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# Dark Side of Clarity: Its Effect on Knowledge Production and Decision-Making

Adrian Wolfberg\*

## ABSTRACT

Law enforcement decision-makers rely on intelligence analysts to produce intelligence products that are clear. Yet, intelligence analysts live in a world characterised by ambiguity and information overload. This paper examines the intellectual journey that leads to clarity of thought, and the effect of the dark side of clarity on producing knowledge for decision-making. The paper asked, how does the dark side of clarity manifest itself to analyst and decision-maker? The result is counterintuitive; while the bright side of clarity is expected, and demanded because of its benefit to decision-making, the dark side of clarity co-exists in the shadows of certainty and makes it difficult to think critically. Neither analyst nor decision-maker is likely aware of this negative effect. To make this dark side of clarity visible, recommendations are made that begin with raising analyst awareness by augmenting existing training. Then, decision-maker awareness can be approached through training and facilitated coaching.

**Keywords:** intelligence, analysis, information overload, equivocality, helpfulness, clarity

## BACKGROUND

In the United States, state and local law enforcement intelligence analysts are employed by any one of 18,000 law enforcement agencies (Reaves, 2011). These analysts, and those employed by federal law enforcement agencies, work in a cognitively demanding environment, requiring the collection and analysis of information to produce knowledge for decision-makers. Yet, the understanding of their analytical processes and efforts to produce intelligence knowledge and the potential negative effects are largely invisible to the decision-makers they support, i.e., sworn officers who have the authority to make arrests and carry firearms. Examples of two such negative effects include: irrelevant knowledge produced and therefore not supportive of decision-maker action because decision-maker

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\* Corresponding author: awolfberg@gmail.com

assumptions about what they were expecting were not explicitly made known and included in the analyst's processes or data; and relevant knowledge produced that is supportive of decision-maker's tactical action but omits a much more strategically- or operationally-relevant framework the analyst's possessed or could have possessed, thereby leaving the decision-maker disadvantaged as to patterns and/or trends. According to the US Department of Justice (DoJ, 2003), such a gap between analyst and decision-maker and its potential negative effects is exactly what intelligence-led policing is intended to overcome.

## INTRODUCTION

Intelligence-led policing is a philosophy in which crime problems are identified so that criminals can be targeted for investigation and prosecution (Peterson, 2005; Ratcliffe & Guidetti, 2008). Intelligence-led policing requires intelligence analysis be the core of data-driven decision-making (Ratcliffe, 2016). However, the full implementation of intelligence-led policing appears to be slow to take effect. Some of the reasons for its slow adoption include external factors such as the criminal environment, the socio-political context, and legal constraints, and internal factors such as law enforcement organisational culture and structure (Lemieux, 2008).

In a survey given to over 250 law enforcement intelligence analysts at the 2015 joint conference of International Association of Law Enforcement Analysts (IALEIA) and Law Enforcement Intelligence Units (LEIU), analysts identified impediments to implementation as the: lack of executive support; lack of training for intelligence analysts; lack of training for sworn officers; management unwillingness to let analysts try new analytic methods; and lack of trust between analysts and investigators (Peterson, 2017).

Still, there is a more systemic reason for the difficulties in the adoption of intelligence-led policing, thus far not recognised: the dark side of clarity. Everyone knows its opposite, the bright side. Clarity can be defined as the quality of being intelligible and certain, ensuring that ambiguity is absent. Clarity has long been recognised a fundamental characteristic of good intelligence products for any type of organisation: national security, law enforcement, public policy, and in the for-profit and non-profit sectors (Wilensky, 1967). Clarity is important for two reasons. One is that in law enforcement organisations, clarity in intelligence products helps ensure individual rights to "due process of law" are not violated, as required by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the US Constitution

(Lippman, 2017). The other is that clarity in knowledge products helps reduce disagreements between decision-makers who use the knowledge that ultimately affects people's lives. For these reasons, clarity is a beneficial outcome for decision-makers. Nevertheless, intelligence analysts start and develop their knowledge production efforts from a place far from clarity. Decision-makers who task intelligence analysts reinforce these needs for clarity, rarely engaging in dialogue with analysts to discuss their journey culminating in clarity. There is a relational aspect occurring between analyst and decision-maker, which means their interaction needs elaboration before fully discussing the dark side of clarity.

## RATIONALE

### **Analyst and Decision-Maker Dynamics**

*Clarity and Helpfulness are Related.* Intelligence analysts can be successful at achieving clarity but only if they first have the motivation to be of service—a sense of professionalism—to those who make decisions.

*Clarity and Helpfulness.* Intelligence analysts are influenced by various factors that negatively affect their ability to learn to assess new patterns and trends, an important competency for intelligence analysts. Some of these factors include the high volume of tasks they are assigned, the degree of ambiguity in data available to them, as well as ambiguity in their organisational context, and the difficulties in communicating with decision-makers so as to gain a deeper understanding of the broader context for which the analyst is supporting at a tactical event. Training standards for learning and other law enforcement analyst competencies, such as critical thinking, the use of analytic techniques, and communicating judgments with clarity to customers have been well documented (DoJ, 2012; DoJ, 2013; Heuer & Pherson, 2011; Kovacs, 1997; Marrin, 2008; Whitford, 2013). In addition to these competencies, analysts need to possess a professional attitude to be helpful.

Helpfulness can be defined as any act that is intended to benefit another person (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart, & Roy, 2008). Helpfulness used in this sense is a work-related behavior associated with one's task completion. This meaning should not be confused with the organisational citizenship behavior concept of helpfulness, which is voluntary-based behavior in aid of others, but not related to one's task completion (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000). In service industries, a close analog to the public safety sector, employee helpfulness has been shown to be the key indicator in customer satisfaction,

behaviors that inspire the customer to have confidence in the employee (Keh, Ren, Hill, & Li, 2013). In national security intelligence, analyst helpfulness is about a service mentality, to help the decision-maker better understand an issue, especially when it is complex (Petersen, 2011; Prunckun, 2015). Success at helpfulness means the intelligence analyst overcomes many, if not all, challenges in determining how the decision-maker processes information. Helpfulness is a precursor to achieving clarity.

### **Challenges in Achieving Clarity**

Achieving clarity is not easy. Beyond the analytical task-related challenges analysts face, they face relational challenges in assessing what clarity means for the decision-maker receiving the intelligence product.

*Uncertainty Absorption.* Decision-makers want clarity in intelligence products, but typically do not understand the challenges in how an intelligence product is made (Wilensky, 1967). Thus, decision-makers are at risk in two ways. One risk is they absorb varying degrees of uncertainty without consciously knowing it, but may feel comfortable nevertheless because of their trust in the intelligence analyst, a phenomenon called *uncertainty absorption* (March & Simon, 1958). A simple example is the children's game "telephone" where one child starts with a story and as it is repeated to each subsequent child in a circle, the story reproduced becomes different from the preceding one, each modification a result of each child's own interpretation and contribution to fill in what may or may not have been heard (Kurke, Weick, & Ravlin, 1989).

A decision-maker faces uncertainty absorption whenever an intelligence analyst, who, being aware that he or she has in-depth access to and knowledge about data and its analysis, extrapolates inferences from the data and conveys these inferences to the decision-maker instead of the raw, actual data. Because the decision-maker does not necessarily understand the technical aspects surrounding the data from which the inferences are constructed, he or she does not understand the logic behind the construction of knowledge. Consequently, the decision-maker attempts to fill-in his or her understanding based on little or no understanding of the journey raw data has taken. Left unchecked, without follow-on briefings or discussions, that "filling in" could be in error, or worse, disastrously misleading.

*Absorptive Capacity.* Faced with uncertainty absorption, intelligence analysts should ensure that their product is clear and understandable to the decision-maker.

This second risk is that a product that can be understood needs to be able to be absorbed quickly so that it can be used for the decision-maker's intended purpose; a phenomenon called *absorption capacity* (Cohen & Levinthal, 2009). Absorptive capacity is the degree an individual and an organisation can identify, assimilate and use information that originates outside of his or her area of expertise. A common example in most organisations is when one unit attempts a knowledge transfer of its best practice to another unit having a different mission and skill set; the success of the transfer is, in part, dependent on the foundational knowledge the gaining unit has about the best practice, which comes from a very different context (Szulanski, 2003).

When decision-makers have low absorption capacity, they do not possess the foundational knowledge to understand what the intelligence analyst conveys, or be open-minded enough to recognise that they need more knowledge. Cohen and Levinthal (1990) showed this capacity is influenced by path dependency: what an individual knows now—based on his or her past—determines what he or she is likely to absorb and learn next. This capacity is also influenced by that fact that individuals tend to overestimate what others know compared to what they actually do know (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). If not accurately assessed, decision-making options are constrained because of how information is framed, boxed into a fixed sense of importance that ignores other related, perhaps more important, factors (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

Not all decision-makers who have low absorption capacity suffer such negative consequences. They may be able to gather supplemental information from subordinates and peers. This process, called *informing*, occurs when decision-makers with low absorption capacity bring themselves up to speed in knowledge areas they are lacking (Preston, 1986).

*Why Critical Thinking is Important.* Decision-making is dependent, in part, on the law enforcement analyst who has to accurately assess the decision-maker's absorption capacity in order to produce products that are clear and understandable for the targeted audience. Such an assessment requires a relational and cognitive ability to use perspective taking, understanding how other people process information (Krauss and Fussell, 1991; Piaget, 1932; Rommetveit 1979). This is one of the reasons why critical thinking by decision-makers is necessary: to surface the nature and character of these relational challenges, both the degree of the decision-maker's uncertainty absorption and the accuracy of the intelligence analyst's perspective taking of the decision-maker's absorption capacity. Other

cognitive reasons include asking questions about analytic assumptions, how assumptions are handled, and how inferences are formed. Opportunities for decision-makers to engage in critical thinking should not be lost, especially since critical thinking is an important competency for sworn officers (Bradford & Pynes, 1999; DoJ, 2003; Phillips & Burrell, 2009) and intelligence analysts (DoJ, 2010; DoJ, 2013; Harris, 2011; Moore, 2007; Prunckun, 2015). Most importantly, critical thinking is an important prerequisite to learning (Wolfberg, 2016).

### **Why Learning is Important**

Analysts navigate these task-related, relational challenges while working within a messy cognitive environment; both relational and cognitive aspects are dynamic conditions difficult to control. For analysts to balance these aspects, they are highly motivated to take a learning stance.

*Information Overload and Equivocality.* Analysts are exposed to substantial cognitive challenges. These include external effects, which everyone in the workplace and in their daily life faces, the effects from information overload, and equivocality (i.e. ambiguity). Information overload can be defined as the quantity (volume) rendered in a given situation by an individual, while equivocality is defined as the level of confusion about the meaning of that information being exchanged (Daft & Macintosh, 1981). Daft and Huber (1987) argued that how organisations adapt to these informational properties forms a key factor influencing the success of organisational effectiveness; that is, information overload and equivocality directly affect how intelligence analysts learn, and thereby, the performance of the overall organisation.

*Learning.* Learning can be defined as a change in the individual's mental model, when the individual absorbs new knowledge he or she reframes their understanding of their existing world (Leahey & Harris, 2001; Lewis, 2000). An individual's ability to shift mental models improves over time because of assessing and assimilating new knowledge, resulting in higher levels of learning (Gray & Meister, 2004). When an individual's learning takes place, an organisation's capability may be enhanced, as well, because the individual can sense greater resolution into the problem dynamics, and increase their identification of valid cause and effect relationships (Edmondson & Moingeon, 1998; March, 1991). How and why intelligence analysts can identify new trends and patterns is directly related to how they learn.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to understand clarity and the effects it has on the complexity and messiness of knowledge production, we need to understand how intelligence analysts learn while experiencing information overload and equivocality (Daft & Huber, 1987). The subject literature on the simultaneous effects of both overload and equivocality, and their effects on learning is wanting. Therefore, by investigating how law enforcement intelligence analysts are affected by overload and equivocality, we can understand: how and why the dark side of clarity manifest itself to law enforcement intelligence analysts and the decision-makers they support?

## METHOD

*Quantitative Component.* The quantitative study used an electronically disseminated, Internet-based, self-administered survey within a population of law enforcement intelligence analysts. In 2012, a survey was emailed to 1,451 law enforcement intelligence analysts working in the United States and Canada who were members of the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA). The study received 485 responses for a response rate of 33%, of which 364 records were usable. The demographics of the 364 respondents were: 53% female, 47% male; 75% of the total worked in the United States, 25% in Canada; and almost 50% had bachelor degrees, another 27% held a master's degree, about 11% earned an associate's degree, three percent had either a doctorate or law degree, and less than 10% were high school graduates.

In pre-testing of the data, equivocality was found to have no effect on learning contrary to theoretical insight and empirical findings (Weick, 1979, 1995). This effect was due to the confounding effect, i.e., masking or making hidden, that overload had on equivocality (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000). To correct for this confounding effect, the 364 records were double dichotomised using medians of both overload and equivocality, which resulted in four equally sized subpopulations of data (91 records each).

The study used only four constructs in a structural equation model consisting of the three independent variables—filter, dialogue, and networking—and one dependent variable, individual learning. Structural equation models allow for the simultaneous integration of multiple regression analysis and factor analysis, which yields a richer hypothesis testing of causal effects than if sequentially analyzed (Hoyle, 2012). Four moderating conditions were tested to see how they affected

individual learning: low overload with low equivocality, high overload with low equivocality, high overload with high equivocality, and low overload with high equivocality. As predicted by Daft & Huber (1987), each condition of overload and equivocality had different effects, but the nature of these differences had not previously been investigated. To explain why such differences occurred, a qualitative study was deemed appropriate, discussed next.

*Qualitative Component.* For the qualitative component, the study used Charmaz's application of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Charmaz, 2006). This involved interpretation and coding of interview data. Such methods have been used successfully in recent intelligence studies (Hulnick, 2011; Wolfberg, 2016; Zohar, 2013). Thirty-one intelligence analysts were interviewed in early 2013; these interviewees had responded to the 2012 IALEIA survey. The interviewees were randomly drawn from the four subpopulations, resulting in 7–9 interviewees per condition.

The 31 worked in a variety of work contexts ranging from cities or counties with populations between 50,000 and 4 million, and providing intelligence to the following kinds of decision-makers: locally elected officials such as city mayors, chiefs of police, county sheriffs, and city council members; locally appointed officials such as chiefs of police; state elected officials such as attorneys general and political appointees such as chief prosecutors and secretaries of state; and senior-level career professionals such as chief investigators and agents in charge of city and regional offices. Since the quantitative study identified the conditions of overload and equivocality the interviewees resided, the interview questions focused on the differences and similarities in how they operated in their work context. A full description of the independent variables, dependent variable, quantitative and qualitative methods, and the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings of the original mixed methods study are reported elsewhere (Wolfberg, 2017).

## FINDINGS

There were substantial differences in the ways that intelligence analysts reacted to the four conditions of overload and equivocality, yet there were also, simultaneously, substantial similarities. The focus on the similarities was not included in the original Wolfberg (2017) study. The cognitive differences resulted in four learning archetypes: cooperative learning, focused learning, survival learning, and reflective learning. The theoretical and empirical basis for

identifying the presence of these learning archetypes was fully developed in Wolfberg (2017) and is summarised below. The relational similarities resulted in the expression of helpfulness and clarity. These cognitive differences and relational similarities are summarised in figure 1, and discussed below under each of the four conditions of overload and equivocality.

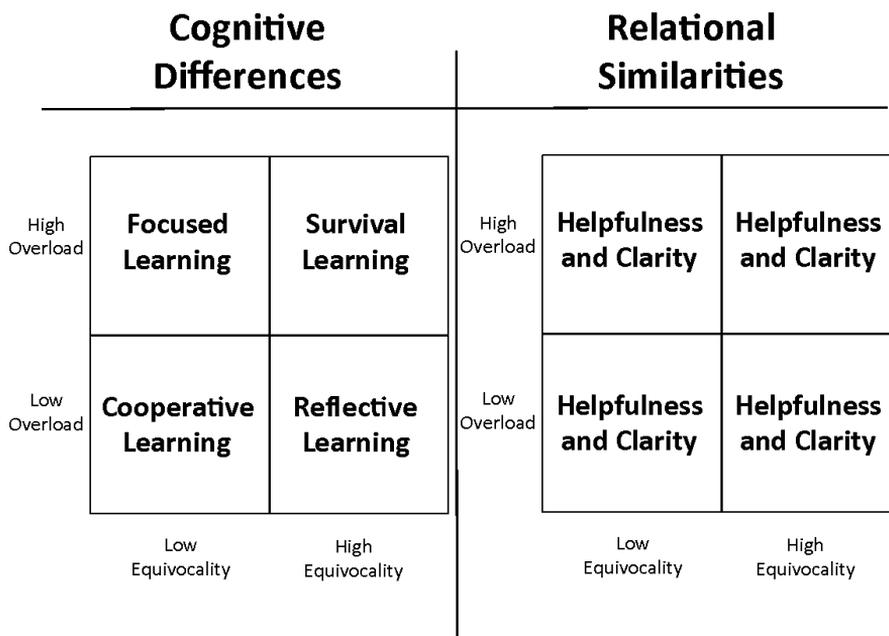


Figure 1—Cognitive Differences and Relational Similarities

### **Low Overload and Low Equivocality**

*Cognitive Difference—Cooperative Learning.* Under low overload and low equivocality conditions, the distracting effects of overload and equivocality were absent, allowing analysts to focus their attention on decision-maker needs and use conversation to make decision-maker knowledge needs explicit. Dialogue was valued. Trust was fostered. Common ground was established. Analysts learned because decision-makers provided facts beyond the analyst’s awareness, expanding the analyst’s ability to interpret data and contextualise knowledge. Both analyst and decision-maker shared in the path towards knowledge discovery.

This condition expanded the breadth of knowledge from what the analyst knew, and the decision-maker was able to gain insight into what and how the

analyst knew, which increased the decision-maker's breadth of knowledge, as well. The advantage of this learning type was the sense of parity between the two very different worlds of analyst and decision-maker, which created a space for shared understanding. The disadvantage was analysts were not particularly reflective because they were less likely to be exposed to perceived imperfect, stressed conditions. Also, depth of analysis was limited, moderated by the level of foundational knowledge analyst and decision-maker shared.

*Relational Similarity: Helpfulness.* Analysts considered the need to be helpful.

I am a team player and people know that I will do whatever they ask, even if it is not analytical. I have a reputation that if someone needs something, they "go to [name]." The request may not be analytical, "can you dig this up on this guy?" or "find people for this court filing." I do a lot of special projects for people, special requests. I am both an analyst and a "go to" person. (Analyst 1.5)

*Relational Similarity: Clarity.* Analysts knew to be most effective they needed to produce intelligence products with clarity.

It is kind of a two-edged sword. You put together what the attorney will use in a jury trial. If I put together a map, for example, I will talk with the attorney and ask them how they want to use the map, what they want it to look like, what information they want on it. He will tell me how he wants to present the information. This is from the prosecutor's perspective. But also, we talk about whether the facts and visuals, "is this a good point to make?" One side of the sword is using the info to help the attorney figure out what he needs, and the other is figuring out what the jury needs. I used link charts with eighteen people, it was a drug related case. No one thought we could win. It was a team effort. It was a combination of brainstorming, logic, luck, photo measurement, link charts. The jury was out in less than one hour. One juror told me after the trial that "I couldn't understand the case but when you put the chart up, it was so clear. (Analyst 1.3)

### **High Overload and Low Equivocality**

*Cognitive Difference: Focused Learning.* High overload and low equivocality conditions, with the distraction of equivocality absent, afforded the analyst clarity of context. This allowed the analyst to focus attention on exploiting their specialized skills to produce knowledge. The analyst compensated for externally originated overload by successfully controlling his or her own work efforts enriching knowledge production. Nonetheless, the demand for more knowledge

by decision-makers unintentionally contributed to increasing the analyst's overload.

Analysts learned because their self-generating and self-correcting overload reducing efforts allowed them to be thorough and in-depth about their expertise. When needed, if any knowledge into areas outside of the analyst's expertise was required it was acquired by tapping into the analyst's social and professional networks. This condition allowed the analyst to exploit the depths of existing knowledge, discovering new knowledge about phenomenon of which they already had a firm understanding. The advantage of this learning type was the likelihood of deep and thorough data analysis, exploiting existing expertise. The disadvantage was that even though analysts were highly skilled in their field they were not particularly innovative or integrative across knowledge boundaries.

*Relational Similarity: Helpfulness.* Analysts considered the need to be helpful.

The chief will say, "I don't know what I need," when he obviously needs something, so I go through a needs analysis series of questions and statements; I do this to find out what he really needs. If you ask the patrol officers, they would say to me, "you know how to get the information." They look up to me. (Analyst 2.4)

*Relational Similarity: Clarity.* Analysts knew to be most effective they needed to produce intelligence products with clarity.

I testify frequently. I create charts and graphs to tell the story in a courtroom with a jury. I am asked to help explain complex parts of a case in easy to understand ways. (Analyst 2.5)

## **High Overload and High Equivocality**

*Cognitive Difference: Survival Learning.* Under high overload and high equivocality, the analyst was in a survival mode, fending off little understood distractions beyond their control. The challenge was how to prioritize their attention and what to reduce: focus on overload and/or equivocality? This condition was the most hectic, perhaps quite common, and has the potential for the most negative impact on knowledge production and decision-making. Dealing with equivocality alone was difficult enough because isolating the source of ambiguity and controlling it were challenging, if not impossible, but they were greatly increased when overload existed. Nevertheless, the analyst focused on reducing overload—because it was easier to identify the source of it and to control

it, relatively speaking—which led to ignoring equivocality, creating blind spots that, in turn, unintentionally increased the negative effects of equivocality.

Learning under this condition occurred by an analyst making process-related choices to expend energy to find ways to bypass cognitive obstacles, rather than expend energy on solving task-related problems. As a result, the choices they made reduced methodological and analytical rigor, and focused their efforts to find the fastest ways to solve problems. Learning occurred only in the sense that the analyst quickly assessed the knowledge readily available in memory, the shallowest and fastest way to problem-solve without having to think too much. The advantage of this learning type was analysts might be able to excel in survival tactics in chaotic environments and act quickly, the greater their expertise, the more so. The disadvantages were far more numerous: analysts felt they were not particularly successful at their job, they were not reflective about how they performed and how they could improve, and, probably most important, they lacked adequate situational awareness.

*Relational Similarity: Helpfulness.* Analysts considered the need to be helpful.

This was before the Ministry of Environment, early in my career. The report went to the executive committee of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the highest decision making body. My manager at the time was very supportive; he understood the value of how intelligence can influence operations. That is how I began to see how intelligence could influence operations. That is when I got the idea that I could help operations and have an impact. (Analyst 3.1)

*Relational Similarity: Clarity.* Analysts knew to be most effective they needed to produce intelligence products with clarity.

I realised that a timeline based on movements was not useful. Within a couple of weeks, I had a link chart drawn. It was a timeline, but at every location, underneath I put in bold what the witnesses saw, him drinking something or his being drunk, those things. When the police brought him back for questioning again, they put the chart on the table in front of the driver, and he plead guilty right away after he saw the chart. (Analyst 3.4)

## **Low Overload and High Equivocality**

*Cognitive Difference: Reflective Learning.* Under low overload and high equivocality, the absence or reduction in overload allowed the analyst time to ponder the root causes of equivocality, largely by introspection using two

methods. In one method, they imagined a new context to think about a problem they are working on, taking time to reflect and create a broader world view by temporarily stepping outside their mental model and reframe new possibilities. Absent overload, analysts were able to attend to ambiguity and reflection emerged. In the other method, the analyst became acutely more mindful of one's environment, expanding their attention space to a broader operational environment, thus increasing their ability to interpret data within a broader context. These two methods collectively and iteratively allowed the analyst to be unhinged by cognitive boundaries, thus allowing access to both breadth and depth of new knowledge.

Learning occurred for these analysts because they had the time and energy to creatively expand their thinking. They did that by reframing their mental model, which resulted in expanding the number and quality of organisational and societal factors that affected their knowledge production, an especially relevant competency for solving complex problems. The advantages of this learning type were the analysts were reflective, engaged in creative problem solving of complex problems, and were innovative. The disadvantages were analysts were not quick, and they were not optimized for complying with organisational routines.

*Relational Similarity: Helpfulness.* Analysts considered the need to be helpful.

This job, I love doing it. The challenge is making sense of it, the data, and to give it to the police officers. I am very passionate about this job. I love the puzzle, making sense of the data. It is a challenge, I live for the challenge to make things fit. (Analyst 4.8)

*Relational Similarity: Clarity.* Analysts knew to be most effective they needed to produce intelligence products with clarity.

For identification theft, I do maps to show locations. For cell [mobile] phones, I do maps. I do cell phone sprays to see how often he talks with another person in a given time. I use plotter printouts for the district attorney. There is a mapping initiative that we are planning for. It is using technology in an interactive way so that data from databases can be displayed whenever needed and manipulated as we need. One thing the mapping initiative will do is bring any type of video or photographic data from cameras in towns, on highways, schools, shopping malls, whatever has access to cameras and videos. Visualization is key, it helps the attorney general; it is easy to understand. (Analyst 4.6)

## DISCUSSION

### **Dark Side of Clarity**

Figure 2 shows how the dark side of clarity manifests itself to intelligence analysts and decision-makers. Intelligence analysts are discussed first, as shown in the top half of figure 2.

*The Analyst's World.* Analysts possess the underlying disposition of task-related helpfulness towards others, which serves them well as a guiding personal norm. Helpfulness reinforces our self-identity, because how others see us in response to helpfulness serves as a source of our motivation (Charmaz, 1987). When others see us as being helpful, they appreciate the behavior and seek more of it. As long as the individual provides help—as with intelligence analysts creating products with clarity—then a positive feedback cycle is created within the relationship between analyst and decision-maker (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Positive feedback cycles reinforce and amplify behavior, creating more helpfulness and trust, thus creating a continuous loop reinforcing a person's self-identity and a desire for the analyst to provide more help. In cases where a familiarity does not exist between analyst and decision-maker, or when interaction is infrequent, analyst helpfulness may not be noticed or appreciated.

From a cognitive perspective, analysts live in a realm of highly complex processes. The effects of information overload and equivocality on analysts in the pursuit of their analytical tasks produce differential learning archetypes, in which differences in analyst' thinking and learning, and, ultimately, in their decisions made about data and the quality of the knowledge are affected. Simultaneously, analysts transform their highly complex cognitive context into clarity and to make this transformation, analysts have to use relational skills like perspective taking of decision-makers to assess their absorptive capacity, itself, a highly complex process. From a practical viewpoint, analysts have to target the degree and type of clarity in knowledge products in accordance to what the decision-maker's foundational knowledge will allow them to understand and use. Developing and mastering perspective taking is, therefore, a critical competency for analysts.

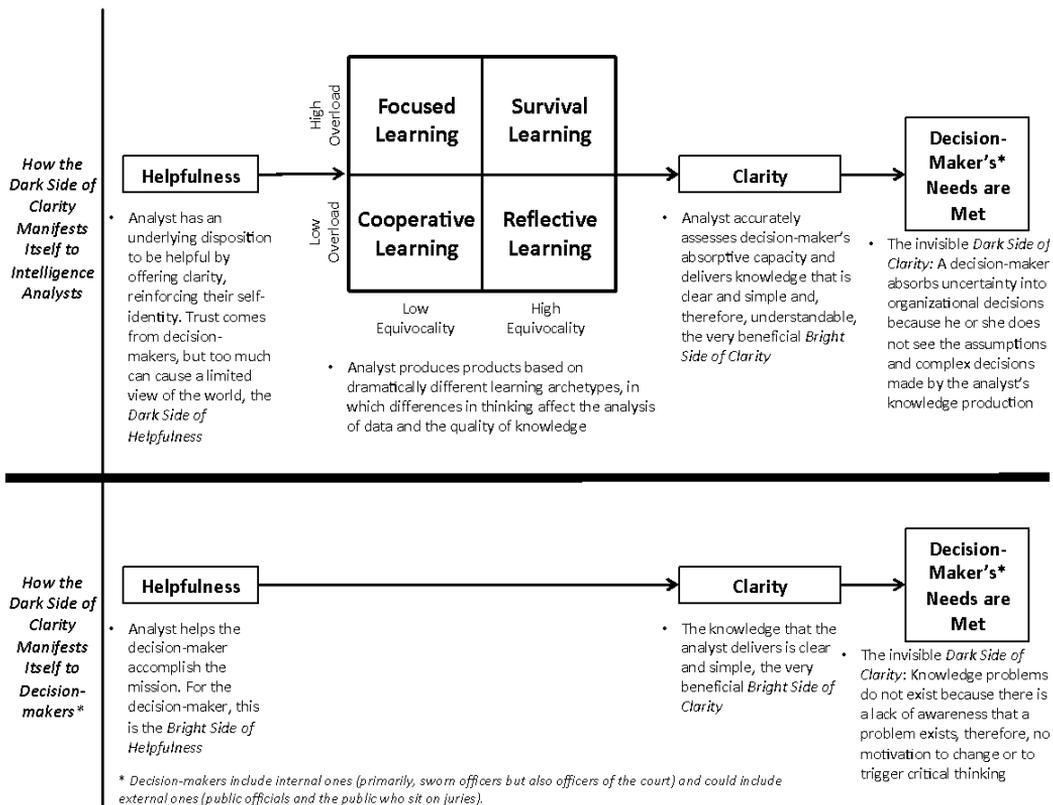


Figure 2—Dark Side of Clarity

Clarity in intelligence products has an advantage and disadvantage for decision-makers. The advantage is that decision-makers can easily understand the content destined for the court system, a natural inclination to ensure both protection of privacy and civil rights, on the one hand, and prosecution, on the other. But this clarity has a disadvantage, in that clarity makes it difficult for intelligence information and products to trigger critical thinking. Critical thinking is needed to understand the world when clarity is either absent or, even when clarity is present yet intentionally or unintentionally misplaced by the appearance of certainty. In effect, a counterintuitive phenomenon occurs—which this study termed the *dark side of clarity*—i.e. when one is in the shadows of certainty, it can be difficult to see beyond the obvious and think critically.

Decision-makers view intelligence analysts as helpful, whom they can trust, because analysts produce clarity in products that meet their needs, which this study called the *bright side of clarity*. Trust is a critically needed and shared behavior

between analyst and decision-maker (Speranza & Pfaff, 2016). The dilemma with the dark side of clarity is that the motivational factor necessary for triggering critical thinking in decision-makers is absent (Bonn, 2005; Halpern, 2014). It is absent because the success of bright side of clarity makes the targeted ideas understandable and appear certain, and therefore, the absences of opportunities to use critical thinking are not perceived as a problem. This perceived absence of a problem is the trigger of the dark side of clarity.

More importantly, the bright side of clarity unintentionally masks the dark side of the clarity. This is largely due to another counterintuitive phenomenon—which this study called the *dark side of helpfulness*—that when analysts bask in the trust from decision-makers because the bright side of clarity is helpful to them, it is difficult for the analyst to see beyond the obvious and think critically. The dark side of helpfulness can blindside the analyst to other potentially relevant collection sources and analytical methods needed for consideration. Because analysts are helpful, the bright side of clarity resonates as mission responsive and emotionally satisfying to decision makers. The bright side of clarity is quite visible and where attention is therefore focused by analyst and decision-maker alike, while the dark sides of clarity and helpfulness reside below their consciousness, and therefore, not available to pay attention to, and, thus, invisible.

*The Decision-Maker's World.* For decision-makers, the lower half of figure 2 depicts the path that clarity manifests itself. Analysts appear to them as helpful in terms of accomplishing the decision-maker's mission. Decision-makers see this as the *bright side of helpfulness*. The output of the analyst's work is the intelligence product, something that either terminates with the decision-maker or continues onward to other decision-makers, such as members of a jury. Clarity of a product is an essential requirement for understanding and usability, a factor so powerful it makes it difficult for a decision-maker to consider anything less than its positive effect.

Analyst helpfulness reinforces decision-maker trust in them. As a result of uncertainty absorption, decision-makers do not easily consider the assumptions and series of complex decisions—cognitive and relational—made during the journey that knowledge takes in the analyst's pursuit of completing an analytical task. More importantly, decision-makers are likely to be blind that such issues even exist or about the details within such issues, due in part, to their lack of awareness of analyst's learning archetypes (see figure 1) and their consequent effects on knowledge production. This lack of awareness reinforces two dynamics

within the decision-maker. One is that without having the motivation for considering problems associated with knowledge, there is no reason to engage in critical thinking about intelligence, intelligence products, or the assumptions and logics of the intelligence analyst. The other is that since there is an absence of a problem, there is no problem to fix, thus no reason to change. As a result, left unabated, the dark side of clarity results in a self-reinforcing cycle with little chance for the decision-maker to escape: with little motivation for critical thinking, there is little likelihood for its emergence.

### **Theory of the Dark Side of Clarity**

The short version of the theory of the dark side of clarity is part of a broader theory of clarity: clarity can facilitate the ease of understanding yet simultaneously clarity can suppress critical thinking. The former is the bright side of clarity, expected and demanded, while the latter is the dark side of clarity, masked by the bright side and not acknowledged.

The long version of the theory of the dark side of clarity is stated in the following sequence of expressions: (1) the bright side of helpfulness simultaneously strengthens self-identity for the analyst and mission satisfaction for the decision-maker, thereby (2) masking the negative blindsiding effects of the analyst's dark side of helpfulness, and, (3) provides a self-reinforcing cycle for the bright side of clarity to flourish for both analyst and decision-maker, with little reason for diminishing, (4) not triggering the motivation for critical thinking or for seeing more deeply into the nature of a problem or issue, which combined is the dark side of clarity, and thus (5) the pattern will persist and remain invisible.

The dark and bright sides of clarity are theorised to be natural phenomenon of knowledge production in law enforcement contexts. The two sides are part of a double-edged sword and cannot be eliminated nor should be, but can be managed. Fortunately, humans can hold and engage opposing ideas simultaneously (Martin, 2009).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **Recommendations**

Problems are not recognisable without having had the experience to frame and recognise them as such (Weick, 2005). A well-known example of this dilemma comes from our understanding of the 9/11 attacks against the World Trade Center towers. Intelligence analysts never experienced any behavior related to terrorists

flying commercial jets into skyscrapers and therefore they could not envision this tactic, and because they could not envision it, such a scenario was never recognised as a concern (Posner, 2004). After the 9/11 attacks, this new problem could be conceptualised: it was now possible to envision scenarios requiring action to dissuade terrorists from using public transportation systems as weapons of mass destruction.

Getting an individual to shift their frame of mind can be accomplished through training and education (Martin, 2009). These five steps should be considered. First, intelligence analysts have to become aware of the dark and bright sides of clarity, the ways they manifest themselves through the dark and bright sides of helpfulness to analysts and to decision-makers, and how different these ways are. Raising such awareness of these four phenomena could be accomplished in analyst training and education settings by updating standards and augmenting the existing training curriculum. Specifically, a program of instruction that focuses on the importance of the communication relationship—through the use of dialogue—between an analyst and decision-maker would provide a foundation of knowledge from which the dark and bright sides of clarity and helpfulness could be built upon (Fischhoff, 2011; Wolfberg, 2015).

Second, analysts would then be able to recognise when and where the dark and bright sides of clarity cause a lost opportunity for decision-makers to use critical thinking. Understanding where and when opportunities exist or could exist entails knowledge about how one's organization operates. Such knowledge involves not only the awareness of similarities and differences between analyst and decision-maker across dimensions of self-identity, experience, view of the job, daily schedule, value placed on knowledge, and overall goal, but also the detection of cohesive and disruptive influences (Wolfberg, 2014). With this background awareness and knowledge in place, by understanding daily routines one can identify when and where analyst and decision-maker interactions can or should be opportunities for critical thinking.

Third, analysts, once proficient, are the ones who are going to have to identify to decision-makers the instances of the dark and bright sides of clarity. The analytic community must make a commitment that will help their analytic community and the greater law enforcement community. To accomplish this step, it is important to gain a deep understanding into difficulties of making changes to improve intelligence analysis and communication with decision-makers. These challenges include: the realisation that creating and adopting new practices is often

quite difficult in public sector organisations; a recognition that organizational structure affects the ability of its members to learn; and there is often a resistance to the innovation of new techniques and processes (Zegart, 2011). Especially relevant, for the last reason, is that innovation means not only new process changes but, more importantly, it first requires culture changes in order for new process changes to be understood, adopted and thrive (Wolfberg & Pelley, 2009).

Changing one's culture can be quite challenging. This is especially true when two or more groups that are dissimilar, and have different ways of thinking and different traditions, such as intelligence analysts and sworn officers. A key prerequisite for achieving culture change under such conditions is establishing a common ground, a sort of *trading zone*, where different groups can work together without each having to have a depth of knowledge about the other (Galison, 1997).

Fourth, when both parties share an understanding of the clarity issues, analysts and decision-makers need to engage in regular communication starting from analytical tasking to the delivery of the final product, where such engagement offers the opportunity to engage in mutual critical thinking. This would be an example of operationalising a trading zone. As Peterson's (2017) data suggests, there may be trust issues between analysts and decision-makers, making trading zones more difficult to establish. In such cases, or in cases when trust does exist but where communication between analysts and decision-makers could be improved, organisational members get into a routine where they learn very quickly how they are expected to act, which reinforces an unproductive pattern of communication behavior. One technique that has had positive results in the intelligence community is the use of an experiential and interactive venue that helped analysts and decision-makers become aware of specific individual and social factors that created barriers of communication between them, and then provides, in a transparent and nonthreatening context, a way to help reduce these barriers (Wolfberg & Dixon, 2011).

Finally, decision-makers need to recognise that a new problem now exists and be willing to ask intelligence analysts questions and think critically with them. Critical thinking is included in many training programs in the national security and law enforcement communities. Case studies are an excellent way for both analyst and decision-maker to be emerged into situations requiring critical thinking. A key activity that triggers critical thinking is confronting and grappling with contradictions (Wolfberg, 2016). Critical thinking is also improved when individuals from diverse levels and skill sets in the hierarchy work side-by-side in

problem-solving sessions to resolve contradictions, ambiguities and uncertainties (Wolfberg, 2016). Leadership coaching will likely be useful during most of these steps, especially this last one.

Other knowledge production contexts exist where analysts interact with decision-makers. These occur in the national security intelligence community, military intelligence, and in competitive intelligence functions within the for-profit sector. To what degree this study is generalizable across these and other more general management contexts involving knowledge production and decision-making is uncertain without further empirical study. However, given that common cognitive and relational dynamics exist between any knowledge producer and consumer in knowledge organisations, it is likely to a considerable degree.

## **Conclusion**

Two self-reinforcing, interrelated, and invisible cycles negatively affect law enforcement knowledge production and decision-making. One cycle is from the dark side of clarity, which is largely cognitively-based, and has a direct and limiting effect on critical thinking by the decision-maker. The other is from the dark side of helpfulness, largely relational-based within the analyst, which reinforces the persistence of the bright side of clarity, masking the dark side of clarity. It is imperative, then, that solutions to bring these dark sides to light will require a joint commitment by analysts and decision-makers to work together to create a common ground. By making these dynamics visible, and addressing them through training and education, the law enforcement community has a better chance for improving decision-making and achieving intelligence-led policing.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**Dr Adrian Wolfberg**, BA, MS, MS, PhD, is serving as the Chairman of Defense Intelligence, Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, on a rotational teaching assignment from the Department of Defense. He earned his PhD from Case Western Reserve University's Weatherhead School of Management, where he concentrated on decision-making and learning under varying conditions of information overload, uncertainty, and equivocality. His research focuses on policy informatics, where communication and learning behaviors intersect between analyst and decision-maker within national security and law enforcement contexts.

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# Reassessing the Bunbury Bombing: Juxtaposition of Political and Media Narratives

Kate O'Donnell<sup>†</sup> and Jacqui Ewart

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines an Australian newspaper's coverage of the bombing of an export port terminal in Bunbury, Western Australia on 19 July, 1976. We wanted to see how *The West Australian* newspaper framed the story, its precursor events, and the events that followed. We were particularly interested in whether the bombing was reported as an act of *terrorism* because the then Premier of Western Australia, Sir Charles Court, immediately decried it as "a gross act of terrorism." We find the newspaper resisted the lure to apply this label, and couched the story in terms of *serious criminality*. However, it did so before the 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing; an event the news media heralded as the "arrival" of terrorism in Australia. Also, this occurred before what could be argued the sensationalist and politicised reporting of terror-related events became normalised.

**Keywords:** Bunbury bombing, news media framing, environmental protest, terrorism

## INTRODUCTION

Despite terrorism being "as old as history," academic interest in it as a field of study only gained serious momentum in the 1970s (Duyvesteyn, 2004: 440). It is now an expansive and contested multi-disciplinary scholarship. As a term, terrorism remains inherently difficult to define and its meaning is constructed in different academic, legal, political and colloquial contexts (Easson & Schmid, 2011: 99–157; Schmid, 2011; Tiefenbrun, 2002). While it is an expansive and contested scholarship, at the core of the contemporary concept of terrorism is that it is ideologically or politically-motivated criminality and violence (Schmid, 2011).

Internationally, there is a large body of research about how the news media frames terror-related events that has expanded over time, driven by factors including technological shifts (such as widespread television broadcasting) and specific acts of terror (such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks) (Paletz & Schmid, 1992; Pippa, Montague, & Marion, 2003; Weimann & Winn, 1994). Moreover, there is a substantial body of research about how bombings and bomb plots have been

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<sup>†</sup> Corresponding author: k.odonnell@griffith.edu.au

reported by the news media since the events in the United States of America on September 11, 2001 (Kern, Just, & Norris, 2003; Leurs, 2007; Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2008; Ryan, 2004; Schaefer, 2003; Willcox, 2001). Researchers have focused on how bombing and terror plots within Australia have been reported by the news media since 9/11 (Dreher, 2007; Ewart, Pearson, & Lessing, 2013). However, scant attention has been paid to the news media framing of politically-motivated bombings that occurred in Australia before 9/11. Our examination of one of these bombings shows not only a juxtaposition of political narratives and news frames, but a sharp contrast to what has become sensational and politicised reporting that seems to be the “new normal” (Dreher, 2007).

This paper explores the news media framing of a now largely forgotten 1976 kidnapping and bombing of port infrastructure in the Western Australian (WA) town of Bunbury, and the policy and policing contexts in which it occurred. The *Bunbury bombing*, as it became known, was ideologically and politically motivated. It was at the time, and remains, “unprecedented in Australia” (O'Donnell, 2015: 75). The Bunbury bombing was a serious and genuine attempt by two men to shut-down the fledgling, yet increasingly contentious, woodchip export industry in Western Australia (Chapman, 2008: 121–126).

We identify that while the Bunbury bombing was immediately decried as a “gross act of terrorism” by the Premier of the day (Court, cited in *The West Australian*, 1976a), it was consistently reported as an act of criminality or sabotage by *The West Australian*. It occurred before the bombing outside the Hilton Hotel in Sydney in February 1978 that was heralded by the Australian news media as the “‘arrival’ of terrorism in Australia” (Hocking, 2004: 101) and decades before a terrorist act was defined in the Criminal Code (Lynch, McGarrity, & Williams, 2015: 15).

The question of how the Bunbury bombing was framed by the news media and the context in which this occurred is an important one because researchers have shown that in contemporary politico-policy environments, there is now a close relationship between how news media cover events that are framed as acts of terrorism and policy responses in relation to those events (Ewart et al., 2013).

## BUNBURY BOMBING

In the early hours of 19 July 1976, motivated by environmental and anti-capitalist concerns and intent on crippling port infrastructure used in the export of wood chips, Mr Michael David Haabjoern and Mr John Robert Chester drove to Bunbury in a stolen car fitted with false number plates (Western Australia Police, 2006: 17). After cutting through fencing, they entered the site of the WA Woodchip and Pulp Company's export port terminal (Western Australia Police, 2006: 17). Not stationed on site full time, Mr Trevor Morrirt, the sole night watchman, was making his rounds of the site when he encountered the men, initially mistaking them for contractors who would have been there legitimately (T Morrirt, personal communication, 24 February, 2015). Morrirt was bound and held at gunpoint by Chester in an on-site office for approximately 25 minutes, while Haabjoern planted three home-made bombs fitted with home-made timing devices that were set to explode concurrently at 5:30am (Bonyhady, 1993; Guhl, 1976; Western Australia Police, 2006: 17). While held at gunpoint, Morrirt feared for his life and worried for the safety of his family (T Morrirt, personal communication, 24 February 2015). The bombs themselves had been made from part of a cache of 363 kilograms of gelignite and associated detonating equipment the men had earlier stolen from an explosives magazine in the nearby city of Perth (Rinaldi, 1977; *The West Australian*, 1976b).

After ascertaining from Morrirt that the regular train that had delivered wood chips had already passed through the site, Haabjoern and Chester, when exiting the site after the bombs were planted, placed signs warning of the existence of explosive devices (*R v Michael David Haabjoern and John Robert Chester*, 1976: 16). The three men exited the site in two cars: Chester drove Morrirt's car (with him still bound in it), and Haabjoern drove the car the men had arrived in (T Morrirt, personal communication, February 24, 2015). In relation to Chester driving his car, Morrirt (personal communication, February 24, 2015) explained that this was because he had raised concern about its possible destruction as it was uninsured and belonged to his wife.

Of the three bombs planted, only one exploded. This was set at the base of the stacker tower (Rinaldi, 1977; *The West Australian*, 1976a). As a result of fused wires, the remaining two bombs set at the base of the main loading gantry (the main target that would have crippled the infrastructure) failed to detonate and were later defused by the Western Australia Police (Skehan, n.d.; Western Australia Police, 2006: 17–18). The magnitude of the single bomb that did explode sent

metal flying into a nearby housing estate and broke windows 500 metres away (*The West Australian*, 1976a). The blast was heard at least 15 to 20 kilometres away (T Morritt, personal communication, 24 February 2015). While damage was estimated at \$300,000, because the main loading gantry was not affected, the explosion had little overall impact on wood chipping operations and the export of wood chips continued (Western Australia Police, 2006: 17–18).

The Bunbury bombing remains unprecedented in Australia (Bonyhady, 1993; Chapman, 2008; O'Donnell, 2015: 75). It occurred in the context of the wood chipping of native forests and as the negative impacts on the environment (while predicted) were beginning to be observed (Chapman, 2011). The clearing of old growth forest to export wood chips was a divisive political and social issue (Chapman, 2011: 85–87). Motivated by anti-capitalist and environmental concerns, Haabjoern and Chester sought, by bombing the export port terminal, to delay the export of wood chips for up to two years, which they viewed as long enough to generate a groundswell of opposition to wood chipping and to force a resultant change in the law to prevent it (*R v Michael David Haabjoern and John Robert Chester*, 1976: 22). Both men acted in isolation from the broader (and already well established) environmental movement that quickly, strongly and consistently denounced the bombing as both illegal and violent (Bonyhady, 1993: 40–41; Chapman, 2008; Guhl, 1976; *The West Australian*, 1976a). Haabjoern and Chester were arrested by the WA Police soon after the bombing (Western Australia Police, 2006: 17–18) and in November 1976 both pleaded guilty in the Western Australia Supreme Court to four offences:

- (1) breaking, entering and stealing;
- (2) causing an explosion likely to cause serious injury to property;
- (3) placing an explosive substance in a place likely to cause serious injury to property; and
- (4) unlawfully detaining a person against his will (Rinaldi, 1977; Supreme Court Criminal Indictment Register, 1977).

The offences were serious, carrying a maximum penalty of life imprisonment with hard labour (Bonyhady, 1993: 41). On 22 December 1976, Haabjoern and Chester were both sentenced to serve concurrent prison sentences of three years, seven years, five years and twelve months for the respective charges with a minimum

term of ten months to be served before becoming eligible for parole (Supreme Court Criminal Indictment Register, 1977).

Following a Crown appeal, the minimum non-parole period was increased to three and a half years (Rinaldi, 1977; Supreme Court Criminal Indictment Register, 1977). In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, the then Premier of WA, Sir Charles Court decried it as “a gross act of terrorism” (Court, cited in *The West Australian*, 1976a). In a sharp distinction, *The West Australian* consistently characterised the Bunbury bombing as an act of criminality (albeit very serious criminality) and Haabjoern and Chester as criminals, bombers and saboteurs.

### METHODOLOGY

The concept of framing has been the subject of much scholarship in the fields of media studies and social movement studies (Benford & Snow, 2000; de Vreese, 2005). Entman (1993: 52) describes framing, at its core, as involving two interrelated components; selection and salience. As Benford and Snow (2000: 611) explain, framing acts to “render events or occurrences meaningful.” Frames then “function to organise experience and guide action” (Benford & Snow, 2000: 611). Entman (1993: 52) provides one of the most cited definitions of framing:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

As a sub-set of the framing scholarship, news media framing has been conceptualised both broadly and narrowly (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010; de Vreese, 2005; Miller & Riechert, 2001). It too continues to develop theoretically (Miller & Riechert, 2001). Lawrence (2010) points out a key question in news framing analysis is the extent to which the preferred narratives of political actors gain traction. In setting out a typology of news frames de Vreese (2005: 60) explains that they can be *issue-specific* (relevant to a particular topic), as well as *generic* (with a broader application including across time and cultures). de Vreese (2005: 60) calls for researchers to specify the nature of the frames being studied, and to consider “the conditions under which frames emerge.” In this analysis, we focus on the issue-specific news framing of the Bunbury bombing by *The West Australian* newspaper, political narratives and the policy and policing contexts in which the frames emerged. We selected *The West Australian* for analysis because

it is a key daily newspaper in the state of WA and the newspaper reports were able to be accessed through the newspaper's archives.

Using an inductive qualitative approach, we first applied framing analysis to sixteen news articles supplied by *The West Australian's* archives to one of the authors about the Bunbury bombing, its precursor event and the events that followed it. As it enables analysis of different phases of a news story, we applied Miller and Riechert's (2001) framing cycle. To situate the analysis in its historical context as part of a broader study, one of the authors also conducted three semi-structured, conversational style interviews with people with direct knowledge of either the bombing or the policing and policy context in which it occurred. This interview technique is suitable for exploring and understanding alternative perspectives on events (Burgess-Limerick, 1998).

### NEWS FRAMING DATA

All sixteen news articles were published by *The West Australian* newspaper between 14 April 1976 and 14 March 1978. We began our analysis by identifying key news frames in each headline and lead paragraph and mapped them to Miller and Riechert's (2001) schema. Each story was read to determine the most commonly occurring news frames and a list of the key news frames was developed. All sixteen articles cover events that led up to the bombing, the search for the bombers, the arrest and trial of the suspects, their subsequent convictions and the escape from custody by one of the convicted bombers.

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

*The West Australian* newspaper used very traditional news frames in reporting the events associated with the Bunbury bombing. The story broke on 14 April 1976 with details about the theft of the gelignite later used in the bombing. A little over three months later, the news about the bombing of the wood chip terminal at Bunbury led *The West Australian's* news coverage. From then until 28 July 1976 the newspaper covered various aspects of the search for the bombers and their eventual capture by police. Coverage then turned to the court case, the jailing of the two convicted bombers and the Crown appeal against the length of their sentences (perceived to be inadequate) through late 1976 and into the first quarter of 1978. Chester's escape from custody then became the focus of the newspaper's coverage.

Table 1—Newspaper articles, date of publication, headlines, key news frame headline, key news frame lead paragraph.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Key news frame headline</b>	<b>Key news frame lead paragraph</b>	<b>Phase of Miller and Riechert's framing cycle</b>
14 April 1976	1	Thieves get big gelignite haul	Crime - theft	Crime - theft	Emergence
20 July 1976	1 carry over to page 3	Sabotage bomb fails to cripple chip base (p1 headline) Woodchip bomb blast (p3 headline)	Crime - failure	Crime – damage and failure	Emergence
21 July 1976	3	Theft theory on Bomb	Crime - theft	Crime investigation	Definition - different views on event
22 July 1976	8	Guard: Bombers didn't hurt me	Human interest	Human interest	Definition – guard's views of the event
23 July 1976	4	Leitch: Bombs no surprise	Expected crime	Trend to violence; international political situation replicated in WA	Definition/ Conflict
24 July 1976	8	Car clue in Bunbury blast	Crime - investigation	Crime investigation	Definition
29 July 1976	1	Blast probe continues	Crime - investigation	Crime investigation	Definition

<b>Date</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>Key news frame headline</b>	<b>Key news frame lead paragraph</b>	<b>Phase of Miller and Riechert's framing cycle</b>
30 July 1976	3	No bail on bomb counts	Crime – court story	Court proceedings	Definition – magistrate's view of event
24 November 1976	4	Two woodchip bombers guilty, seek mercy	Crime – court story	Court proceedings	Resonance - resonates with expectations and values of the public
23 December 1976	1 cont. page 8	Two bombers gaoled, Govt calls for report (P1 headline) 2 bombers gaoled (p8 headline)	Crime – Court story	Court sentence	Resonance - resonates with processes of court
15 February 1977	3 cont. on page 5	Woodchip sentences 'inadequate' (p 3 headline) Outrageous, says crown (p 5 headline)	Court response to court sentences	Court response to court sentences	Resonance - crown response resonates with expectations and values of the public
19 March 1977	3	Two woodchip bombers will serve 3 and a half years	Crime – court new sentence		Equilibrium or Resolution – policy response phase i.e. increased sentences

Date	Page	Headline	Key news frame headline	Key news frame lead paragraph	Phase of Miller and Riechert's framing cycle
14 March 1978	1 with pictures page 5	Hunt for bomber in forest (p 1 headline) Cars searched (p 5 headline over photos)	Police search for bomber	Escape of convicted bomber	Emergence – a new event in the story
15 March 1978	3	Forest fugitive still evades capture	Police search for bomber	Bomber evades capture	Emergence
16 March 1978	10	Search for Chester goes on	Police search for bomber	Police search for escapee	Emergence

Most the newspaper stories were framed as news reports about a crime, with follow-up stories about court appearances being framed in the manner of a typical court report. Haabjoern and Chester were routinely referred to by the newspaper as “bombers” or “saboteurs.” For example, on one occasion *The West Australian* reported as follows: “The armed bombers who blew up part of the woodchips berth at Bunbury’s inner harbour on Monday told a security guard: ‘We don’t want to hurt any little blokes’” (22 July, 1976: 8).

After sentencing and the appeal, the newspaper continued to refer to the men as the “Bunbury bombers.” “The two Bunbury woodchip bombers who looked forward to probable release on parole next October now face imprisonment till 1980” (sic) (19 March, 1977: 3). Quite some time after the bombing and subsequent court trials, the newspaper again avoided the possible terrorism description, framing the story as a police search for a *bomber*.

There were three attempts by public figures to influence the trajectory of the news coverage and subsequent framing of the story, with no success. These were all contained in a single story published by *The Western Australian* on 20 July, 1976. In that report, the then WA Premier, Sir Charles Court, attempted to reframe

the story by referring to the actions of Haabjoern and Chester as terrorism. The newspaper reported:

The Premier, Sir Charles Court, said yesterday he was appalled that anyone would resort to such an act of violence. Someone could have been killed or seriously injured. ‘We will not tolerate this kind of intimidation,’ he said. ‘It is a gross act of terrorism and will be treated as such. I do not see this as a protest. Those responsible will be treated like anyone else who carried out an act of violence’ (20 July, 1976: 3).

Sir Charles Court’s use of the word *terrorism* failed to gain purchase in *The West Australian* newspaper. A similar attempt to reframe the story was made by the manager of the company that owned the woodchip loading facility, who described the actions of those responsible for the bombing as “extremists” and their actions a form of “madness.” *The West Australian* attributed the following comments by the aforementioned source:

The manager of the Forest Products of Association of WA, Mr GW, Kelly, said that ‘pseudo conservationists’ at the head of the anti-woodchip campaign could not escape responsibility for the outrage. ‘This exhibition of madness occurred after extremists among these people had inflamed emotions with a campaign of bitterness and hatred, divorced almost entirely from the truth,’ he said. ‘Their distortions have been rejected by all responsible authorities in Australia. Yet they have been spread with such venom as to poison minds and provide a savage inspiration to ideological extremists’ (20 July, 1976: 3).

One other source quoted by *The West Australian* attempted to frame the actions of Haabjoern and Chester in a similar way. This was the then Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia, Mr HD Evans. His electorate was described as covering a significant part of the wood chipping area. The newspaper cited him as “deploring the bombing” and he went on to say “the ALP was appalled by such violence. The incident was un-Australian and must have been the work of unbalanced minds” (20 July, 1976: 3).

Ewart (2012: 92) in an article that explored the news frames used by four Australian news media organisations suggests that “for news frames to shift there have to be extenuating circumstances.” Despite the attempts of these sources to frame the story within the context of terrorism or madness, *The West Australian* did not pursue these particular frames. This persisted through the four phases of the news framing cycle. Further, the fact that the bombing was clearly a

politically-motivated crime didn't gain wider appeal with *The West Australian* newspaper. The newspaper framed the Bunbury bombers as *criminals* and the bombing as a *crime*.

de Vreese (2005) identified the importance of analysing news frames in the context in which they emerge. By the time of the Bunbury bombing, Australia had already experienced at least 196 acts of terroristic violence (Commonwealth of Australia, 1979a: 474). In his examination of home-grown terrorism in Australia during the 1970s, Brawley (2016: 295) identified such acts were directed at “mostly government, military, judicial, diplomatic and commercial targets” predominantly by “radial left-wing actors.”

Despite Australia's experiences of terrorism, it was the bombing outside the Hilton Hotel in Sydney in February 1978 (that killed three and injured many others) as Commonwealth heads of regional governments were convening to meet, that was heralded by the Australian news media as the “‘arrival’ of terrorism in Australia” (Hocking, 2004: 101). The Hilton Hotel bombing is still considered to be one of Australia's most serious unsolved crimes (Head, 2009: 49).

The policy and policing responses to the Hilton Hotel bombing have been well documented (Commonwealth of Australia, 1978, 1979a; Head, 2008, 2009; Hocking, 1993, 2004). It was a turning point for Australia's emerging counter-terrorism policy, federal policing arrangements and military call-out arrangements (Commonwealth of Australia, 1978, 1979b; O' Donnell & Bronitt, 2014). It was also a turning point for the Australian news media that intensively covered the bombing, the unprecedented military call-out that followed and its long and complex policing and legal aftermath (Head, 2009, p. 50; Hocking, 2004, p. 101). As Hocking (2004: 101) explained, “the Australian security context was reversed overnight” and the ways the Australian news media reported acts of politically-motivated violence shifted with it. Hocking (2004: 101) asserted that, before this the Australian news media had shown a distinct “lack of interest” in the terroristic plots and events that had taken place in Australia.

The further acceleration of counterterrorism policy development that occurred post-9/11 has also been documented by researchers (Bronitt, 2008; Lynch et al., 2015; Williams, 2011). Among other substantial responses Australia enacted “its first national anti-terrorism laws” (Lynch et al., 2015: 15). In context, terrorism itself is a powerful and pejorative label that continues to elude both academic consensus and international legal definitions (Easson & Schmid, 2011;

Saul, 2012). In 2002 a terrorist act was defined in Australia's the *Criminal Code* for the first time (Lynch et al., 2015, p. 15). It is defined at s100.1 in the following terms:

*terrorist act* means an action or threat of action where:

- (a) the action falls within subsection (2) and does not fall within subsection (3); and
- (b) the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause; and
- (c) the action is done or the threat is made with the intention of:
  - (i) coercing, or influencing by intimidation, the government of the Commonwealth or a State, Territory or foreign country, or of part of a State, Territory or foreign country; or
  - (ii) intimidating the public or a section of the public.

Importantly, subsection 3 of s100.1 of the *Criminal Code* excludes: advocacy, protest, dissent and industrial action not intended to cause serious physical harm or endanger the lives of others.

Whether Sir Charles considered he was being technically correct in characterising the Bunbury bombing as a gross act of terrorism or thought he was being politically astute in pushing a pro-development agenda ahead of what was to be a hard-fought election is beside the point. Sir Charles levelled the label *terrorism* at an act of violent protest before terrorism was viewed by Australia political, policing and policy elites any differently than so-called ordinary criminality (O'Donnell, 2015: 116; Williams, 2011: 1,146).

It is interesting to speculate if the Bunbury bombers would today be charged with engaging in a terrorist act and to consider how the news media may report the story. What is clear is that since their enactment, Australia's contemporary suite of anti-terror laws "have been rigorously enforced" (Lynch et al., 2015: 92). Of the forty-six people charged with terrorism-related offences in Australia since 2002, twenty-six have been convicted (Lynch et al., 2015: 92). However, to date, no one has been charged with the core offence of engaging in a terrorist act, and in this regard the law remains untested (Lynch et al., 2015: 93).

On the one hand, the Bunbury bombing was ideologically driven and was a genuine attempt to directly influence the government of the day. The nightwatchman, Morrith was bound, gagged, held at gunpoint, kidnapped and feared for his life and the safety of his family. The single bomb that did explode caused serious property damage. While precautions were taken by the Bunbury bombers to limit possible injury to people, the unexploded bombs risked serious injury to first responders.

Conversely, the Bunbury bombing could arguably be considered a form of protest and dissent (albeit violent) that was never intended to endanger lives. At the time, the highly contentious practice of directly linking violent as well as non-violent environmentally-motivated protest to terrorism had also yet to emerge (Arnold, 1983, 2007). While the term *eco-terrorism* is now part of the US political and policy lexicon, it has not gained acceptance in contemporary Australia (Jarboe, 2002; O'Donnell, 2015: 104–107). It does, nevertheless, offer a potentially different frame for considering such events not available at the time.

What is far more certain is that since 9/11, news media coverage of terrorism, terrorism plots, and suspected terrorism has been sensationalist and highly politicised (Dreher, 2007; Ewart, 2009; McNamara, 2009). Sensationalist reporting has in many instances become the standard way in which bombings and terror plots are approached and reported. In effect this has established expectations amongst news media organisations and journalists about the way these stories will unfold. That means it can be very difficult for journalists to shift their approaches to reporting when an event or series of events do not follow expectations.

The daily news cycle has expressively increased pressure for many news organisations to be the first to break a news story and that in turn means that mistakes can be and have been made. The arrest in July 2007 of Australian-based Indian doctor Mohamed Haneef on suspicion of providing resources to a terrorist organisation highlights the urgency involved for the news media of reporting bombings and bomb plots (Ewart, 2009: 16). Ewart (2009) outlined some of the mistakes that were made by some mainstream news media and the associated failure of those organisations to correct those errors, in the process providing salutary lessons for journalists. Key amongst them were: do not jump to conclusions about the guilt or innocence of those arrested; cross check information you obtain from all sources; correct errors as soon as they are drawn to your attention; and avoid the political spin involved in such cases (Ewart, 2009).

Our case study findings have implications for those charged with managing public communication about similar events and those reporting on such events. Governments recognise that public confidence in their ability to respond to terroristic violence is paramount (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015: 2). Whereas Sir Charles immediately decried the Bunbury bombing as a gross act of terrorism, the contemporary orthodoxy is restraint (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015: 3). This is because hoaxes, false alarms, and serious criminality unrelated to terrorism could all be in play (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015: 3). As the Bunbury bombing illustrates, finding the tipping point between serious criminality and terrorism is complex. In contemporary Australia, the law remains untested.

A series of tensions combine during suspected terror events. For policing and security agencies tensions arise from the need to inform the public in a timely about an event while exercising restraint in rushing to label an act as terrorism (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). For the news media tensions arise from the race to be the first news media organisation to get the story and to publish it and the increasing pressure to “obtain a scoop.”

The fractured relationships between Australian news media and security agencies add to the tensions (O'Donnell & McLean, 2015). Stories involving planned or actual acts of terrorism will continue to garner news media attention, particularly in the current political climate. The Haneef case illustrates the problematic and frustrating experiences some journalists reported having when dealing with government and policing agencies' spokespeople (Ewart, 2009). If not addressed, these are likely to continue to influence news media coverage of terrorism-related stories.

## CONCLUSION

The Bunbury bombing was a watershed event for Western Australia and therefore an important news story for *The West Australian*. The newspaper showed considerable restraint in framing the story. In particular, the newspaper continued to treat it as a crime, rather than an act of terrorism. Our findings highlight the independence of one news media organisation in crafting news frames, and identify that the contexts in which events occur can moderate the take up by journalists of the preferred narratives of pressure groups (in this case the political elite).

By not taking-up and continuing to refrain from positioning the bombing as an act of terrorism, or to question the mental health of the perpetrators, the

newspaper avoided what might be deemed hysteria that characterises recent news media coverage of similar bombings (Dreher, 2007; Ewart, 2009). What this case study reinforces is that the context in which news frames emerge are crucial to their analysis.

Future research could focus on comparing how the news media framed terroristic violence in Australia before the policy and media turning points of the Hilton Hotel bombing and 9/11. Official catalogues of serious politically-motivated violence now available to researchers provide a useful starting point (Commonwealth of Australia, 1979a: 473–476; SAC-PAV Review Team, 1993 Annexe 6).

There is evidence that the way news media frame coverage of events can have “a considerable influence on the way in which audiences, including policy makers, understand and respond to issues and events” (Ewart, 2012: 97). In contemporary Australia, our study’s findings have implications for those charged with managing public communication about similar events and those reporting on such events. Public figures who are tempted to frame a story that has a complex connection to terrorism for political gain may not always succeed. For journalists reporting such events, avoiding the attempts by public figures to frame or reframe the story and change its trajectory is vital.

Understanding the policy and policing context for such an event is also vital. In contemporary Australia, there have been instances where political narratives about terrorism have been uncritically accepted and replicated by journalists (Dreher, 2007; Ewart, 2012). Policy frameworks for countering terrorism and responding to politically-motivated violence that had yet to develop at the time of the Bunbury bombing now provide journalists with a starting point with which to assess political narratives.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Dr Kate O'Donnell**, BBus, MCCJ(Hons), PhD, is based at Griffith University. Her research interest is in critical infrastructure resilience and the policing of protest. She has enjoyed a career in the public sector spanning some thirty years that included practitioner-in-residence at Griffith University and senior roles in transport security and Ministerial liaison services.

**Dr Jacqui Ewart**, BA, MA, PhD, is an Associate Professor of Journalism, Griffith University. She was a journalist and media manager for more than a decade and has worked as an academic for the past twenty years. Her research interests including media coverage of disasters and media representations of terrorism, focus on the costs of poor communication.

## CASE CITATION

*R v Michael David Haabjoern and John Robert Chester* (Unreported, Supreme Court of Western Australia, Jones J, 23 November 1976)

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# Discreet, Not Covert: Reflections on Teaching Intelligence Analysis in a Non- Government Setting

Troy Whitford<sup>‡</sup> and Henry Prunckun

## ABSTRACT

This paper discusses some of the challenges in teaching intelligence gathering and analysis to non-government organisations (NGOs). It used Gibb's reflective model to assess the teaching impact because the model allowed the workshop convenors a structure to form their thoughts and observations. The teaching reflections in this paper are based on an intelligence gathering workshop conducted in Sri Lanka to NGOs working in the South Asian region. The paper reports on several pedagogical and cultural challenges that were encountered in delivering the workshop. In chief, the participants were culturally South East Asian, and before this workshop they had no exposure to intelligence gathering techniques. However, once presented, the members of the workshop could see reason for using intelligence gathering techniques for their own planning and security measures. A notable pedagogical issue was the workshop participants' reluctance to use or trust police/intelligence and military terms and concepts. Subsequently, the workshop facilitators, who were not South East Asian, attempted to adopt a different lexicon more suited to social science, rather than a military or intelligence vocabulary. Using a social science lexicon also allowed for scaffolding existing knowledge possessed by participants to an intelligence analysis framework. Underlining this workshop experience is an assessment of the efficacy of teaching intelligence gathering and analysis skills to NGOs.

**Keywords:** Non-government organisations, NGO, humanitarian missions, violence against aid workers, intelligence assessments, security intelligence, open source intelligence, tactical assessments

## INTRODUCTION

According to a 2011 report by the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UNOCHA), violence against aid workers in settings such as "Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan have increased globally" since 2005–2006 (2011: 11). Attacks on aid workers have been perpetrated with greater sophistication and organisation due to the tactics and weaponry used (UNOCHA,

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<sup>‡</sup> Corresponding author: twhitford@csu.edu.au

2011: 11). In addition, NGOs (non-government organisations) that are the target of this violence are often perceived as no longer conducting themselves in the spirit of neutrality (Burkle, 2005).

While this issue is complex, NGOs that provide aid are sometimes perceived as serving the interests of governments (or conversely, criminal or insurgent groups). For instance, Boyce (2002) pointed out that NGOs can experience the pressure placed on them through the competing foreign policy objectives of donor nations, as well as the policies of host nations. In some countries, aid agencies are expected to supply the host nation's intelligence services with information to continue their operations (Laipson, 2008). Donor governments, those funding aid delivery, have been known to revoke funding if aid agencies are deemed to have been in communication with insurgents or the "enemy" (Laipson: 2008).

Paradoxically, aid agencies are dependent on host country government police/intelligence and military for security information to assist them deliver aid and keep their workers safe. But this is not always the case—take for instance, the July 2003 bombing of the UN in Baghdad. This event was a turning point for NGOs to do things differently; such as engaging private security firms to provide security intelligence to plan operations, as well as providing physical security for aid workers. According to Burkle (2005: 26), "Before deployment to conflict areas, especially those characterised by insurgent activity, humanitarian providers must realistically assess the threats to life and to the mission. They must obtain pre-deployment situational awareness education, security training and optimal protective equipment and vehicles."

## CONTEXT

In response to the challenges faced by NGOs' reliance on security intelligence advice from host country agencies, there have been calls to empower aid agencies with the training to gather and analyse their own intelligence (Zwitter, 2016). MacLeod (2009), in his article *Leveraging Academia to Improve NGO Driven Intelligence*, makes a case for NGOs to develop their own intelligence capabilities using university academics as a remote intelligence analysis service. According to MacLeod (2009), such an arrangement would provide NGOs with more independence, and it is MacLeod's work that set-in motion the convening of the security intelligence workshop. This workshop was held in the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in September 2016. The workshop was designed as a case study to assess how intelligence analysis could be taught to NGOs.

Rather than relying on private security company's or government agencies, the workshop convenors posited that encouraging non-government organisations to gather and analyse intelligence provides them with their own independent security advice. This proposition was supported by Zwitter (2016: 1) who pointed out "...humanitarian missions require good intelligence and solid risk assessment." Therefore, a good intelligence report should be free from the constraints of being associated with host governments, local criminal gangs or insurgents, and foreign peacekeeping forces. Having the capacity to conduct their own intelligence assessments would help re-establish their own neutrality, and hence offer a safety buffer from being targeted by one side or the other. Further, it gives NGOs more control over decision making with respect to the kind of aid they will deliver, and under what conditions they decide to do it (Bollettino, 2008).

To provide NGOs with an opportunity to gain the skills necessary to generate their own intelligence, an NGO intelligence gathering workshop was conducted using a practice-based professional learning approach (Whitford and Prunckun, 2016). The workshop's aim was to impart a new skill—writing a *tactical assessment*—in order to give NGOs the confidence to recover their sense of independence by being able to develop their own intelligence capacity (ICfSD: 2016).

A tactical assessment is a type of intelligence report that takes a wide view of an issue under investigation (Prunckun, 2015: 221). It is not reactive, but anticipatory. That is to say, tactical assessments ask, and answer, questions that require some level of probability to be assigned to an event's likelihood. For instance, an NGO that is planning to deploy to (the fictional country of) Orrenabad might ask these questions:

- 1) determine what socio-political issues are prominent in Orrenabad; and,
- 2) suggest how these issues might manifest in to security issues that this NGO needs to consider if it was to go ahead with its aid program.

So, a tactical assessment is well suited for adaptation by NGOs regarding security issues for their in-country personnel and/or aid operations.

## METHOD

The workshop convenors used Gibbs's (1988) reflective practice-based learning approach to identified pedagogical issues to scaffold the workshop's content. This was deemed necessary because intelligence research and its associated lexicon have had negative connotations when discussed with social scientists (Prunckun, 1996). In the main, this is because the social science practitioners have had no experience of intelligence gathering, and coupled with the negative perception of intelligence work portrayed in the press and cinema, it is likely they believed it was based on secrecy and deception (Miller, 1994: 254). As such, they consider the work of security intelligence agencies as alien. By way of example, in October 2001, then-Secretary of State, Colin Powell (2001) stated, "And I want you to know that I have made it clear to my staff here and to all of our ambassadors around the world that I am serious about making sure we have the best relationship with the NGOs who are such *a force multiplier for us, such an important part of our combat team.*" The emphasis that has been added underscores the image NGOs would like to distance themselves from.

The workshop convenors chose a participant observer approach for the evaluation. To do this, they selected the International Consortium for Social Development's conference held in Sri Lanka (ICfSD: 2016). This was done for two reasons. First, those attending the conference were social workers who had a special emphasis on aid delivery (ICfSD: 2016). They were university educated in the social sciences, and therefore, understood research practices regarding the provision of social welfare.

Secondly, Sri Lanka was also a conducive venue to conduct the workshop. Having gone through an almost 26-year civil war (1983–2009), the nation is the base for several NGO operations. The country has NGOs that have a lived-experience in working in conflict zones. Specifically, many of the local workshop participants told the convenors that they could recount the errors made by their aid agencies because of a lack of security information. Subsequently, the workshop was geographically well placed, as well as being able to offer intelligence training to those that were on the front-line of service provision.

Therefore, the conference provided the workshop convenors with an opportunity to discuss the use of security intelligence in an environment where the participants felt comfortable and in a mindset conducive to presenting ideas. Further, because NGOs are often under resourced when it comes to providing

training, the workshop was provided free of charge; it was a set workshop item on the conference agenda so NGO delegates had the opportunity to participate.

To evaluate this trial, Gibbs’s reflection model (1988) was used to examine the interactions observed during the workshop. This method also allowed the convenors to make sense of the encounters from a teaching perspective. The Gibbs (1988) reflection model provided a useful structure to evaluate the results. The convenors followed each of the six steps during and after each session as well as the workshop series, so that the findings could be used to guide future workshops (see figure 1).

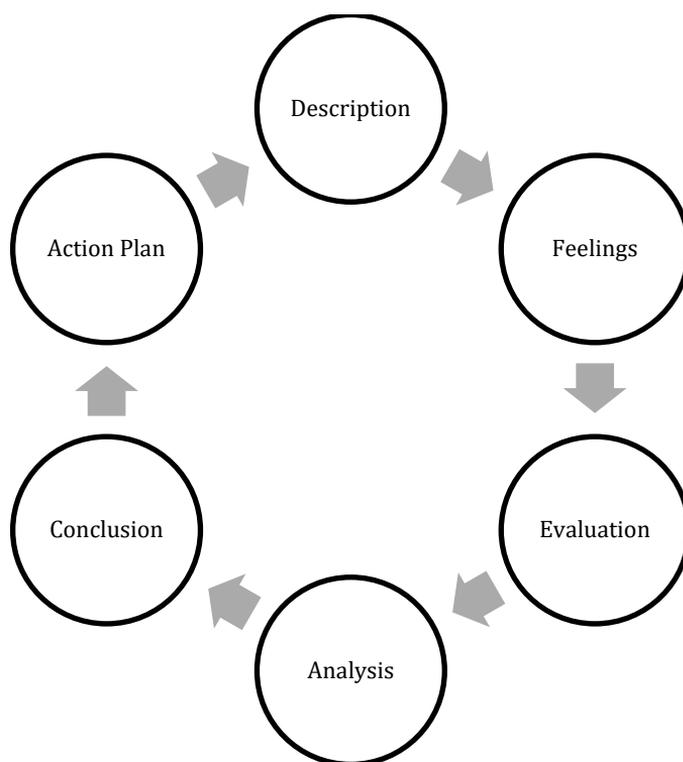


Figure 1—Gibbs (1988) Reflective Cycle

Because the participants did not have English as their first language, it was difficult to request formal written feedback. That is why the convenors adopted the use of reflection-on-action (i.e. after-the-event thinking) and reflection-in-action (thinking while doing) as Finlay (2008: 3) advocated.

These two processes were informed by Dewey's concept for reflective practice (Finlay, 2008: 3). That is, Dewey's view was that "...while we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habit of reflecting (Dewey, 1933: 35)." Dewey perceived reflection as an "...active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and further conclusions to which it leads... it includes a conscious and voluntary effort to establish belief upon a firm basis of evidence and rationality (Dewey, 1933: 9)."

So, through post-workshop discussions with participants, and the reflective teaching process undertaken independently by the convenors, several insights were gained that are discussed below using Gibbs's (1988) model as a framework: 1) description; 2) feelings; 3) evaluation; 4) analysis; and, 5) conclusions. The analytical process involved asking questions such as: How was the presentation received? What aspect(s) were good? Why? What aspects were troublesome? Why? What are the options for the next presentations?

## RESULTS

### **Description—What Happened?**

The NGO intelligence workshop was held in Kandy, Sri Lanka on 29 and 30 September 2016. There were fifteen participants. The majority were of South Eastern Asian background. The participants were also working in the region. All had a university education, the majority with a background in social welfare. The workshop was conducted in English and the participants indicated that they had a limited understanding of intelligence gathering and analysis.

The convenors were not from South East Asia. They had wide-ranging teaching experiences, including teaching in developing countries, as well as a strong understanding of security intelligence work.

The workshop was conducted over two sessions, on two separate days. Each session went for approximately two hours. The first session was conducted as a description account that outlined the need for NGOs to develop intelligence capacities.

- What is socio-political information?
- Why gather socio-political information?
- What can be achieved by gathering socio-political information?
- What is the scale of socio-political information required?

The session also covered the rudimentary aspects of intelligence gathering and analysis, but placed these concepts in the context of applied social research so that the participants could see the nexus between what was being advocated and their own academic background.

The second session built upon the first by providing participants with the practical understanding of what a tactical assessment is, and how it is crafted. It stepped the group through identifying sources of information that could help answer their query, and discussed the utility of using open-source information. Using a notional case-study, this session also included a discussion on how a tactical assessment can be used within the participant's organisations and how NGOs could use McLeod's (2009) theory of leveraging university academics to provide a remote intelligence analysis service.

### **Feelings—What were the Convenors Thinking?**

Given the reaction of NGOs to comments like that of former-Secretary of State Powell (2001), the workshop convenors were concerned about how the transfer of intelligence theory and methods would be accepted by social science practitioners. While there are many commonalities between the academic disciplines (in fact, many intelligence analysts have come from careers in social sciences—Prunckun, 1996; Ward, 2012), the world views expressed within each practise are markedly different—the roles of intelligence officers and NGO workers are manifestly unlike. For instance, the convenors observed that many of the participants could see the benefits of NGOs developing an in-house intelligence capability, but participants thought it would be too removed from their social sciences training.

A difference in world view was also observed in the participants' different use of language in describing methods and techniques. The convenors came to the view that choosing the right terminology would be vital in engaging the workshop participants. Like Secretary Powell (2001) using the term *combat team*, the feeling was that using intelligence terms would disconnect the participants from the learning experience.

The feeling was that it would be a challenge to demonstrate that NGOs could benefit from having their own intelligence gathering and analysis capabilities. There was also a feeling that a degree of trust would be needed to conduct the workshop to encourage participants to reflect on their field experiences and how these experiences could be improved by adopting an in-house intelligence capability.

### **Evaluation—Pros-and-Cons of the Experience**

The first session provided background and context for the writing of a tactical assessment, which was held the next day. This session was presented in what is best described as an exposition teaching style by both convenors. Although the presentation, which was supplemented by visual teaching aids, went well, it left the workshop convenors uncertain if the participants had engaged in the learning. For instance, there were only a few questions asked by participants and many of the questions the convenors put to the participants went unanswered. Using the reflection-in-action method, it was considered that the teaching approach of the first session did not achieve the degree of trust needed to develop a meaningful engagement for the second session. Although nothing was said explicitly by the participants, it was their *silence* that was the trigger.

So, in the second session, the convenors leveraged the research of Marx, Fuhrer, and Hartig (1999) by deliberately incorporated a semi-circle seating arrangement; rearranging the seating into a more intimate setting which was hoped would result in a more cooperative learning atmosphere, or inclusive “classroom.” It was observed that this change allowed participants to engage more. For example, as an introduction, the convenors invited the participants to share their thoughts about their experiences in using government and military security intelligence. The convenors observed that the discussion was less restricted and freer than the day before, with all participants engaging in the exercise.

Group discussion (Vygotsky, 1978) was used to scaffold the participants’ experience by illustrating why they may find a benefit in developing their own tactical assessments. While the participants were open about their experiences with various host governments, they were reluctant to think in terms of developing intelligence capabilities. The workshop participants appeared uncomfortable with the idea that they should operate using secrecy. Again, using reflection-in-action,

the convenors decided to not use words like *secrecy* or *covert*—opting for terms like *discreet inquiries*.

### **Analysis—What Sense Did the Convenors Make?**

From a pedagogical point of view, the workshop contained the essential elements for a positive learning experience. It followed the “...the instructional techniques and strategies that allow learning to take place. It [considered] the interactive process between teacher/practitioner and learner and it is also applied to include the provision of some aspects of the learning environment” (Siraj-Blatchford, Sylva, Muttock, Gilden & Bell, 2002: 10). But despite these preparations—such as hand-outs, slide presentations, microphones for the speakers, comfortable chairs for the participants—the subject matter appeared to have been the difficulty. Teaching a topic that is useful, but seen by the learners as, in some form, objectionable, failed to yield better results. A compelling explanation for this lack of engagement can be seen in Fast, et al.’s (2013) observation that, “...the failure of [NGOs] to systematise and clearly articulate acceptance [of intelligence assessments] as a distinct security management approach and a lack of organisational policies and procedures concerning acceptance hinder its efficacy as a security management approach.”

### **Conclusion—Could Anything Else have been Done?**

Even though the initial teaching session was devoted to laying the foundational basis for the follow-up practical workshop, the participants seem to maintain a cautious intellectual distance from the topic; refraining from engaging in the practice-based learnings. The lack of engagement likely stems from long held apprehensions about the activities of various intelligence agencies that have been highlighted by world’s media in recent decades. Various intelligence agencies have used, or attempted to use, the cover of NGOs (Walsh, 2006). They have also used NGOs as sources for information (Laipson, 2008). Subsequently, NGOs have lost their trust in intelligence agencies, or their methods (Cole, 2015). Additionally, as DeMars (2000: 196-197) described, “NGOs as serving universal human interests.” The emphasis on *principles* challenges notions of secrecy and covert methods, even those surrounding the basic intelligence gathering techniques. Adopting the methods of an intelligence officer are likely to have been perceived by these participants as being *unprincipled*.

## **Action Plan—What Does this Mean for Future Workshops?**

The convenors considered their findings and decided that in the future, efforts to promote the development of a security intelligence capability to NGOs needs to be based on trust. Educators could not simply rely on the participants to recognise the intrinsic benefits in the proposition. As such, the challenge is to divorce the analytic techniques from the intelligence sector (e.g. espionage). And, in doing so, consideration needs to be given to how intelligence terminology can be modified so that social welfare workers are more likely to feel comfortable in the learning process.

Future workshops should be based on a greater awareness of the differences in operating principles, and consequentially, the professional outlook held by the intelligence sector and that espoused by NGO workers. This may need to be done by convenors building relationships with NGOs before the workshops are conducted.

During the workshop, it became apparent that there was also division between the participants regarding the relationship NGOs should have with the host government. It ranged from an acceptance that NGOs deliver programs and services that governments mandate, to the need to negotiate with governments and then work distinctly separate from them, with minimal contact. The convenors observed that those that advocated a distinct separateness from government were more comfortable with developing intelligence capabilities.

The final observation the convenors noted regarded the learner group. That is, to obtain the best learning experience, NGOs that have a compatible philosophical outlook about operating independently, could benefit the most from taking part in a workshop. As a result of the reflective process, the convenors posited that NGOs that expressed a degree of scepticism/cynicism with government are more inclined to assume a greater individual responsibility toward developing their own security intelligence capabilities.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

It is safe to say that there is a need for security advice for any organisation that plans to deploy to an area that is experiencing civil turmoil. NGOs fall into this category. At present, they rely on the services of police and intelligence agencies to provide this advice. Having such a close tie to government agencies can place them in a position that outsiders view as being closely aligned, even though this is

unlikely to be the case (Schneiker, 2013). The implications for this type of relationship are many, but sufficient to say, that chief among them is the loss of independence NGOs are respected for—aid for the good of the communities they serve.

Miller (1994), in his paper *Educational Programs for Intelligence Professions*, described the reluctance of the business community to adopt intelligence skills as mostly a misunderstanding of the nature of intelligence gathering and analysis. It also provided an explanation on why NGOs are reluctant. Miller writes that for many *intelligence* is confused with *espionage* where intelligence means gathering information in an illegal or unethical manner (Miller, 1994: 254). The challenge for those teaching intelligence skills to non-intelligence personnel is to demystify the covert myth.

The goal of the workshop was to spotlight this issue and point to an alternative approach for conducting the security intelligence assessments themselves. This could be done using the format of a tactical assessment, and using, not classified information, but data that is in the public domain—open-source information. Open-source information does not carry the same restrictions as working with classified data. An NGO in-house assessment would never reveal to an “outsider” a covert source or project the impression of complicity with government agencies, or equally, insurgents/criminals. Moreover, because NGOs have limited resources, the use of a tactical assessment in conjunction with open-source information makes for a cost-effective option. If conducted well, a tactical assessment will be on par with a government produced report. If, as McLeod (2009) has advocated, it was done in collaboration with a university study centre or the like (as opposed to a private security company), it should be indistinguishable in quality to an intelligence agency’s briefing.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Dr Troy Whitford**, BA, MA, PhD, lectures in history and politics at Charles Sturt University and is a doctoral supervisor at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Sydney. His research interests include political intelligence gathering and the place of private investigation firms within the broader intelligence community. Dr Whitford has written on elements of the extreme-right in Australia and the nature of political intelligence in the Twenty-First Century. He is a government licenced private investigator and a director of Civintel Pty Ltd, an intelligence-led private investigations company.

**Dr Henry (Hank) Prunckun**, BSc, MSocSc, MPhil, PhD, is Associate Professor of Applied Research at the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security, Charles Sturt University, Sydney. He is a research methodologist who specialises in the study of transnational crime—espionage, terrorism, drugs and arms trafficking, as well as cyber-crime. He is the winner of two literature awards and a professional service award from the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts. He has served in several strategic research and tactical intelligence capacities within the criminal justice system during his previous twenty-eight-year operational career and holds a private investigator’s licence.

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# The Future of Killing: Ethical and Legal Implications of Fully Autonomous Weapon Systems

Martin Lark<sup>§</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Warfare is moving towards full weapon autonomy. Already, there are weapons in service that replace a human at the point of engagement. The remote pilot must adhere to the law and consider the moral and ethical implications of using lethal force. Future fully autonomous weapons will be able to search for, identify and engage targets without human intervention, raising the question of who is responsible for the moral and ethical considerations of using such weapons. In the chaos of war, people are fallible, but they can apply judgement and discretion and identify subtle signals. For example, humans can identify when an enemy wants to surrender, are burying their dead, or are assisting non-combatants. An autonomous weapon may not be so discerning and may not be capable of being programmed to apply discretion, compassion, or mercy, nor can it adapt commanders' intent or apply initiative. Before fully autonomous weapons use lethal force, it is argued that there needs to be assurances that the ethical implications are understood and that control mechanisms are in place to ensure that oversight of the system is able to prevent incidents that could amount to breaches of the laws of armed conflict.

**Keywords:** Autonomous weapons systems, unmanned combat aerial vehicle, UCAV, ethics, lethal force, accountability

## INTRODUCTION

This paper considers the legal and ethical accountability for the actions of fully autonomous weapon systems and will discuss the challenges that leaders need to consider in deploying such systems. Warfare, whether on a global or more localised scale, is inevitable and the need for those engaging in war to have superiority over their adversaries is fundamental. For centuries, this concept has equated to the need to deploy superior numbers of troops, ships, and more recently, aircraft to overwhelm the opponent. This rudimentary power balance allowed dominance in the battle space, ultimately leading to defeat of the enemy. Combatants may die in huge numbers, but the rules of war in recent times,

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<sup>§</sup> Corresponding author: [mglark01@gmail.com](mailto:mglark01@gmail.com)

generally taken to be the Geneva Conventions of 1949 (subsequently updated by the additional protocols of 1977), are in place to provide a legal framework to protect "non-combatants." For example, the following groups are wherever possible to be spared and treated with dignity: civilians; non military infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools, and significant architecture; and even enemy combatants, for instance, those who are deemed *hors de combat*<sup>1</sup> or are identified as child soldiers; (International Committee of the Red Cross ICRC, 1977). Historically, a human (usually the commander in the field) has made the decision to target, or not target, a particular person, place or thing, however, in more recent conflicts, this decision process has moved away from the point of engagement, for example, when semi-autonomous weapon systems are utilised (Boothby, 2012).

The removal of humans from the battlefield by the deployment of robots is a military objective that is gaining momentum. Historically, man has attempted to wage war from an ever-increasing distance; for example, the slingshot, longbow, rifle, artillery piece, and now the remotely piloted aircraft, are continually evolving technological means of delivering lethal force against an adversary, while reducing the physical and mental risk to one's own combatants.

Ethical concerns on the use of remote weapons are not new; indeed in his history of war, weapons and aggression, O'Connell (1989: 48) identified that in Homer's *Iliad* (considered to have been written between 760BC and 710 BC) there is comment that the use of a bow to fight at distance was not in keeping with the spirit of heroic and confrontational warfare. Despite Homer's misgivings, attempts to preserve one's own force while exposing the adversary to increased risk is fundamental to strategic planning, and the historical desire to fight at ever increasing distance to gain tactical advantage raises the notion that the absence, or remoteness of a weapon operative per se does not amount to either a legally, or ethically important change to what has gone before (Boothby, 2012).

### CURRENT BATTLESPACE

There are already semi-autonomous weapons systems in service that replace the need for human presence at the point of conflict (Krishnan, 2009). While systems that move on land or sea are under rudimentary construction, it is in the air that technology is most advanced and semi-autonomous unmanned combat air vehicles (UCAV) are currently being used in conflict zones such as Afghanistan and Iraq (Kellenberger, 2011; Sharkey, 2008). By way of example, heavily armed systems,

such as the *Predator* and *Reaper*, each capable of carrying up to fourteen Hellfire missiles can autonomously navigate within a programmed area and can search for and identify targets. However, it is ultimately a remote human "pilot" sitting thousands of miles away, who assesses the validity of the target and whose decision it is to use deadly force. In practical terms, although theUCAV is physically pilotless; the end result, being the release of weapons systems against a target, is undertaken within the same legal bounds as would be employed in a conventional piloted aircraft. The remote pilot must give regard to the law and consideration of the ethical implications of the decision to use lethal force (Altman, 2013).

### BUILDING DISCRIMINATION INTO AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

The future of warfare is not likely to follow such conventional, human-controlled decision making processes (Boothby, 2012). Technology is advancing at such a rate that the future battle space is likely to be centrally managed from great distances, and the decision to search for, locate, and use lethal force against enemy targets could be conducted entirely autonomously by robots (Arkin, 2010). For the purpose of this paper, the term *autonomy* is defined as the absence of human control in the weapon's algorithm-based target acquisition, identification and engagement process (Boothby, 2012) and discounts the necessary involvement of humans in the logistical effect, as in the case of, say, the launch, re-fuelling, or recovery of the weapon system.

It is clear that even in such a case where there is an absence of human decision-making, the requirement to show appropriate target discrimination (e.g. between hostile and non-hostile actors), proportionality, and precaution in attack remains necessary (Boothby, 2012; ICRC, 1977). It is not concealable that a robot weapon system is created to perform autonomously, would not relieve a command structure involved in ordering the operation of their responsibilities under international treaties and law to ensure that "everything feasible" was done to identify legitimate military targets and to reduce the impact on the civilian population. This is likely to apply to those involved in programming the weapon. (Boothby, 2012; ICRC, 1977, Art.57-2(a)(1))

In a command and control environment, the commander's intent is provided to subordinates, who develop strategies, plans, and tactical actions to achieve an effect that aligns with the commander's requirements (Adlam & Villiers, 2003; Commonwealth of Australia, 2009; Smith & Flanagan, 2000). At all times in this

process, the commander retains ultimate responsibility for the actions taken to achieve the effect relying on the expertise and moral and ethical judgment of the subordinate to understand and act within the law, and to apply compassion and appropriate discretion dependent on the circumstance of the event they are dealing with, irrespective of a commander's orders to the contrary (Adlam & Villiers, 2003).

In a combat situation, a soldier is expected to apply discretion in a humane way, for example, when an enemy combatant surrenders, their life is spared and they are afforded protection (ICRC, 1977). In the battlefield of the future, when fully autonomous weapons are deployed, will they be capable of making the distinction between enemies actively participating in combat and one who is injured, or *Hors de Combat* who should be spared? This dilemma is one which the commanders of the future must understand, for it is they who may be called to account for an autonomous weapon systems action (Arkin, 2010; Boothby, 2010; Sharkey, 2010). If such distinction is not possible or routinely accurate, then should they be deployed at all?

#### ELIMINATION OF HUMAN ERROR

Humans are fallible. In the so-called "fog of war," it can be difficult for a soldier to decide whether a target is legitimate or not. There is also a myriad of accounts of soldiers acting inappropriately; for instance, by exacting revenge on surrendered enemy combatants, civilians, or property they have captured. This can include crimes such as summary execution, rape, or wanton destruction of goods and chattels.

There is an expectation that the overall military commander, and even a nation's leader, can be held accountable for the actions of a soldier under their command in the field (Howard, Quigley, & Robinson, 2011; Von Knieriem, 1959). In this context, there is a strong case for the development of autonomous weapons that eliminate human frailty, both in a mental, emotional and physical sense. If systems could be developed that would at least match, or exceed, a soldier's observance of extant laws of war then, it could be argued, a reduction in war crimes incidents would follow. It is anticipated that there would be an additional benefit to deployment of autonomous weapons, such as a reduction in own force casualties and a reduced logistic burden (Arkin, 2010).

There are a number of areas where autonomous weapon systems are expected to out-perform humans (Arkin, 2010). These include:

1. An ability to act fearlessly: Autonomous unmanned combat air vehicles will not need to consider self-preservation when tracking targets. They will be able to view a target much closer than a human would and will be programmed to “self-sacrifice” before they release the weapon if required, thereby eliminating a "shoot first, ask questions later" mindset.
2. Lack of emotion: An autonomous weapon’s decision-making will not be clouded by fear, hysteria, or emotion that currently exists in battle. These reactions are symptomatic of behaviours that tend to increase the incidence of criminal actions (Walzer, 2006).
3. Battlefield observation and information assessment processes would be developed to operate more quickly than human response capability. Through employment of enhanced optical sensors, ground and wall penetrating radar, acoustics and data analysis, the autonomous weapon will be closer to the enemy and better equipped to make an informed decision on the use of lethal force, than is currently possible for humans to emulate (Arkin, 2010).
4. Avoidance of the psychological condition of "scenario fulfilment" where in stressful situations, humans will distort or ignore new information that challenges their pre-existing belief patterns (Sagan, 1991, as cited in Arkin, 2010, p. 333). This condition was found to be a causal factor in the destruction of an Iranian commercial aircraft by US forces in 1988 when it was mistaken to be an attacking military jet fighter (Arkin, 2010). Autonomous weapons would not be susceptible to such cognitive bias.

Adams (2002, as cited in Arkin, 2010) argued that autonomous military systems, including weapons currently on the verge of production, will eventually be too numerous, too swift, and will generate an arena too complex for humans to direct, which raises serious concerns about the ability of humans to remain in control in a future conflict zone. Conversely, the commander must acknowledge the positive impact that such technological advances may have on his own force, or the way in which a nation’s leaders could use the deployment of autonomous weapons to engender positive effects amongst its citizens. An illustration of this is the media interest over the death of an Australian soldier in a conflict zone. Removal of soldiers from direct conflict would exponentially reduce the risk of own force casualties.

There are important health and logistics benefits as well. To keep an army in the field requires a significant logistic effort. To maintain a human combatant

in top condition they need to be fed, clothed, and equipped, they also need shelter and regular rest. The commander in the field must take account of all aspects of their subordinates' existence and they must also provide strategic guidance on tasks and objectives. As an army closes with the enemy, the risks increase. Soldiers may be killed or injured by enemy action, or by environmental factors, such as terrain or weather. They may suffer immediate psychological issues that will cloud their decision-making and objectivity, or these symptoms may manifest sometime later, resulting in the permanent loss of that individual to the commander for future conflicts.

In addition, the financial burden to the respective state in maintaining a physical presence in a war zone is substantial. It is estimated that the financial cost of the current relatively small Australian Defence Force deployment to Iraq, (circa 600 troops, eight strike aircraft and logistic support), costs approximately A\$400 million per annum (Toohey, 2014). The future battle space, employing autonomous weapon systems in place of troops, will counteract some of these significant issues. However, the transition to fully autonomous weapons has its problems, which can cause some serious ethical concerns.

### ETHICAL CHALLENGES

The remote pilots of today's unmanned combat air vehicles are in no danger of being killed. They sit in relative comfort, thousands of miles from the battle space, and generally, work standard shifts (Sharkey, 2010). Nonetheless, it is this very distance that can create an ethical dilemma for command. It is clear that fear of death diminishes the further a combatant is from the enemy; indeed, many conflicts have been lost by men running in panic from an opposing force (Holmes, 2003).

Studies conducted on UCAV pilots in the US have identified a phenomenon termed *moral disengagement* in which remote pilots disengage emotionally from their actions in using lethal force (Royackers & Van Est, 2010; Singer, 2009). The issue appears to be that the weapons control system is configured to resemble a computer gaming console, which has the effect of engendering a so-called "Play Station" mentality (Royackers & Van Est, 2010). Interviews with US UCAV pilots have showed that, in one instance, a remote pilot described his view of fighting from his "cubicle" by commenting, "...it's like a video game. It can get a little bloodthirsty, but it's fucking cool" (Singer, 2009: 308–309). Or another who mused:

The truth is, it wasn't all I thought it was cracked up to be. I mean, I thought killing somebody would be this life changing experience. And then I did it, and I was like 'All right, whatever.' (...) Killing people is like squashing an ant. I mean, you kill somebody and it's like 'all right, let's go get some pizza' (Singer, 2009: 391–392).

This almost impassive response raises the argument that UCAV pilots may be so detached from the battle area that they cease to act in an ethical manner. This may cause them to deploy lethal force more readily than they would do if physically present on the battlefield. So, will the future transition to fully autonomous weapon systems remove these issues? Or, will the ethical focus merely shift from the *presence* of a remotely situated human pilot to the *lack* of a human in the decision-making process to use lethal force?

During an attack, the application of discrimination and proportionality in attack, to satisfy the laws of war, can be difficult. People make mistakes and can act immorally, especially when under severe stress (Sharkey, 2010; Sparrow, 2007). It is conceivable that autonomous weapons could also act immorally, but unlike humans, they cannot be held responsible (Sharkey, 2010). A robot does not "think," therefore it cannot be disciplined. So, the dilemma lies in identifying where in the process responsibility for violations of law reside. Sparrow (2007) argued that if it is not possible to identify someone who can be held accountable—be that the operator, the commander in the field, the strategic commander in control of the operation, the manufacturer, the weapon-programmer, or indeed the Minister of Defence—then the fully autonomous weapon should not be deployed at all.

The case for caution is further made when we examine the confusion that exists in a war zone. In cases where non-uniformed combatants are engaged—as in a counterinsurgency conflict—the ability to identify who to kill is predicated on situational awareness, having a perception of current intention and probable actions of those observed in the combat zone.

There are also instances when the use of lethal force against enemy combatants is not lawful, as in the case of when combatants are burying their deceased, or when they have made clear their intent to surrender (ICRC, 1977). Humans can pick up on such "signals" even when they are subtle, while an autonomous weapon may not be so discerning. Davis (2007) argued that an autonomous weapon system may not be capable of being programmed to apply

discretion, compassion, or mercy, nor can it adapt commanders' intent or apply initiative.

Kellenberger (2011: 5–6), the former president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), expressed numerous concerns relating to the potential deployment of autonomous weapons, for example, by warning:

A truly autonomous system would have artificial intelligence that would have to be capable of implementing IHL (international humanitarian law) ... Their development represents a monumental programming challenge that may well prove impossible. It would also raise a range of fundamental legal, ethical, and societal issues, which need to be considered before such systems are developed or deployed.

Kellenberger's (2011) warnings may be pertinent; however, there is no indication of a reversal in the rate of technological research and development in the move to the deployment of a fully automated weapon system (Asaro, 2012; Boothby, 2012). Asaro (2012) added a further ethical issue to the deployment of such weapons, by commenting that the removal of humans from the battlefield may reduce the threshold for states to initiate conflicts, especially when there is an asymmetric imbalance in forces or technology. He included that autonomous weapons able to employ lethal force without human oversight may ultimately do so, without specific authority from executive or political leaders, culminating in the unintentional start or intensification of conflicts.

On the one hand, the future where autonomous weapon systems, whether they are acting alone or as part of a networked system, elect to initiate conflicts with belligerents without human sanction is not accepted as inevitable. On the other hand, a number of military observers see beneficial effects of deploying these systems, especially from an ethical viewpoint (Boothby, 2012; Royaker & Van Est, 2010; Sharkey, 2010). It is argued that the use of such autonomous systems, especially in a conventional war scenario — broadly defined as a *state-against-state* conflict, using uniformed forces and weapons in open confrontation (Gorka & Kilcullen, 2011) — could be programmed to seek, identify and engage opponents, with knowledge of enemy strength, disposition and intended tactical movement, with little risk of breaching the laws of war.

Moreover, through the aggressive presence of such systems, the enemy could be denied ground without the need to commit one's own forces. The impact of such an event on civilians caught in the contested zone, may directly reduce

non-combatant loss of life and result in less non-military property destruction, due to the absence of dynamic actions. Autonomous systems may also reduce the incidence of criminal activity against non-combatants or civilian property and infrastructure (Boothby, 2012). It could be envisaged that autonomous surveillance systems may be programmed to observe the actions of both friendly and opposing forces, enabling commanders to ensure that kinetic actions are conducted within the laws of war. If breaches are identified, the swift reporting process, including the evidence of high resolution imagery, would provide a solid base for the strategic commander to take dynamic action to cease (own forces), eliminate (enemy forces) or prevent further occurrence (Boothby, 2012). This surveillance and reporting function would provide effective real-time ethical oversight to the battlefield in a way that has not been previously possible.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the warnings and misgivings raised by some, the continued development of fully autonomous weapons systems seems inevitable (Boothby, 2012; Royaker & Van Est, 2010; Sharkey, 2010; Singer, 2009). So, the challenge for politicians and the defence leadership is to understand the strengths and limitations of these systems, and to prioritise the response to future developments.

This could be done by considering the legal and ethical implications of deploying these weapon systems and by examining the need for amendments to the conventions and protocols as they relate to the protection non-combatants. This course of action should not be viewed as without precedent, as the so-called Ottawa Treaty (Casey-Maslen, 1997) set in place international laws to prohibit the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and set a timetable and procedures for their destruction. The analogy between anti-personnel landmines and autonomous weapon systems of the future should not be underestimated, as once placed on the ground mines become indiscriminate in their destruction and require no human interaction to engage with lethal force. It is reasonable to ask whether anti-personnel mines would have been developed and deployed had the ethical issues their use caused been better understood at that time?

The transition to full autonomy has provided insight into the ethical issues that the use of fully automated weapons will generate. This not only relates to the destruction of targets where deployment of lethal force is of dubious legality, but also in relation to the incidence of moral disengagement seen in some UCAV

pilots. Encapsulated within the ethical implications of using fully autonomous weapons is a psychological duty of care for commanders to consider in the currentUCAV pilot cohort. Further debate needs to be held at an international governmental level to determine protocols that will guide the development, deployment and use of fully autonomous weapons. This needs to establish just who in the process is likely to be accountable for breaches of law that may occur in the conduct of an autonomous weapon strike.

There are good reasons why the development and deployment of fully autonomous weapons should continue, however, these benefits could be lost by the actions of a system that although superior to humans in speed of reaction, technology and physical endurance, lack the human instincts of compassion, proportionality and situational awareness, and as a result are unlikely to be able to differentiate between an opponent who is willing and able to fight and one who is surrendering or injured. Understanding the chain of accountability for the unlawful actions of robots must be an integral component of the weapons introduction to the battle space.

#### NOTE

1. French: "...outside of combat. A civilian or a soldier who has relinquished or been extricated from combat status. A person is hors de combat if: he is in the power of an adverse Party; he clearly expresses an intention to surrender; or he has been rendered unconscious or is otherwise incapacitated by wounds or sickness, and therefore is incapable of defending himself" (ICRC, 1977, Protocol 41).

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Martin Lark**, MPolLeadMangt, is a Major in the Australian Defence Force. He is Provost Marshal at the Headquarters Joint Operations Command, where he acts as principal Service Police advisor to the Commander of Joint Operations.

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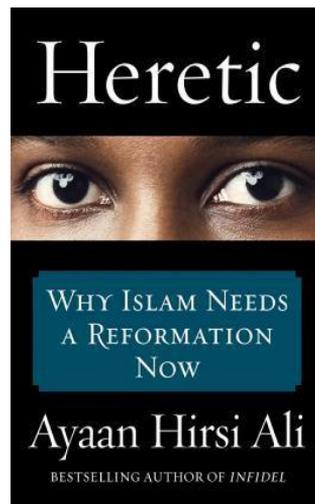
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***Heretic:  
Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now***

by Ayaan Hirsi Ali  
Harper: New York  
2015, softcover, 288 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0062333933

Reviewed by Susan Robinson



**H**ow can Islamic terrorism be addressed if the West does not understand the fundamental basis of the problem; how can they understand the cause of the problem if it refuses to name it and discuss it? These are the questions posed by Ayaan Hirsi Ali in her book *Heretic: Why Islam Needs a Reformation Now*. In addition to being informative and topical, her book is challenging and confronting because it moves away from the politically correct discourse of many other publications of this type to speak directly about the issues underpinning the ideology of Islam and the political, cultural and religious norms it dictates. This is a refreshing dialogue because as she bravely analyses her own religion, and analyses its impact on the world, the author goes where many others refuse.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali was born in Somalia to a Muslim family and at a young age moved to Mecca, Saudi Arabia with her devout Muslim parents. In the book, she compares the moderate Muslims of Somalia (as they were at the time she lived there) with the strict interpretation of Islam she experienced in Mecca. Through her lived-experience with Islam, she identifies three types of Muslims. The “Mecca Muslims” are, according to her, the more moderate Muslims whereas the “Medina Muslims” are more extreme in their interpretation of the Qur’an. She explains that these are not geographical classifications, but rather refer to ideological differences based on Mohammed’s teachings (the Qur’an) and example (the Hadith).

Hirsi Ali explains that while Mohammed was in Mecca his teachings were gentler and more peaceful but when the people of Mecca refused to accept his new religion Mohammed left Mecca went to Medina where his teachings became more violent. In his Medina writings, he targeted the Jews and Christians, who were referred to as the “people of the book” and “the people who have gone astray,” respectively. The third group Hirsi Ali calls the “Modifying Muslims.” This group, she argues, are dissidents who dare to be critical of Islam and who lead the call for reform.

The author posits that it is difficult for Muslims to be critical of the Qur’an because many do not know what it actually says. Traditionally the Qur’an is written in Arabic and must not be translated into any other language. Very few Muslims are Arabic and therefore rely on the Islamic Clerics to translate and interpret the text for them. It can also be confusing because according to the rules of Islamic doctrine, if there is a clash between verses the later and more violent Medina verses abrogate the more peaceful Mecca verses. According to Hirsi Ali, Muslims who engage in violent jihad against the unbelievers (the Kuffar) are following the Medina teachings and the Medina example of Mohammed.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali knows first-hand the teachings, practices, and punishments inherent within Islam and provides examples throughout the book in illustration. She also understands and articulates the rationale behind the religious imperative of jihad and debunks many of the myths promulgated by Western politicians, academics, and theologians. Perhaps the most poignant aspect of the author’s account is that of her experience as a Muslim woman; from wearing the “oppressive” Burqa and Hijab to arranged child marriages. She describes the way in which every aspect of a Muslim woman’s life is controlled from birth and throughout adulthood.

She articulately describes the fear women live with every day because they are constantly in danger of beatings and worse for the smallest infraction. In many Muslim countries women are unable to leave the house without a male escort and must be fully covered before doing so. She provides examples of the sexual jihad being played out around the world through institutionalised sexual slavery and rape by Islamic groups such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, Al Nusra and Boko Haram, and the honour killings of women and girls who are victims of these rapes. She expresses great disappointment at the lack of interest in protesting these practices

by Western feminist groups which instead advance misguided support for the self determination of the religion and its cultural practices despite its overt misogyny.

This book provides a compelling account of Islam from the inside, and offers a different perspective for understanding global Islamic terrorism other than the usual framework of social disadvantage and/or marginalisation. Ayaan Hirsi Ali places the responsibility for violent jihad at the feet of Islamic Clerics and the teachings of Islam itself. The central message the author conveys is that the only way to successfully deal with Islamic terrorism is a reformation of Islam. She argues that at the very least frank and open conversations about the source of this problem need to be had, and states that to accuse those who seek to do this as Islamophobes, bigots and racists is unhelpful to the overarching aim of stopping Islamic terrorism. This is a respectful, moving, confronting and challenging book that is highly recommended to anyone wishing to better understand Islam and the ever-increasing threat of Islamic terrorism.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

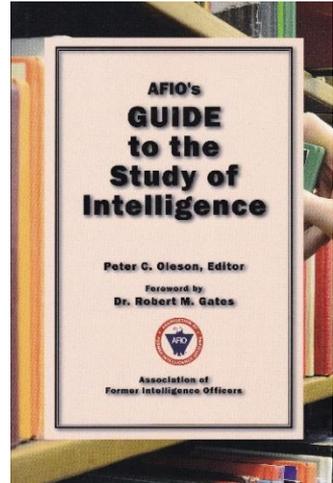
**Dr Susan Robinson** is a criminologist and lecturer with the Australian Graduate School of Policing and Security.

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## *AFIO's Guide to the Study of Intelligence*

Edited by Peter C Oleson  
Association of Former Intelligence Officers: Falls  
Church, VA  
2016, softcover, 740 pages  
ISBN-13: 978-0-9975273-0-8

Reviewed by Henry Prunckun



**I**t is my contention that in the last decade no other profession has experienced the same amount of change as that of intelligence. My view is that the September 11, 2001 attacks were the catalyst that thrust more complexity into the already intricate missions that intelligence agencies carry-out. At that time, intelligence agencies were, by-and-large, either military units or those dealing with national security. But, in the world that emerged since that infamous day, it's difficult to separate these two categories of secret operations and research from other forms of intelligence. Although these other categories that I speak of existed, they were for the most part muted and operated in the background. Specifically, what I'm referring to is: law enforcement intelligence; business intelligence; and private intelligence.

Today, these three intelligence categories have risen in status to form what is now an integral relationship with the military and national security intelligence. This is because many of the issues are now being addressed by all—corporate and government espionage, as well as breaches involving classified information; terrorism; people, drugs and arms trafficking; weapons proliferation; organised crime; and cyber-war/crime, to cite a few examples.

In the years since 9/11, intelligence agencies' roles and responsibilities expanded, and hence their staff needed to increase. This has been coupled with the requirement to share intelligence with agencies that, hitherto, stood in the background. Now law enforcement agencies and business enterprises via contract civilian staff, as well as some private individuals through sub-contacting of certain aspects of intelligence work, need to share information to fulfil they missions.

Not surprising, great demand has been placed on agencies of all ilk to hire analysts who have the skills and ability to work in a secure environment, and who can apply their academic knowledge to secret research. To this end, colleges and universities are now offering degrees in intelligence studies. To aid these courses, scholars have published scores of books for the new curricula.

*AFIO's Guide to the Study of Intelligence* is an example of one of the better texts that has been published. It contains eighty-two papers written by intelligence practitioners and scholars. Under the editorship of one of the intelligence community's most respected academics—Peter C. Oleson—this volume contains a wealth of material that instructors are sure to find a boon for teaching intelligence. Moreover, the *Guide* has application to some of intelligence's allied and adjacent areas of scholarship—political science, history, foreign policy, international relations, and security studies.

The *Guide* is arranged in seven parts: Part I—Introduction to the topic; Part II—History of Intelligence; Part III—Intelligence Disciplines, Applications, and Missions; Part IV—Espionage, Counterintelligence and Covert Action; Part V—Policy, Oversight, and Issues; Part VI—Intelligence Abroad; and Part VII—Miscellany. Each chapter is annotated with author footnotes, references to the subject literature; some chapters have explanatory tables and figures; most chapters have a list of “Readings for Instructors.” Some of the recommended readings are extensively annotated, making the material a pleasure to use in the classroom, even for instructors who have limited knowledge of intelligence.

*AFIO's Guide to the Study of Intelligence* will be a welcome addition to the personal collections of serving intelligence practitioners. It will, of course, be a beneficial text for professors, and their students who are considering careers in intelligence. But, it is likely to have even wider appeal—attracting the attention of former intelligence officers who still maintain an interest in a professional that, I would argue, is matchless in its intellectual demands, academic standards, and personal rewards.

#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

**Dr Henry Prunckun** is a research methodologist who specialises in the study of transnational crime.

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# Call for Papers

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