Exploring Information Operations through its Semantic Networks

Applicable Track(s):
4 - Cognitive and Social Issues
2 – Networks and Networking
1 – C2 Concepts, Theory and Policy

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Straying from the more traditional view of semantic networks as a set of nodal words or ideas linked by some consistent relationship (e.g.,[1, 2]), Monge and Eisenberg [3] suggested conceptualizing semantic networks as patterns of shared interpretations of key artifacts of organizational culture, such as organizational goals or mission [4]. Leydesdorff and Hellsten [5] affirm this view of semantic networks, underscoring the role of information scientists in exploring the organizing principles through which individuals or collectives create and consign meaning of their surroundings. Stohl [6] suggests that national culture may serve as a important variable for accounting for differences in content-based semantic networks among cross-national peers with similar organizational roles, which suggests organizational culture may serve as an important variable for accounting for differences in content-based semantic networks among cross-organizational peers with similar organizational roles. Applying ethnographic content analysis [7] to senior leader statements and war college theses by US military officers about the mission area known as "information operations," this paper longitudinally explores the patterns of interpretation—i.e., the semantic networks—through which US military officers have espoused the purpose, characteristics, and casual explanations of information operations. Influences of organizational culture and environmental factors on these patterns of interpretation, as well as implications of these patterns of interpretation for exploring the variegated worldviews of US military officers, are discussed.

References

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