Intelligence Studies, academia and professionalisation

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Abstract: Intelligence Studies has grown tremendously as an academic discipline in recent years, as evidenced by the growth of the IS section at the ISA annual convention to 29 panel slots in 2016. The depth and breadth of the ISA programme provides a good view into the core topics and priorities currently being researched across the international IS community, and also identifies some "Cinderellas", saw as Law Enforcement, and Competitive Intelligence issues. There is also a good mix of academics and practitioners, in some ways reflecting the broadening and deepening of security actors in the post-Cold War world. But this depth and breadth poses interesting challenges for the discipline: should it be an interdisciplinary field of study, or a more defined and prescribed discipline? Perhaps more importantly, is Intelligence Studies an adjunct to the intelligence sector, or a critical commentator on it? If the former, is the discipline as much about the training of potential practitioners than a critical analysis of the phenomenon? This paper discusses these challenges and opportunities and sketches out the current picture.

At the time of writing, academic output on Intelligence Studies appears a vibrant and growing field. Some such as Marrin (2014) have robustly made the case that this area of enquiry should be recognised as a fully-fledged academic discipline, displaying as it does dedicated university programmes and departments, and academic journals dedicated to the subject. Others have made the connection between the significant role of intelligence and security in contemporary society and politics, and the importance of studying this academically (Glees, 2015). Developments such as Edward Snowden's revelations about the interception capabilities of NSA and GCHQ and the furore they have generated across the world seem only to underline the message.

Marrin's opening statement in his 2014 paper is that "Intelligence studies is an academic complement to the practice of national security intelligence." At first glance, there is little in this statement with which to argue, nor anything not readily recognised about the essence of the subject. At the same time, the statement contains within it the paradox that complicates much of the argument about Intelligence Studies and its place as a properly recognised academic discipline.

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The field of Intelligence Studies

Before developing this point, it is useful to map out the territory that Intelligence Studies supposedly occupies. At the time of writing, both Stephen Marrin and the author are closely involved with the chairmanship of the Intelligence Studies Section of the annual International Studies Association (ISA) convention. The ISA annual convention is itself a very large gathering of political scientists from across the world, and the Intelligence Studies Section has been a growing member of the overall pantheon. If submissions for paper and panel presentations are any sort of measure of progress, the Intelligence Studies Section has been something of a success story in recent years. From small roots in the mid 1980s, the section has grown to be allocated a record number of panel slots (29) in the 2016 meeting: an increase of approximately a third on the previous year. Submissions to present at the conference remain well above the available slots, making the composition of the programme a challenging task. Attendance at panel presentations in recent conventions has been steadily strong, and has comprised a varied and fascinating mix of practitioners and academics from a variety of fields, and in a variety of stages in their career from early PhD students to retired professionals.

A strong case can be made for the Intelligence Studies component of the ISA convention representing the only comprehensive annual gathering of key Intelligence Studies academics across the full spread of international representatives. This means that the composition of the programme provides a fairly reliable shop-window view into the various strands of research activity within the field. These activities are broad and deep. The key categories in recent years have included a perennial strand of intelligence history, fuelled in part by progressive releases of documentation from various government archives. Other key categories include debates about the nature of Intelligence Studies itself, within which the current discussion sits; developments in the delivery of Intelligence Analysis skills and capabilities; and a strong interest in the manner in which intelligence does (or does not) work within the machinery of government bureaucracies across the world. There has also been a growing interest in surveillance ethics and challenges, not least following the advent of the Snowden revelations; and a strand of activity by scholars and practitioners beyond the traditional Anglosphere set of countries that can tend to dominate the field. (Romania, France, Japan, Spain and Latin American countries, to name but a few, are good examples of the widening set of contributors.) These inputs can either be seen collectively within the “non-Anglosphere” context, or, increasingly, contribute to existing thematic strands of debate on their own merit.

It is also worth noting that there are a couple of Cinderellas in the field who tend not to get invited to speak very often at the national security-oriented ISA convention gatherings in Intelligence Studies, but who are nevertheless growing in importance in the wider study of intelligence. These comprise

Law Enforcement intelligence issues (on which more below); and Competitive Intelligence, which is not about governments at all but about commercial and non-governmental organisations. There is a case for arguing that both should be brought more into the heart of the field.

Elsewhere in this journal, Gill and Phythian (2016) reflect on these areas of activity in contemporary Intelligence Studies and delineate the field around four main areas of activity, namely: the research/historical project; the definitional/methodological project; the organisational/functional project; and the governance/policy project. This framework condenses the eight "projects" identified by Wesley Wark in his seminal 1993 paper, "The Study of Espionage". Wark's work was written in what could be described as the very early stages of the contemporary study of intelligence, when the aftermath of the Cold War was only just beginning to be felt, and communications and information technology were starting to make a real impact. This was the case not only regarding the behaviour of targets and objects of interest, but also the process of archival research. It is interesting to note how Wark's delineation of the area of study has proved to be a robust and resilient one as we look at the discipline twenty years later.

Such ontological considerations are important to the building of a new discipline. Marrin (2014: 10) outlines five steps to evolution into a coherent academic discipline, which are largely about collating the knowledge so far amassed and conveying it appropriately to the right scholars. An important step arguably not spelt out is the formation of theoretical frameworks under which the scholarship in a particular area is conceptualised and communicated. Looking at similar debates about disciplinarity in other areas of academic endeavour can be enlightening. In their launch of what was claimed to be the new discipline of Memory Studies, for example, Roediger and Wertsch (2008: 18) noted that the field "will need to develop unique theoretical perspectives to bear on the critical issues". In this way, the experience of fields of study in other areas of the social sciences, which have tried to plant the flag of "new discipline" on the hill, can be highly informative when thinking about the evolution of Intelligence Studies.

Discplinarity and Interdisciplinarity

Regardless of such epistemological issues, however, the question is whether this set of academic activities add up to an academic "discipline" as such. To consider this question, it is worth pondering the nature of a disciplinarity, and indeed, interdisciplinarity.

Many will appreciate that much time and ink have been expended in addressing this question within academia over the years. In 2009, the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's National Centre for Research Methods at the University of Southampton delivered the results of a wide discussion on

the “disciplinarity vs. interdisciplinarity debate” (Krishnan, 2009). The core positions in the debate were usefully outlined. On the one side sat Foucault’s argument that closely-defined disciplines are essentially methods of restraining discourse. Sometimes the constraint is inadvertent, and sometimes perhaps for more sinister reasons of wanting to close down controversial discussions, as Gill and Phythian (2016) point out. Intelligence Studies is an essentially sociological field of enquiry, and people and politics change. To reduce the capability to step outside of traditional and codified boundaries of enquiry is to fail to move with the times, it could reasonably be argued. Indeed, the subject of Intelligence Studies itself gained significant momentum after the events of 9/11, which moved the subject beyond the simple and traditional question of how government machineries fail to spot strategic shocks before they come, and into the world of terrorism, counter-terrorism and the changing character of conflict after the end of the Cold War. These are matters of strategy and psychology, to name but two parallel areas of study. In many ways, the postmodernity argument is as compelling for Intelligence Studies as it is for any number of other disciplines.

On the other side of the debate, however, is Stanley Fish’s argument that, in practical terms, interdisciplinarity is impossible to deliver (Krishnan, 2009: 19). Academia, like any other grouping of people, is inescapably tribal. However lofty the principles, the protection of boundaries around territory inevitably creeps into the process. Internally, universities are no different from any other large organisation, in that they have to be divided into departments and faculties, to each of which budget is devolved and has to be managed. Inevitably, a degree of competition for a slice of sometimes shrinking budgets starts to develop, and faculties can soon become tribal fiefdoms. At inter-university level, despite the vast majority of universities being state-funded, the allocation of budget is again determined by performance and competition to a large degree. This situation is compounded by a machinery of league tables and processes such as the Research Excellence Framework in the UK, under which universities are scored for their research outputs (which, in turn, determines levels of funding). The winning of research grants is also a competitive process by definition. All of these institutional factors mean that, despite an intellectual push in recent years towards collaboration and interdisciplinarity and some valiant examples of these being achieved, there are a number of bureaucratic factors that can militate against them. Whether it is an impossible venture, as Fish argues, is doubtful, but the point is made.

So where does Intelligence Studies fit into this picture? At one level, Intelligence Studies is surely a sub-sub-level of International Relations, probably sitting underneath Security or Strategic Studies. Concentrating again on the national security context, intelligence could be said to be a living example of Realist politics in action. Intelligence is one of the activities that states undertake to protect and further their strategic interests as defined by a notion of National Security. How they do this in

practice; how successful they are at achieving it; and the issues that spin out of this process, whether ethical, legal or to do with policy options, could all be said to be the factors that coagulate to form the heart of Intelligence Studies as currently constituted. It is no accident that most of the university centres and departments which deliver Intelligence Studies in a focused form generally link intelligence with security in their title, since intelligence is one part of security policy and strategy within a state.

Within this picture there are clearly a great number of interdisciplinary interfaces. Intelligence as a tool for counter-terrorism, for example, entails a great deal of analysis and discussion of such issues as radicalisation and counter-radicalisation, which takes the subject into the realms of Psychology and Policy Studies. Terrorism itself is also a major area of enquiry, particularly since 9/11, and Terrorism Studies is a field which could itself be described as a sub-discipline if not a whole discipline in its own right, as evidenced by factors such as dedicated academic journals and university programmes.

Similarly, studies of intelligence analysis also stray into the world of psychology for a different reason: in this case to do with the psychology of the subject doing the analysis, rather than the object being analysed. Here, there are some notable scholars rooted in Intelligence Studies that bridge the gap, such as Richards J. Heuer Jr, but also others outside of the field, such as Daniel Kahneman and the scientific philosopher, Karl Popper.

We have already noted how intelligence history remains a very strong strand in the field, bolstered by periodic releases of historical archives. History, and indeed historiography, are likely to remain key touch-points for the field, with the thirty-year release period now approaching the end of the Cold War.

Intelligence has always gone hand-in-hand with war and conflict, and to this end is a part of Defence Studies. The intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) strand of defence strategy and policy is probably as important an area of debate as ever in history, especially in the context of shrinking defence budgets. Similarly, debates such as that around the growth of private military and security companies (PMSCs) and their role in the erosion of the Westphalian state, should arguably be central to the curriculum of contemporary Intelligence Studies. The significance of institutions such as the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) in the UK within and around Intelligence Studies, underlines the interdisciplinary impulse in this area.

But intelligence is also a tool of government during peacetime, to deliver security against domestic and non-military threats. This is where the Snowden revelations about the activities of NSA and GCHQ come into the picture. Whatever the rights and wrongs of Snowden's actions (an interesting debate

in itself), his revelations have usefully spawned an invigorated strand of dialogue around the rightful nature of the surveillance state in a liberal, democratic context; and a range of legal and ethical issues to do with human rights and privacy, and their evolution in a digital age. Indeed, the cyber-utopianism from whose intellectual traditions Snowden and others originated, such as the Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, asks central questions about the role of the state and the "territory" of cyberspace in the postmodern world we now inhabit. This is another point at which Intelligence Studies intersects with the wider considerations of International Relations.

Furthermore, this is also where law enforcement intelligence issues arguably should be developing a more prominent role in the field. The Western world is in the happy position of having enjoyed a number of decades of peace, so many of the key intelligence issues there at present are largely to do with non-military, transnational threats. At the same time, processes of globalisation mean that transnational, non-military threats such as organised crime, are becoming more important than ever in all parts of the world. In the realm of counter-terrorism, for example, the role of the police and their interface with national security intelligence actors are increasingly pivotal. Again, this is currently within the context of rapidly constrained public sector budgets and cutbacks, which mean that intelligence could become more important than ever in delivering efficient policing on the streets. Here again, there is a strong strand of literature on such issues as intelligence-led policing (Ratcliffe, 2008), which should form a staple part of contemporary Intelligence Studies.

Complement to, or critical analysis of?

As mentioned above, Marrin (2014) describes Intelligence Studies as an academic complement to the practice of intelligence. This obliquely alludes to an important problem with the field and its development into a fully-fledged academic discipline. Many Political Science and Humanities departments and faculties in universities across the world tend to be defined strongly around a critical stance towards the Security State. This can mean that, where Intelligence Studies is considered to be something primarily for and by intelligence practitioners, an inherent suspicion can develop around the subject area. There are numerous examples in both the US and the UK of Intelligence Studies centres finding it difficult to become established and recognised within mainstream university faculties. This might explain where there are relatively few of them on either side of the Atlantic. In other cases, where intelligence is a component of Politics, Strategic Studies or International Relations in terms of being a module option within a wider programme, the focus is frequently a critical analysis of the suspicious growth of the National Security State. In this context, Intelligence Studies is a critical look at the practice, rather than a complement to it.

Similarly, the description of the field as being a complement to its practice within government, raises the question as to whether Intelligence Studies is about training those within the field to be better at it, or indeed training aspiring new entrants to the field, rather than debating the issues about intelligence or acting as some sort of critical friend to government (Glees, 2015). There is perhaps a significant difference between training people to conduct a practice, and educating people about the issues involved in that practice.

This is where the question of intelligence as a "profession" comes into the picture. In earlier work, Marrin and Clemente (2006) conducted some important comparative work on intelligence and the medical profession, suggesting that the former could be more like the latter. They noted that intelligence analysts conduct a highly important role within government, yet professionalization of those analysts "has been spontaneous and its implementation haphazard". In fields such as medicine, law, accountancy and so on, professionalization is an important and necessary process involving documentation and recording of developments in peer-reviewed academic journals; accreditation by professional bodies; and certification of levels of achievement such that the practitioners are demonstrably qualified to do what they do at their various levels.

In one sense, intelligence analysts can have almost as much significance for lives in the real world as can medical practitioners, if, for example, their intelligence assessment leads to a drone firing a missile at a dwelling, or the arrest of a terror suspect. We would not accept medical practitioners doing what they do on the basis of flimsy training, so why should we accept the same for intelligence analysts?

These arguments are not without their merits, but the conceptualisation of the role of Intelligence Studies in this context takes it more down the road of being a training and accreditation process for practitioners, rather than a critical analysis of the practice itself. It also suggests that intelligence analysis is something of a scientific process, in which there are right and wrong answers, and right and wrong ways of doing things. Many would argue that intelligence is as much an art as a science (Richards, 2010). Repeated failures and strategic shocks despite enormous expenditure on the activity, further emphasise this impression. In a sense, much of the debate here connects with how we define intelligence itself. Much effort has been expended in pursuit of a definition, but arguably one of the more useful is that developed by Jennifer Sims (1995: 4), who defined intelligence as "information, collected, organized or analysed on behalf of actors or decision makers". Thus, if intelligence is a policy tool for decision or policy makers in government, the question posed is whether Intelligence Studies should be the academic discipline that helps intelligence practitioners to do their jobs more effectively?

This has defined the way in which some Intelligence Studies departments and programmes have structured themselves. Mercyhurst University's programme in the US, for example, is demonstrably about developing the skills and capabilities of those who wish to enter the intelligence function as a career. In this context, academic and intellectual consideration of some of the deeper issues is perhaps eclipsed by the need to focus on skills and capabilities, and to develop products and engagements with employers which might lead to placements in intelligence jobs. Clearly there is nothing wrong with this, not least as finding a decent job is an extremely important process with which a university absolutely should help its young students. But this activity is different from a critical debate and education about some of the deeper issues revolving around the practice of intelligence within the contemporary state.

In the UK, it is perhaps indicative that the major state intelligence agencies generally do not engage directly with Intelligence Studies programmes in universities (aside from more technical disciplines, such as cybersecurity analysis). Perhaps more importantly, they do not specify an academic qualification in Intelligence Studies as being any more advantageous for employment than a degree in Archaeology or Music. This is for the simple reason that what the agencies are looking for at entry level is a good analyst, and, in their conception, analysis is a very generic and interdisciplinary activity. Any student who can research and compose a good argument about a particular problem or question is likely to be good at collecting, analysing and interpreting a complex set of data, regardless of the subject. Certainly there are very specific routines and processes that intelligence analysts will have to learn in their jobs, but these are sensitive and arcane activities in many cases on which the agencies will train their analysts once they are inside the fence. What they want from the outside are basic analytical and intellectual raw materials with which they can work. This is perhaps an important area of difference between the intelligence sectors in the US and the UK, for example, and the way in which they interface with prospective employees.

Intelligence Analysis – practitioners and academics

At the heart of the business of intelligence could be said to be the process of analysis. As defined by Sims above, intelligence is information that has been analysed for its utility to decision-makers: As Warner (2002) noted in his own attempt to grapple a definition of intelligence, without that analysis, intelligence is just data, like the names in a telephone book. It is therefore worth reflecting on how analysis fits into the ontology of the field of study.

Returning to theoretical and epistemological frameworks that could define a new discipline, I have argued elsewhere that intelligence analysis needs to be seen along two axes: those of analysis, and organisation (Richards, 2010: 36), a framework which adapts Parker and Stern's (2002: 601) analysis

of the intelligence failure highlighted by the 9/11 attacks . (It is worth noting that Parker and Stern's analysis started from the theoretical notion of "strategic surprise" developed by much earlier writings in International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis, by the likes of Wohlstetter (1962) and Jervis (1976). Parker and Stern's own article was published in a journal of Political Psychology.)

The study of intelligence analysis is primarily about when intelligence is effective, and when it fails, both now and in history. In both cases, there are usually bureaucratic and institutional issues to do with how intelligence reporting is processed within government and how it is used to form policy; and analytical issues to do with how individual analysts and teams of analysts collect, interpret and assess the information on which they are basing their intelligence reporting. Any study of a major intelligence failure, from Pearl Harbor to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 – about many of which very comprehensive governmental inquiries have been conducted and published – will show the often problematic nexus between the individual analysis and the bureaucracy within which they were working at the time.

Similarly, all of the strands of research activity in Intelligence Studies identified above fall broadly into these categories, albeit in cross-cutting ways. This is also a useful framework for considering how Intelligence Studies is delivered in different university contexts. Those focusing on the analytical aspects, for example, tend to be more concerned with how the intelligence function is carried out in a practical way, by way of training aspiring new analysts in a vocational process. This is largely the model in Mercyhurst University for example.

Similarly, those concerned with how to train-up in the analysis function will generally be less concerned with the historical, political and organisational context within which the function sits. There may be some interest in some of the new ethical and legal dimensions: for example, those to do with the collection and analysis of Big Data, but the purely academic debates about history and politics will often not be a major concern for such programmes and students, other than as a passing, personal interest.

Those departments and programmes which are concerned with the more academic big-picture issues around the process of intelligence, on the other hand, are structured in different ways and deliver different programmes. In the UK, for example, the two universities that have dedicated Security and Intelligence programmes at Masters level (Brunel and Buckingham) are largely in this bracket, and offer just a sprinkling of analytical exercising around academic debate of the historical and political issues.

Looking at the Intelligence Analysis strand in the annual ISA convention, for example, shows that it is characterised by a blend of the academic and the practical, with arguably more emphasis on the latter.

Lahneman and Arcos's 2014 edited volume "The Art of Intelligence: Exercises, Simulations and Games" is very indicative of this strand within the field. It includes a number of chapters which are based around how to use various analytical exercises and games in the classroom to essentially deliver training in the function of intelligence analysis – at a very generic level – using experiential techniques. Key figures in this strand of activity include Randolph Pherson, who claims (along with Kathy Pherson) to have invented the term "Structured Analytic Techniques", and has published a book by the same name jointly with the historical giant in this field, Richards J. Heuer Jr. (Heuer and Pherson, 2010). Heuer claims to be the architect of the technique Analysis of Competing Hypotheses (ACH): in many ways, the archetypal heuristic approach for large and complex exercises in deductive analysis.

The significance of the book "Structured Analytic Techniques" and related volumes is not to be underestimated in the field of analysis: the book can be found on the desk of countless intelligence analysts across the world, and not just in the Five-Eyes English-speaking realm. But it is avowedly a training manual for analysts, and is presented as such (right down to numbered techniques and a spiral-bound presentation akin to a training manual), rather than being a deeply academic discussion of the big issues around intelligence analysis.

Many of the writers and publishers in this strand of activity, including most of the contributors to the 2014 Lahneman and Arcos volume, are former intelligence practitioners from the Anglo-Saxon world, the author of this paper included. This takes us back to the question posed at the very beginning of this discussion: what is the discipline of Intelligence Studies for? If Marrin (2014) is right that it is an academic discipline that complements the practice of intelligence, then the Intelligence Analysis strand of the field fits neatly into the framework. This strand of work is largely produced by practitioners, and is for practitioners, whether current or aspiring. There is a sprinkling of academic discussion over the top, but the output is largely oriented towards training professionals in how to be good analysts. Interestingly, this applies generically in many cases both to national security and to competitive intelligence analysts, with the latter often being even more practically focused.

Conclusions – more than a discipline

This takes us back to the intellectual foundations on which Intelligence Studies could or should be built. I would argue that, in the contemporary field, the academic foundations frequently identified can largely be characterised as the "CIA School" of former practitioners-turned-academics. The work of Sherman Kent is undoubtedly pivotal in historical terms; a work illuminated in large part in the contemporary era by Jack Davis (Marrin, 2014). Not only did Kent recognise the importance of structured training for intelligence analysts, but he gave his name posthumously to a large analytical

training foundation attached to the CIA, with associated paraphernalia of benefit to the wider community, such as the journal Studies in Intelligence.

We have already mentioned the importance of Richards J. Heuer Jr. to the strand of Intelligence Analysis, who also emerged from the CIA. Similarly, James Bruce and Roger George's 2008 edited volume "Analyzing Intelligence: Origins, Obstacles and Innovations", which should be on the core reading list of every Intelligence Studies programme, resolutely takes this tradition forward by building on the work and memory of Kent and others in the CIA and bringing the fruits of their analysis to bear on the wider community.

Clearly, the CIA is the behemoth of post-war intelligence activity, and has been at the centre of a number of highly significant events not just in intelligence history but in the wider political history of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. (And, it has to be said, not all of these stories have been happy ones.) Many intelligence functions in other parts of the world have built themselves around the philosophy and structure of the CIA. But at the same time, there are risks inherent in seeing this as the only mandated foundation for the study of intelligence in the contemporary era.

There are a number of problems inherent in this line of argumentation. First, to proscribe a set of mandatory readings for any discipline is always to run the Foulcouldian risk identified above of an academic discipline becoming a straightjacket for thinking. Second, the set of giants on whose shoulders the discipline has tended to stand hitherto could be said to represent an avowedly historical, American and CIA-oriented school of thinkers. As Intelligence Studies develops beyond the end of the Cold War, and geographically beyond North America and indeed beyond the Five Eyes community, it will be essential for the discipline not to be constrained by one particular historical perspective and one particular epistemological tradition. Important new work emerging from other countries such as Spain and Romania, to name but two, such as that on intelligence cultures (Arcos, 2014), can and should become highly significant elements of Intelligence Studies as we move forwards.

Third, there is a question-mark over whether Intelligence Studies really qualifies as a discipline in its own right, or whether it is an inherently interdisciplinary field of study, whatever the risks and difficulties of so being in practical terms. It could be argued that such interdisciplinarity offers great benefits and flexibility to the field, allowing it to place itself within wider debates of relevance to contemporary politics and policy. This, in turn, means that the giants on whose shoulders we should stand start to encompass a wider and more challenging set of scholars, from Robert Jervis in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis, to Paul Collier in Development Studies or Daniel Kahneman in Psychology (Jervis, 1976; Collier, 2007; Kahneman, 2012), to name but a few. While going wider in this way offers

risks of dilution and being the master of no trade, if done correctly it can offer tremendous flexibility, relevance and dynamism to the field of study.

There are undoubtedly important practical considerations in the art of becoming a recognised academic discipline, notably the fact that if a field of study is identified as such, it can establish professorships, faculties and programmes, and can attract lines of funding. In short, it can carve out territory and resource of its own, rather than always being subjected to the whims of Politics, Humanities or other departments into which it is sometimes uncomfortably placed. This paper has identified, however, that there are important factors at the centre of Intelligence Studies which could limit its evolution into a discipline.

Firstly, there is something of a tension between the vocational, "training"-oriented aspects of Intelligence Studies, and particularly the strand that focuses on Intelligence Analysis as a trade; and the more academic, scholarly aspects of the field, which places Intelligence Studies within a wider interdisciplinary context of Politics, International Relations and Psychology. It is an uncomfortable truth that many of those who want training in how to be good analysts are not terribly interested, by and large, in the academic debates around the subject. Academic Intelligence Studies conferences, conventions and debates will often operate in a parallel universe to the daily business of doing intelligence, with only limited connections between the two in the shape of practitioner-enthusiasts. Whether academics decide that Intelligence Studies is a discipline or not, will have very limited relevance or interest for the vast majority of people who actually work in intelligence.

It may be that this does not matter, and is the case with a majority of disciplines that have a professional corollary. What does matter, however, is whether Intelligence Studies is inextricably by and for intelligence practitioners, as Marrin (2014) suggests, or whether it is *about* the business of intelligence, and critically so. This may be a confusion that has yet to be resolved in the field, and which may complicate its ultimate evolution into a fully-fledged discipline.

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