques in foreign influence would be effective and salutary, doubtless, but at the same time it would reveal to them the influence and propaganda that their own government tailors and spreads for them. ... In the DGSE, a rule alluding colloquially to this particular definition of sleepwalker says, *Ils dorment; ne les réveillez pas* ("They [the masses] sleep, don't wake them up"). Edgar Morin, French communist philosopher, sociologist, intelligence officer, and founder of modern methods and techniques of mass influence and manipulation is at the origin of this particular use of the word sleepwalker. Morin often said, *"Eveillés, ils dorment"* ("Awaken, they sleep"), quoting his own way Greek philosopher Heraclitus. Thus, Morin implied that, as taken collectively, ordinary people who constitute the masses are too stupid to make the difference between the truth, influence, propaganda, and disinformation. For the record, the exact and complete English translation of Morin's quote above is, "All men do walk in sleep, and all have faith in that they dream: for all things are as they seem to all, and all things flow like a stream"[34][35]

Economics

Economics can be both a tool of the internal and external subversive. For the external subversive simply cutting off credit can cause severe economic problems for a country. An example of this is the United States' relations with Chile in the early 1970s. In an attempt to get Salvador Allende removed from office, the United States tried to weaken the Chilean economy. Chile received little foreign investments and the loss of credit prevented Chile from purchasing vital imports.[36] An economic pressure of this kind prevents an economy from functioning and reduces a country's standard of living. If the reduction is too great, the people may become willing to support a change in the government's leadership. The main objective of economic pressures is to make it difficult for the country to fulfill its basic obligations to the citizenry either by cutting off trade or by depriving it of resources.

The internal subversive can also use economics to put pressure on the government through use of the strike. An example of this is the Chilean Truckers' Strike during the 1970s. The strike prevented the transport of food staples and forced nearly 50% of the national economy to cease production.[37] Activities of these kinds create human, economic, and political problems that, if not addressed, can challenge the competency of the government.

Agitation and civil unrest

As defined by Laurence Beilenson, agitation is "subversive propaganda by action such as mass demonstrations or the political strike, that is, a strike not intended to benefit the union or workers in the ordinary sense, but intended instead against the government".[38] Furthermore, propaganda and agitation, even when they are legal forms of freedom of speech, press, and assembly can still be classified as subversive activity. These tools further demonstrate the need to determine intent of those taking action to identify subversive activities.

Civil unrest creates many of the problems that an insurgency campaign does. First of all it is an affront to government authority, and if the government is unable to quell the unrest it leads to an erosion of state power. This loss of power stems from the people's lack of trust in the government to maintain law and order. In turn, the people begin to question whether or not new leadership is needed. Discrediting, disarming, and demoralizing the government is the goal of these activities and the cause of the government's loss of power.[39] Civil unrest depletes resources as the government is forced to spend more money on additional police. Additionally, civil unrest may be used to provoke a response from the government. In the 1940s communists in France during strikes against the Marshall Plan would, "deliberately provoke the police and gendarmerie into acts of repressive violence in order to exploit the resulting 'martyrs to the cause' for propaganda purposes".[40] These martyrs and subsequent propaganda can be useful in turning political and social groups against each other. The less violent forms of unrest, "such as worker absenteeism, passive resistance, boycotts, and deliberate attempts to cripple government agencies by 'overloading the system' with false reports, can have powerfully disruptive effects, both economically and politically".[41]

Offensive terror

Offensive terror can be defined as the killing of people, destruction of property, kidnapping, etc. It is usually a minor part of subversion and, "is used not to exert force in the transfer of state power, but is meant to cower the people or ruler".[38] Force used in this manner is meant to reinforce other forms or persuasion in addition to cowering the people or leaders.[42] Additionally, much like civil unrest and agitation, it raises the question of whether or not the state can provide security for the population. Terror also provides a practical motivation of physically removing political opponents. The assassination of an organization's leader may open the door to a successor that is more friendly to the subversives position or possibly someone that has successfully infiltrated the organization and is in fact one of the subversives.

Bribery

Bribery is one of the most common tools of subversion. Most societies see bribery as a form of corruption and it used as a subversive tool because it, "implies the undermining of existing rules of political or moral conduct".[43] It can also be one of the less reliable tools as well. Bribed officials are only useful if they take action. However actions taken over a period of time draw suspicion from the public. The official must be able to carefully conceal their actions or perform only key functions and action. For these reasons bribed officials are most effective when they are asked to take immediate action. In the case of external subversion, bribery is usually used for influence rather than for actions.[44]

Subverting cultural hegemony

Recent writers, in the post-modern and post-structuralist traditions (including, particularly, feminist writers) have prescribed a very broad form of subversion. It is not, directly, the parliamentary government which should be subverted in their view, but the dominant cultural forces, such as patriarchy, individualism, and scientism. This broadening of the target of subversion owes much to the ideas of Antonio Gramsci, who stressed that communist revolution required the erosion of the particular form of 'cultural hegemony' within society.

Theodor Adorno argued that the culture industry and its shallow entertainment was a system by which society was controlled through a top-down creation of standardized culture that intensified the commodification of artistic expression; in 1938 he said that capitalism has colonized every aspect of life so much that "every pleasure which emancipates itself from the exchange-value takes on subversive features".[45]

Using culture to bring about change to a political system through integration of political warfare and political action and the targeting of cultural vehicles and institutions is another tool of subversion.[46][47] The use of the arts or more broadly culture is primarily a tool for external subversives, as internal subversives are generally citizens of the country and share the same culture. It is a tool that takes a longer period of time to implement and its effects are revealed over time, as opposed to those of a terrorist attack or civil unrest. Therefore, one could classify this tool as an element of strategic subversion. The targets of cultural subversive activities are traditionally film, literature, popular music, educational institutions, mass media, religious organizations, charitable organizations and other forms of art. The intended results of these activities are to persuade or co-opt publics, discredit the ideas of enemies and splitting factions within the enemy's camp.[48]

The state is charged with the protection of the civilizational values of society (liberty, equality, comradeship, compassion, democracy, education, the family, religion, rule of law, human and civil rights, etc.), "including the cultural/aesthetic values that enhance the quality of life and maintain its legitimacy".[49] In situations where the government is not being a good steward in protecting these values, the use of tools like literature, film, music can be used as a reminder of these values, as well as a forum to protest and question the government's legitimacy. Additionally, art and culture allow people to connect on an emotional level that could soften negative perceptions one may be believed to have. Once the stigma has been removed, the target may be more receptive to other messages conveyed. This individual or group would no longer be seen as being completely different from them. Another example of how culture can be subversive is seen in Iran. Western culture, media, art, etc. is popular among the country's youth, but certain elements are banned or curtailed. As the exportation of Western culture continues, conflict between the state and its citizens is created. The government is then seen as unresponsive or out of touch with its people.

Laws

Subversive activity

Subversive activity is the lending of aid, comfort, and moral support to individuals, groups, or organizations that advocate the overthrow of incumbent governments by force and violence. All willful acts that are intended to be detrimental to the best interests of the government and that do not fall into the categories of treason, sedition, sabotage, or espionage are placed in the category of subversive activity.

China

Subversion (Chinese: 顛覆; pinyin: *Diānfù*) is a crime in China. The government of the People's Republic of China prosecutes subversives under Articles 102 through 112 of the state criminal law.[50] These articles specify the types of behavior that constitute a threat to national security and China has prosecuted many dissidents including Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo using these laws. Of these, Articles 105 and 111 are the ones most commonly employed to silence political dissent.[50] Article 105 criminalizes organizing, plotting, or carrying out subversion of the national order, or using rumor mongering or defamation or other means to incite subversion of the national order or the overthrow of the socialist system.[51] Article 111 prohibits stealing, secretly collecting, purchasing, or illegally providing state secrets or intelligence to an organization, institution, or personnel outside the country.[52]

Italy

Subversion is a crime in Italy (*Attentato alla Costituzione*), under Article 283 of Italian criminal law (*Codice penale italiano)* and *Associazione sovversiva,* under Articles 270 and 270-bis.

United Kingdom

There is no crime defined as "subversion" (as opposed to treason) in British constitutional law. Attempts have been made to introduce definitions but there is no general consensus among political and legal theorists.[9][53]

Historically MI5 were entrusted with the legal investigative powers for concerns of threats to national security by subversion, but in the Security Service Act 1989, subversion was not mentioned, and according to the official MI5 website, subversion is no longer investigated, due to a reduced threat as a result of the end of the Cold War and of associated political situations since the 1980s.[54]

United States

The founders of the United States wanted to avoid charges of subversion. As such they justified their resistance to the British government through the use of the private citizen argument and the doctrine of the lesser magistrate in the United States Declaration of Independence.[55]

18 U.S.C. ch. 115 (https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/part-I/chapter-115) covers "Treason, Sedition, and Subversive Activities" in Federal law.

As related above, members of the Communist Party were supposed by legislators to be subversives, especially after the Russian Revolution. The House Un-American Activities Committee was formed in 1938 in order to investigate alleged disloyalty and subversive activities on the part of private citizens, public employees, and those organizations suspected of having Communist ties. Senator Joseph McCarthy became the most visible public face of a period in which Cold War tensions fueled fears of widespread Communist subversion. The term "McCarthyism", coined in 1950 in reference to McCarthy's practices, including public attacks on the character or patriotism of political opponents, was soon applied to similar anti-communist activities. Senator Pat McCarran sponsored the McCarran Internal Security Act of 1950 and the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, both of which were hotly contested in the law courts, and by Harry Truman, who went so far as to veto the former; however, the veto was overridden in the Senate by a margin of 57 to 10.

In 1943, the Stone court ruled in a bitterly contested fashion that an avowed publisher of the Communist doctrine could be naturalized a citizen of the US, in *Schneiderman v. United States*, 320 U.S. 118 (https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/320/118/) (1943).

Aptheker v. Secretary of State tested in 1964 whether a passport could be disallowed to a Communist. Aptheker won.

Elfbrandt v. Russell involved questions concerning the constitutionality of an Arizona Act requiring an oath from state employees. William O. Douglas wrote in 1966 for a strongly divided court the majority opinion that the State could not require the oath and accompanying statutory gloss.

The Warren court ruled by 5–4 majority in *Keyishian v. Board of Regents* (of SUNY) to strike down New York State law that prohibited membership by professors in any organization that advocated the overthrow of the US government, or any organization that was held by the Regents to be "treasonous" or "seditious". The Regents also required teachers and employees to sign an oath that they were not members of the Communist Party.

Iran

Subversion (Persian: براندازی ; Romanization : *barandāzi*) is a crime in Iran.The government of Islamic Republic of Iran prosecutes subversives under Articles 498 through 500, 507 and 508 of Iran's criminal laws.[56]

See also

- Agent of influence
- Agent provocateur
- Democratic elements of Roman Republic
- Destabilisation
- Counter-insurgency
- Information Warfare
- Political warfare in British colonial India
- Psychological warfare
- Revolution
- Sedition

- Subvertising, a portmanteau of subverting and advertising
- Yuri Bezmenov
- Active measures

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