



RESEARCH REPORT

Cognitive Warfare and the Vulnerability of Italian Society 2026

RESEARCH REPORT

Cognitive Warfare and the Vulnerability of Italian Society 2026

Over the course of the twentieth century, conflict expanded from the physical domain to the cybernetic one, arriving today at a sixth front: **the cognitive domain**. **Democracies are particularly exposed to this threat**, which exploits freedom of information and pluralism to strike directly at individual judgment and the collective construction of meaning.

Cognitive warfare does not aim to destroy infrastructure, but to alter the way people perceive reality, form beliefs, and make decisions. Unlike **cyberwar** (which strikes systems) and **infowar** (which spreads information disorder and manages perception), **K-WAR** modifies the very mechanisms of thought, leading the adversary to spontaneously do what the attacker has planned, without realizing it. This happens through concrete techniques such as cognitive manipulation and dissipation, memewarfare, algorithmic hypnosis, and AI-driven disinformation.

From theoretical framework to the construction of a cognitive defense system

PROTOTYPE ALPHA V. 1.0

INITIAL SCOPE:
ITALY

EXPANSION OUTLOOK:
EUROPE / WORLD

REPORT OBJECTIVES

Understanding, measuring, and countering the cognitive vulnerability of contemporary societies.

UNDERSTAND

Map the mechanisms, actors, and techniques of cognitive warfare.

MEASURE

Translate cognitive vulnerability into observable, comparable indicators.

PROTECT

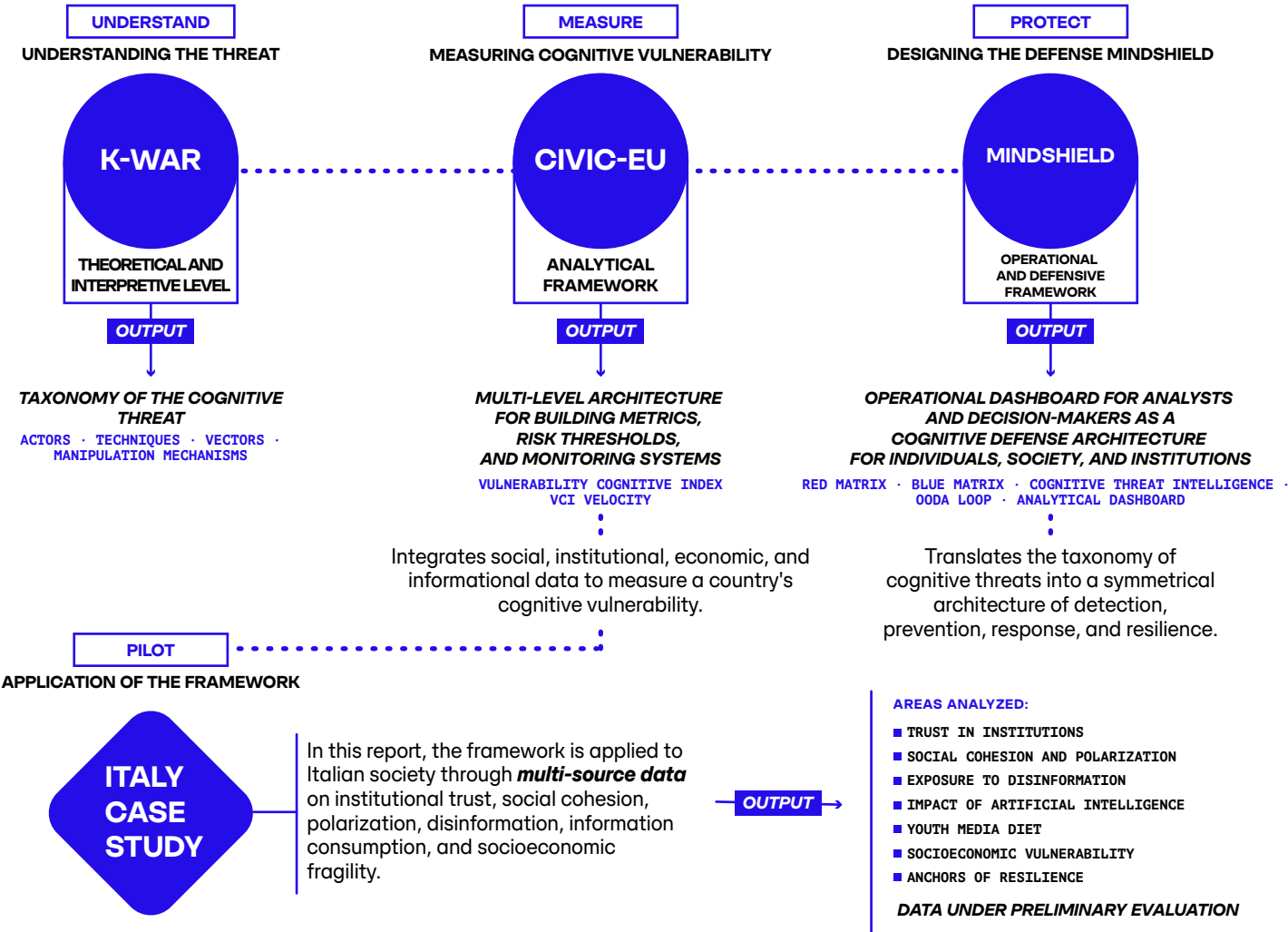
Link every vulnerability and attack technique to specific operational countermeasures.

WHAT IS COGNITIVE WARFARE?

It is a form of conflict that seeks to influence how people perceive, interpret, and understand reality, ultimately shaping judgments, beliefs, and decisions. **The main target is the human mind.**

 CYBER WARFARE	<i>Targets computer systems</i> Objective Damage, block, or compromise networks and digital infrastructure.
 INFORMATION WARFARE	<i>Targets information and narratives</i> Objective Steer public opinion through propaganda or disinformation.
 COGNITIVE WARFARE <i>K-WAR</i>	<i>Targets the way we think</i> Objective Change the way we assess what is true, credible, or relevant.

REPORT ARCHITECTURE





WWW.UNISOBMEDIALAB.IT



WWW.EUROPEANTECHNOLOGYETHICS.COM