Defence Studies

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdef20

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To cite this article: Saskia Pothoven, Sebastiaan Rietjens & Peter de Werd (2022): Producer-client paradigms for defense intelligence, Defence Studies, DOI: 10.1080/14702436.2022.2089658

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2089658

Published online: 22 Jun 2022.

DEFENCE STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/14702436.2022.2089658

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Producer-client paradigms for defense intelligence

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how specific characteristics of defense intelligence affect the relationship between intelligence producers and their clients in a manner that is different from prevailing conceptualizations commonly found in civilian intelligence organizations. To do so, the paper first addresses some important distinguishing characteristics of defense intelligence. These include the embedded character of defense intelligence agencies in military organizations, specific military cultural traits and the mixture of military and civilian personnel. Based on literature study and desk research, the paper then identifies three producer-client paradigms: I) *distance versus closeness*, II) *the ideal of analytic objectivity, and* III) *intelligence lays the foundation for decision-making*. Confronting these paradigms with the characteristics of defense intelligence, we find that defense intelligence producer-client relations are more multifaceted, layered and networked than commonly explained.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 3 September 2021
Accepted 10 June 2022

KEYWORDS
Defense intelligence; producer-client; politicization; intelligence cycle

1. Introduction

The relationship between intelligence producers and clients[1] has been studied for decades, which has resulted in a large body of literature. Most research on this topic is concerned with civilian intelligence agencies, and mainly focuses on intelligence and decision-making at the *strategic* level (Herman 1996, 241). Within the military domain, defense intelligence is a topic that lacks attention and has in fact been characterized as "the neglected handmaiden" (Davies 2016, 797). For the scope of this article, defense intelligence is considered to be intelligence produced by an intelligence agency embedded in a Ministry of Defense. The intelligence produced by defense intelligence agencies is often primarily concerned with military topics aimed at military clients. Due to strategic compression, such defense intelligence agencies often provide both strategic intelligence, as well as combat and mission support at the operational and tactical level. Such activities are included into the scope of this article as long as a defense intelligence agency is involved.

The lack of attention for defense intelligence is concerning, because foreign military power has always been and remains one of intelligence's biggest targets (Rietjens 2020, 718). Some authors have to some extent paid attention to the special character of defense

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intelligence (e.g. Pascovich 2014; Davies 2016; Thomson 2016; Gentry 2019; Wolfberg 2017), yet often the intelligence producer-client relation is treated as equal to civilian intelligence (e.g. Abels 2018; Eriksson 2016; Hershkovitz and Simon-Tov 2018).

There are a number of distinguishing characteristics of defense intelligence that are relevant when examining the relation between its intelligence producers and clients. These characteristics include a high degree of institutional embedding in military organizations (Rietjens 2020, 719), specific military cultural traits such as high value for hierarchy, rules, and discipline (Herman 1996, 250; Gentry 2019; Soeters 2018, 254; Davies and Gustafson 2019), as well as the mixture of military and civilian personnel (NATO STO HFM-226 TASK GROUP 2018).

This article examines to what extent these unique characteristics affect defense intelligence producer-client relations in a manner that is different from prevailing civilian-intelligence-based paradigms. Although the notion that there are organizational and cultural differences between civilian and military organizations is certainly not new, the lack of attention on defense intelligence producer-consumer relations warrants further research and debate.

This article first proceeds with discussing defense intelligence and identifying its main characteristics. Based on literature study and desk research, sections 3–5 discern three dominant paradigms of the intelligence producer-client relation and subsequently confront them with the characteristics of defense intelligence. These paradigms are I) *distance versus closeness*, II) *the ideal of analytic objectivity, and* III) *intelligence lays the foundation for decision-making*. Section 6 provides a discussion and elaborates on the conclusion that defense intelligence producer-client relations are more multifaceted, layered and networked than commonly explained.

2. Defense intelligence

Mostly appearing from the 1960s onwards, defense intelligence is the result of the amalgamation of armed services under overarching Ministries and Departments of Defense. Much younger than the traditional military intelligence branches, it can be best conceptualized as "intelligence production in support of defence as a corporate whole as embodied at the official level in a multi-service command staff and unified defence political leadership" (Davies 2016, 799). Defense intelligence is intended for the political as well as command staff levels, and can therefore be identified with the strategic level of military doctrine, decision-making and policy (Davies 2016, 799). Examples of defense intelligence agencies include the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in the United States, Defense Intelligence (DI) in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands Defense Intelligence and Security Service (NLD DISS), the Israeli Defense Intelligence (IDI), and the French Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) (e.g. de Graaff and Nyce 2016)[2]

Due to the unique character of the military domain, "defence intelligence represents a different class of problems from those conventionally identified as issues in intelligence conceptualization and practice" (Davies 2016, 801). In fact, defense intelligence is not merely "a specific subset of classic problems but [is] dogged by unique challenges arising from its position in government" (Davies 2016, 801). Michael Herman (1996, 241) recognized this over two decades ago, and has stated that defense intelligence has "a

more central position than it is often credited with." However, in the relatively rare occasion that defense intelligence organizations are being studied, they are often equally treated to civilian intelligence organizations.

A number of distinct characteristics of defense intelligence can be derived from intelligence and military studies literature. First, defense intelligence agencies are embedded in military organizations, the main executive when it comes to war and conflict. Such embeddedness includes the relationship between defense intelligence agencies and military decision makers as well as their relationship with the single-service intelligence branches of the armed forces, that are responsible for intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination during military missions. Perhaps it goes too far to use the term "prosumer" when it comes to intelligence relations within military organizations, as this would refer to intelligence communities self-consuming products for intelligence activities, or military units being both sensor, assessor and user of (targeting) intelligence. Yet this organizational embeddedness creates a more intimate relationship with the most important clients of defense intelligence. It is therefore reasonable to assume that this could potentially result in *extra* pressure – compared to civilian intelligence – to modify assessments when they are not in the best interest of the defense organization (Rietjens 2020, 719). For example, by adjusting probability or confidence, or lowering threat levels in order to ensure support of a wider parliamentary majority for military deployments. On the other hand, the "vertical integration" of intelligence throughout all levels of the MoD means that especially for intelligence support on the lower tactical level, such as mission support, the "threat" of politicization is not relevant, as the whole purpose of intelligence support at this level is to support ongoing policy and command decisions. In this sense, defense intelligence arguably differs from military intelligence as well as civilian intelligence agencies

A second characteristic of defense intelligence is the mixture of military and civilian personnel. Defense intelligence has a unique double position as it sits central within the dichotomy between military and civilian intelligence culture (Thomson 2016, 854). Whereas in some defense intelligence agencies, such as DI, the majority of personnel is made up by military officers (UK Government), in other agencies, including DIA and NLD DISS, the majority of the personnel is civilian (Defence Intelligence Alumni Associaton 2009; NLD DISS, 2019).[3] This mix brings about specific issues concerning a shared identity, different approaches to leadership styles, the optimal use of different backgrounds and different career and training opportunities (NATO STO HFM-226 TASK GROUP 2018; Goldenberg et al. 2019, 33). In the context of intelligence producer-client relations, problems could especially occur between military and civilian personnel on opposite sides of the relationship.

Third, since defense intelligence agencies are rooted in military organizations, their culture is highly influenced by traits that are considered typical military. These include a high value for hierarchy, rules and discipline, competences and status, and clear lines of authority and accountability. Although all organizations are hierarchical in some way, rules and hierarchies are "deemed more important and pervasive" in military organizations. (Soeters 2018, 254). This is also considered to be a mechanism for discipline and order (Holmberg and Alvinius 2019, 134). Herman (1996, 250) has argued that the military traits of decisiveness and teamwork may conflict with intelligence's need for qualifications, shades of gray, and continuous questioning and revision.

Another important cultural aspect is that military organizations are so-called "greedy organisations" that demand a lot from their personnel. Community life forms a significant aspect of the military culture, in which working and private life overlap, such as by living together on military bases or on deployment to mission areas (Soeters 2018). Moreover, military personnel often rotates rapidly between different roles. This might threaten the institutionalization of knowledge and the relationship between intelligence producers and clients. To the contrary, however, frequent rotations might also lead to an increased understanding and respect for each other's role.

A final aspect of military culture is what is called the "Janus-faced" character, meaning that a defense organization has two different faces. More specifically, this means that there can be both "hot," i.e. combat situations that require direct action, and "cold" situations, including training, preparing, and practicing for action (Soeters 2018). Although the Janus-face as a metaphor appeals nicely to the imagination, it would arguably be even more accurate to arrange these opposites on a spectrum from "very cold" situations such as training, through "lukewarm" or "slightly hot" situations such as mission preparation, to the other end of the spectrum which would be "very hot" combat situations.

Given the focus of this article on defense intelligence, it is important to note that there is overlap between strategic defense intelligence and military intelligence, which extends down from the strategic to the operational and tactical levels. The traditional separation of the three levels of military doctrine, stemming from a classic Western or Clausewitzian perspective, are not as distinct and clear-cut in modern times as doctrinally described. A prime reason for this is strategic compression; a phenomenon where the three levels of war contract, enmeshing the characteristics of those levels. It blurs the formalized vertical hierarchical organizational structures (Reist et al. 2016). For example, technological developments increasingly have made it possible for intelligence support in military missions to take place outside the mission area, within the home country itself (Netherlands Ministry of Defence 2012). In this way, operational and tactical intelligence support can also be provided by defense intelligence agencies, who in that way are involved in intelligence support beyond the strategic level. Teams may simultaneously deal with a mix of strategic and operational or perhaps even tactical intelligence, without a clear-cut distinction. This means that defense intelligence analysts can be concerned with producing highly strategic warning reports, but can also be responsible for operational or tactical threat analysis in support of decision-making processes in preparation of military deployment. An example where this overlap in different levels is visible can be found in the DIA, which generally handles national-level, long-term and strategic intelligence needs, but simultaneously has been designated as a combat support agency. Also, Israel's IDI provided both strategic and tactical intelligence during the Arab Awakening (Zohar 2015, 228). In this way, strategic compression adds to the complexity of the defense intelligence environment.

In the next sections the distinguishing characteristics of defense intelligence are used to confront three core intelligence producer-client paradigms. These are "distance versus closeness," "the ideal of analytic objectivity" and "intelligence lays the foundation for decision-making." It is important to note that these paradigms are related to each other and sometimes overlap. In essence, they are all concerned with the use of intelligence, namely the mis-use (distance versus closeness), the presumed optimal use (analytic

objectivity) and the nonuse (intelligence lays the foundation for decision-making). The first intelligence paradigm concerns the age-old question of how much distance there should be between intelligence producers and clients, as too little distance may lead to politicization, but too much distance leads to irrelevance. The second paradigm further builds on this as it concerns the idea that analytic objectivity prevents intelligence being manipulated to appeal to decision-makers. The third paradigm discusses the problem that although the traditional perception is that intelligence is the precursor for decision-making, in practice, intelligence receptivity is often low.

3. Intelligence paradigm 1: distance versus closeness

The relationship between intelligence and policy is often problematized, in particular the question of proximity. The debate focuses on the definition of the boundaries between intelligence and decision-making, the issues with the communication between intelligence and decision-making and the desired impact of intelligence on decision-making processes (Eriksson 2016, 6). The existing academic literature on the intelligence producer-client relation generally discerns two approaches: the traditionalist approach (a school of thought initiated by Sherman Kent in 1949 preferring distance over closeness), and the activist approach (following the line of thought initiated by Willmoore Kendall and later by Robert Gates which prefers closeness over distance) (Eisenfeld 2017, 82; Marrin 2013, 2). Most of this literature portrays the relationship between intelligence analysis and policymaking as a strictly hierarchical one with mutually exclusive norms. According to Stephen Marrin 2013, the proximity hypothesis "suggests that greater distance between intelligence and policy produces a more accurate but less influential product, whereas greater closeness leads to increased influence but decreased accuracy."

Mirrored to the concepts of "hard" and "soft" power, Hastedt (2013) introduced the concepts of "hard" politicization, and "soft politicisation." Hard politicization involves "deliberate attempts to coerce analysts into adopting a certain set of assumptions or conclusions or in the extreme overruling analysts and imposing a conclusion on the analysis," whereas "soft" politicization, involves "deliberate attempts to alter the assumptions underlying an analysis, the decision rules by which an analysis moves forward, and the institutional setting within which these deliberations occur" (Hastedt 2013, 10). In practice, soft politicization means that intelligence analysts are constrained from drawing strong conclusions when these findings are at odds with leadership preferences (Rovner 2013, 56). Intelligence politicization is however not always unambiguous and especially hard politicization can be difficult to determine in practice, not in the least because it is unlikely that analysts would ever admit that their judgments have been politicized (Pillar 2006, 21). U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Intelligence Directorate Leadership (CCJ2) officials were accused of pressuring DIA analysts working for CENTCOM into a positive narrative regarding CENTCOM efforts in Iraq and Syria. Although no evidence was found for systematic or intentional distortion of intelligence by CCJ2 leaders, some analysts had self-censored their products and therefore had not tried to submit intelligence assessments that they believed conflicted with their perception of their leaders' narrative (Inspector General Unclassified Report 2017), which can therefore be considered as a case of soft politicization. Similarly, in a recent investigative newspaper article

into Dutch defense intelligence support in Afghanistan, it was suggested that more than once, intelligence assessments were toned down in order to appeal to political decision-makers (Berkhout and Versteegh 2021)

When it comes to the proximity of intelligence agencies and their clients, the degree of institutional embedding is important. As noted before, defense intelligence agencies have a significantly higher degree of institutional embedding than their civilian counterparts. This is for example visible in the United Kingdom, where unlike SIS, M15 and GCHQ, DI is a departmental agency managed by the Chief of Defense Staff, and funded by the Ministry of Defense's (MoD) budget (Davies 2013, 197). The same institutional structure can be found in other countries. In the Netherlands, the DISS is part of the MoD and funded by a portion of the MoD's budget. In contrast, the civilian intelligence- and security service (General Intelligence and Security Service, NLD GISS) has a separate budget from the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), where it is part of. Moreover, the MoI is not a principal client of the GISS, whereas the Dutch MoD is arguably the most important consumer of the DISS' output.

Herman (1996, 256) has argued that this high degree of institutional embedding puts defense intelligence under "unusual pressure from its military users." As the institutional and political leaders of defense intelligence agencies are at the same time the ones benefitting from the output of these agencies, such institutions may be subject to "intrinsic conflict of inflict" (Davies 2016, 801). Badsey et al (2004, 97) refer in this respect to the notion of "situating the estimate." This means "shaping your threat to fit your capability and ignoring those to which, inconveniently, you have no response." Due to the high degree of institutional embedding, defense intelligence producers arguably run a higher risk of situating the estimate, in order to conform to the capabilities of the armed forces.[4]

As a result of the institutional embedding many military intelligence officers within defense intelligence agencies are dependent on the military services for their subsequent careers. This can therefore lead to a lack of independent analysis (Herman 1996, 251).

Meanwhile, defense intelligence agencies often have an intimate relationship with the single-service intelligence branches of the armed forces. Defense intelligence agencies often make use of these military intelligence branches, for example as on-the-ground sensors during missions. At the same time however, these military intelligence branches also make use of the intelligence estimates of the defense intelligence agencies. Depending on the level and the type of product, it is possible to be intelligence producer and client at the same time. A J-2 section, for example, might receive a strategic intelligence product from a defense intelligence agency (here, the J-2 is an intelligence client) and use this product as input to produce another intelligence product that is aimed at the operational or tactical level (here, the J-2 functions as an intelligence producer). Analytic defense intelligence departments, who are intelligence producers and have decision-makers as their clients, are intelligence clients at the same time when they make use of raw intelligence collected by other branches of the armed forces. In this sense, defense intelligence agencies and military intelligence branches can be producers and clients of each other simultaneously, and therefore have overlapping roles. In this context, the producer-client dichotomy in a defense context may even be a false one, and should perhaps be re-conceptualized as a network of intelligence prosumers working with each other to reach a common goal. This can however also lead to complications,

which are related to hierarchy and status. Hare and Collinson (2012, 223) have reported a "siege mentality" within DIAS, which translated to an inferiority complex with respect to the rest of the MoD and the British intelligence community. Part of the reason for this inferiority complex was the fact that the single-source intelligence collection agencies "have an audience among senior MoD decision makers," and thus engage in an intelligence producer-client relationship without the involvement of DIAS.

Switching to the influence of military culture in defense intelligence, one observes that the high value for hierarchy and clear lines of authority can increase the risk of politicization. Lower ranking military analysts might be prone to doing what higher ranked military clients tell them to do. In addition to these hierarchical relations, military producers and clients of defense intelligence may have developed strong informal ties through joint education, training, previous positions, and deployment. Community life might further enhance informal ties, as intelligence producers and clients can be well connected through living together in barracks. Moreover, as military personnel frequently rotates, military analysts may previously have worked in a position where they were intelligence clients, and vice versa. This can arguably contribute to a better understanding amongst military defense intelligence officers of the specific needs and tasks of their intelligence clients, and a better understanding amongst military clients of the tasks and capabilities of defense intelligence. To the contrary, such frequent rotations might also lead to a lack of organizational memory and challenge the building of a relationship.

The third characteristic of defense intelligence – the mixture of civilian and military personnel – brings about another set of challenges to the intelligence producer-client relation. Despite the embeddedness of defense intelligence agencies within MoD's, Hare and Collinson (2012, 222) found a strongly perceived collective identity at the Defense Intelligence Assessment Staff (DIAS); analysts were far more attached to DIAS and their intelligence profession than to the MoD, of which many felt to be only part of on paper. Although it would go too far to speak of a "DIAS culture," as Hare and Collinson identified several subcultures, the perceived distance to the rest of the MoD brings about challenges to the relationship between defense intelligence analysts and their military clients. This was particularly true for the interaction between civilian analysts and military clients and vice versa. In these cases, a lack of shared background, different values and norms, and a weak identification of intelligence analysts with the MoD were detrimental for the relationship between producers and clients.

Herman (1996, 249) provides further insight in the challenges of the relationship between military intelligence officers and civilian clients. He refers to this as "the basic problem of civilian credibility." Illustrating the cultural divide between civilian and military personnel, he quotes a former British Chief of the Defense Staff about the dangers of civilian policy-makers who "have never been to the grass-roots … They have no idea what a Tornado really can do – or an SSBN, what its operation is. They have probably never been to Faslane. They have never visited Coltishall. They have perhaps been in the same Ministry for twenty years … some of them do not know the sharp end." (House of Commons Defence Committee 1984). More recently, Wolfberg (2017) has touched upon the same issue. Military officers often possess operational knowledge and technical expertise, whereas civilian clients have strategic and political experience. Both groups also operate under a different set of competences, as generally speaking military officers tend to be decisive and state their position clearly, whereas

civilian leaders tend to be "inquisitive, have a tolerance to act under conditions of ambiguity, and integrate differences" (Wolfberg 2017, 472). These contradictions can be beneficial, especially when, incidentally, the civilian clients have past experience as senior military officers. It can however also complicate the relationship, in particular with clients without military experience or exposure to strategic intelligence (Wolfberg 2017, 472).

As illustrated above, it is perhaps most helpful for defense intelligence to conceptualize the producer-client relationship as neither distant nor close, but as networked and multi-layered. This idea is also illustrated by Wolfberg, who held interviews with 21 senior generals. According to the generals he interviewed, they were intelligence clients in their professional development as combat arms officers. However, due to the fact that their experience with strategic intelligence occurred late in their careers when they had become senior commanders in wartime, they developed an additional role as "drivers" of intelligence. This means that national security leaders are responsible for identifying intelligence requirements, and according to one general: "The issue is how to be both a consumer of intelligence and a driver of intelligence. Assuming you have inquisitive commanders, it's not about problem solving. It's about co-producing and co-consuming" (Wolfberg 2017, 467).

4. Intelligence paradigm 2: the ideal of analytic objectivity

In an effort to prevent intelligence politicization, analytic objectivity arguably has become the holy grail of intelligence analysis. Distortion of the analytic product resulting from subjectivity or bias is considered in extreme cases to lead to intelligence politicization. As analytic objectivity is seen as the most effective way to reduce distortion of the analytic product the thought is that it therefore prevents politicization as well (Marrin 2020, 350).

Objectivity, together with the independence or separation from the decisionmaker that we have seen in the first paradigm "are viewed as crucial in the ethos of the intelligence analyst" (Marrin 2020, 353). These characteristics combined provide the rationale for the concept of "speaking truth to power" as the aspirational goal of the intelligence analyst. As illustrated by then-Director of Central Intelligence Robert Gates, "truth, insofar as we can determine it, is what our work is all about" (Gates 1992, 5). Analysts use the concept of analytic objectivity, for example by eliminating bias through the use of structured analytic techniques, as a means to strive for truth. The desire for objectivity and a quest for the truth can be found in the mottos of several intelligence agencies. For example, the motto of the CIA is "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The motto of the NLD DISS is "*meritum in veritatum discernendo*," which translates to "the merit lies in the recognition of the truth."

The problem with this desire for analytic objectivity, however, is that it requires the absence of bias, which has been acknowledged to be unachievable, and may even be deeply ingrained within intelligence analysis. In fact, cognitive biases are necessary for intelligence analysis, as it enables analysts to paradigm estimates using incomplete data (Marrin 2020, 354). Besides this, ensuring that decision makers are faced with inconvenient facts and unwanted interpretation requires a bias in the direction of warning, which is often referred to as pessimistic intelligence analysis versus (overly) optimistic policymaking (Marrin 2020, 354). As a result, intelligence analysis does not necessarily

have to be more accurate than policy analysis. Thus, since it has been acknowledged that all intelligence analysis involves at least some degree of bias and subjectivity, it should be concluded that absolute analytic objectivity cannot be attained, which warrants a reflexive attitude toward the different types of knowledge regimes in intelligence analysis. It is more fruitful to reflexively recognize the existence of different types of knowledge or "truth" (for example political, media framing, intelligence, science) and study how they influence each other. This also entails reflecting on the way intelligence producers and clients define "self" in their analysis (de Werd 2021, 2).

Furthermore, as has been established before, policymakers often ignore intelligence analysis if it does not confirm their own ideas. This diminishes the value of analytic objectivity, since it does not matter whether the analysis is objective for decisionmakers to (not) use it. As observed by Thomas Fingar (2012), "greater objectivity, actual or assumed, does not necessarily make IC contributions more influential." As decision-making is often necessarily subjective, and driven by concepts, values and other normative judgments which shape the interpretation of what is or could be, decisionmakers are frequently faced with multiple versions of the truth (Marrin 2020, 355). In fact, "if policymakers, per Robert Gates" observation (1987, 227), usually ignore the inconvenient fact or unwanted interpretation, the more intelligence analysts pursue objectivity the less relevant or influential their analysis may be' (Marrin 2020, 356).

Since complete analytic objectivity cannot be achieved in practice, the standard of objectivity essentially means that "all analysts will be deficient in achieving that standard." (Marrin 2020, 360). It thus might be useful to shift the narrative away from absolutes such as "seeking truth" and "speaking truth to power," and 'instead embrace more relative considerations like honesty, integrity, and "call it as you see it" (Marrin 2020, 360). In line with this, Nathan Woodard (2013) argues for objective fairness (making assumptions and reasoning explicit) and clarity (remove ambiguity of evidence and language), instead of policy neutrality.

It may also be argued that the kind of analytic support encapsulated in the notion of "speaking truth to power" 'almost inevitably drives analytic support toward tactical intelligence, rather than the strategic (Kerbell and Olcott 2010, 13). This has worked well during the Cold War years, "because the nature of the Soviet Union and the means to face it were such that tactics all but merged with strategy" (Kerbell and Olcott 2010, 13). However, the more the analytic task moves away from the tactical, and more toward strategic problems, "analysis begins where the information ends and uncertainty is inescapable" (Agrell and Treverton 2014, 36). Treverton (2007) illustrates this change by comparing puzzles with mysteries. Whereas intelligence analysts during the Cold War were confronted with puzzles ("How many missiles did the Soviet Union have? Where were they located? How far could they travel?"), the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of terrorism has demanded a move from solving puzzles to framing mysteries. Puzzles can be solved with enough information, but there is no clear-cut solution to a mystery. It can thus be argued that the increasing demand for strategic intelligence has made it even more difficult to achieve analytic objectivity and "speaking truth to power."

Another way to frame this difference is to compare the theories of Prussian General and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz with the Swiss strategist Antoine-Henri, Baron de Jomini. Jomini "saw strategy as a series of problems with definite solutions. He believed that mathematical logic could derive 'fundamental principles' of strategy [. . .]"

(Agrell and Treverton 2014, 36). Proponents of the Jominian view see the intelligence domain mainly as a science (Rietjens 2019). By contrast, Clausewitz considered unpredictable events to be inevitable in war, and believed that combat involved some irreducible uncertainty (or "friction"). He saw war as "an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good luck and bad," and argued that "in the whole range of human activities, war most closely resembles a game of cards" (Agrell and Treverton 2014, 36). According to Agrell and Treverton (2014, 36), intelligence – especially U.S. intelligence – adheres to Clausewitz, "arguing uncertainty, hence risk, can only be managed, not eliminated."

At the same time however, "intelligence is still non-Clausewitzian in implying that uncertainty can be reduced, perhaps eliminated" (Agrell and Treverton 2014, 36). It could be argued that defense intelligence may even be more Jominian compared to the realm of civilian intelligence. This is mainly due to military traits such as decisiveness and an adherence to rules and discipline which tend to be more Jominian. In their research into the organizational culture at DIAS, Hare and Collison (2012) found that DIAS analysts are, even compared to the rest of the MoD, highly committed to professional values such as intellectual integrity, the support of assessments with evidence, and attention to detail. Some analysts were reluctant to deliver best guesses and could not understand how intelligence clients could make important decisions based on limited information. These tendencies may interfere with intelligence's need for qualifications, shades of gray, and continuous questioning and revision, which corresponds to the Clausewitzian approach. Considering that due to strategic compression, defense intelligence agencies also deliver tactical and operational intelligence analysis, this could also put the defense intelligence mind-set more into Jominian territory in comparison with civilian intelligence agencies. As a result, defense intelligence possibly treats complex strategic mysteries more often as puzzles, compared to civilian intelligence. The concept of effects-based approach to operations that NATO implemented in Afghanistan and in which numerous indicators were formulated to measure the progress on various lines of operation, is a clear illustration of such a mind-set (Rietjens et al. 2011). Closely related to this is the political problem definition and mandate for military missions, which can limit intelligence collection or what parties to engage with. This further fuels the transformation of complex problems or mysteries into more manageable puzzles (de Werd 2021, 2).

5. Intelligence paradigm 3: intelligence lays the foundation for decision-making

The traditional view on the intelligence analysis – client relation is that "intelligence analysts provide information to decision-makers who then use that information in the course of deciding which policy option to pursue" (Marrin 2009, 133). Intelligence is often called the handmaiden of those in power, as they only have a supporting role, and decisionmakers can discard intelligence estimates in favor of other considerations. In other words, intelligence clients can work without intelligence, but intelligence cannot work without clients who read and use their estimates.

As is often pointed out by scholars, in practice the degree of intelligence receptivity is low, meaning that (strategic) intelligence is frequently disregarded in decision-making processes (e.g. Johnson 2003; Marrin 2017). For example, Betts (2007, 67) states that "policymakers are often dissatisfied with what they get from intelligence analysts, while

analysts are frustrated when what they produce is apparently misused or not used at all." This frustration is also apparent amongst analysts within DIAS (Hare and Collinson 2012, 223). Immerman (2008) suggests that in terms of foreign policy "instances of the formulation of national security policy, or grand strategy, hinging on intelligence collection and analysis are few and far between – if they exist at all." Over the years, many other scholars, including Robert Jervis (2017), Erik J. Dahl (2013), Joshua Rovner (2011), Paul Pillar (2011), and in earlier years Sherman Kent, Benno Wasserman (1960) and Roger Hilsman (1952) have commented on the lack of impact of intelligence analysis on decision-making. The developments leading up to the 2003 Iraq invasion are a clear example of the complications that can arise when intelligence is disregarded or misused. Although a much lengthier discussion would be necessary to properly reflect the complexity of what did happen, a number of issues occurred, including cherry-picking, which is the selective use of intelligence by intelligence clients, and stovepiping or b-teaming by the Office of Special Plans (Mitchell 2006), which entails the analysis of raw intelligence by government entities that are not intelligence agencies. Dismissal of intelligence analysis can also occur when hierarchy and authority on the basis of seniority or military rank or expertise are (too) highly valued (Hare and Collinson 2012, 223). An extreme example is that of Admiral Turner, the US Navy Director of War Plans (OP-12) prior to Pearl Harbor. Although Turner had no experience in intelligence analysis, he considered his judgment superior to that of the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI)'s staff when it came to strategic intelligence analysis. According to him, the officers in his own division were "more experienced than the officers in naval intelligence who were generally more junior, and were trained rather for the collection and dissemination of information, rather than its application to a strategic situation" (Handel 1990, 25). As a result, Turner began preparing his own intelligence estimates and transmitting them independent of ONI, which ended up to be a major underlying cause of the failure to anticipate Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. As stated by Handel, "this painful experience serves as just one more sorry reminder that a military leader's senior rank and responsibility for carrying out operations do not automatically qualify him as an intelligence expert." (Handel 1990, 25).

The predominant model used to understand and explain the intelligence process – including the intelligence producer-client relation – was the intelligence cycle, which is ubiquitous in intelligence literature (Phythian 2013, 21). It presents the intelligence process as occurring in four to five sequential stages, which are planning and direction, collection, (processing,) analysis and production, and dissemination. As additional or new requirements can follow from dissemination, the cycle starts again (Phythian 2013, 21). The prevalence of the intelligence cycle in literature on the intelligence producer – client relation has caused intelligence analysis to be portrayed as "a precursor to and foundation for policy decisions" (Marrin 2009, 133). That is, from an intelligence perspective. Looking at policymaking processes this idea clearly becomes more relative (Eriksson 2018; Marrin 2017).

Although the intelligence cycle used to be the predominant model to explain the intelligence process, over the years it has been criticized, inter alia for the over-simplification of the model in relation to the complex reality of the intelligence process (e.g. Evans 2009). With regard to the portrayal of the intelligence-producer client relation according to the intelligence cycle, Arthur Hulnick (2006) contends that the notion that

intelligence clients provide guidance to intelligence producers at the start of the intelligence process is incorrect. Although clients sometimes indicate their main concerns to intelligence producers, they often "assume that the intelligence system will alert them to problems, or provide judgments about the future" (Hulnick 2006, 959). Instead, Hulnick argues that filling the gaps in the existing intelligence data 'is what drives the intelligence collection process, not guidance from policy makers (Hulnick 2006, 960).

Peter Gill and Mark Phythian (2013) add to this that the concept of the intelligence cycle has become outdated due to technological developments, the information revolution and changing threats and targets, and therefore requires "a major re-fit," or should even be discarded. As an alternative model, they propose a "web of intelligence." This more accurately reflects the "complex and multiple interactions that occur between the main points of targeting, collection, analysis and so on" and more clearly expose "the main environmental or contextual factors that influence the process and which may, in turn, be altered by the outcomes of the process" (Phythian 2013, 34).

Models that are used within intelligence research will always be a simplification of a much more complex reality, and the intelligence cycle is no exception to this. In the academic debate, it has long been recognized that the intelligence cycle may be oversimplification of the intelligence process, which has sometimes been reflected in doctrinal changes, such as in the JDP 2–00 in the United Kingdom (Phythian 2013). Often however, it still plays a dominant role within other defense and military intelligence doctrines (e.g. Netherlands Ministry of Defence 2012; Joint Chiefs of Staff 2013).

It could be argued that due to several military characteristics, the use of a simplified model to understand a complex reality, is particularly attractive. First, the stereotypical characteristics of military culture that include a top-down organizational structure, clear lines of authority, discipline and accountability do perhaps not necessarily align with complex realities. Doctrinal thinking is especially predominant within military culture, which arguably comes with a penchant for grasping complex realities in simplified models. Second, rapid turnover of military personnel means that specific knowledge and experience needs to be institutionalized within an intelligence organization, rather than that it comes with a plethora of long-sitting and highly experienced military intelligence personnel. In order to secure this knowledge, and to ensure a relatively quick and thorough handover of knowledge of specific intelligence processes, the use of models such as the intelligence cycle come in handy.

Furthermore, defense organizations – and therefore their intelligence institutions as well – need to cooperate intensively with international counterparts (Soeters and Tresch 2010; Gentry 2019), both bilaterally as well as within international organizations such as NATO, and both in the field (e.g. Flynn and Flynn 2012) as well as on the political and strategic levels (e.g. Ballast 2018), which demands specific organizational and technical requirements (Rietjens and Baudet 2017). This requires a synchronization of intelligence analysis and the use of specific methods, for which the extensive use of models offers a solution. Still, continuing to understand the complex relationship between intelligence analysis and decision-making in terms of simplified models such as the intelligence cycle will not lead to a deeper understanding of this relationship.

Lastly, the Janus-face character of military organizations influences the impact that intelligence analysis has on decision-making. On the spectrum from "cold" to "hot" intelligence, decision-makers are generally more receptive to "hot" intelligence, such as

tactical and operational intelligence that is directly used for combat situations, or that directly contributes to decision-making regarding military missions and deployment of military personnel. Instead, "cold" intelligence, such as strategic intelligence estimates that are not produced for mission support, nor warrant direct action, is arguably more likely to be disregarded by decision-makers. Wolfberg suggests that experience with strategic intelligence is generally only gained upon reaching senior commanding officer ranks. This lack of experience with the "colder" side of the intelligence spectrum can also be a reason why military decision-makers are more receptive to the "hotter" side of the spectrum. A few decades ago, Handel made similar observations and recognized that because military leaders spent most of their formative years learning about intelligence on the tactical and lower operational levels, some generals tend to apply what they know about utility and relevance of intelligence on these levels to the very different world op operational or strategic intelligence on the upper echelons of command (Handel 1990, 26). This is problematic, as a lack of experience with the higher operational and strategic levels of intelligence can lead to failure both on the short and the long term if the intelligence is not used effectively (e.g. Handel 1990; Wolfberg 2017, 460).

6. Discussion and conclusion

The objective of this paper was to find out if prevailing paradigms on the producer-client relationship are sufficient for examining this relationship within the context of defense intelligence. This article concludes that this is not the case.

First, due to the characteristics of defense intelligence, the predominant concept of distance versus closeness between intelligence analysts and decision-makers may not be sufficient to explain the relationship between defense intelligence analysts and decision-makers. A useful framework for further research into this relationship within a defense intelligence context can be the policy network analysis framework of archetypes developed by James Svara and applied to the intelligence context by Eriksson (2018). Whereas the traditional view on the intelligence producer-consumer relation generally conceptualizes this relationship as separate roles, the networked and multifaceted character of defense intelligence warrants a conceptualization more closely approaching one of overlapping roles. Further looking into the defense intelligence producer-client relationship in this context can bring about a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that influence this relationship.

Second, this article has found that due to several specific characteristics, defense intelligence can, compared to civilian intelligence, be more vulnerable to intelligence politicization. Whereas civilian intelligence tends to be more Clausewitzian, defense intelligence – especially due to strategic compression – tends to adhere to values that are more of a Jominian nature. Because of this, complex strategic mysteries that have a large degree of uncertainty are often treated more as solvable puzzles, which leads to an unattainable strive for objectivity. This warrants a reflexive approach to intelligence analysis. It would be more useful to abandon the aim for objectivity and rather embrace values such as honesty and "call it as you see it," which due to the military values could be especially fitting in a military environment. At the same time however, the importance of hierarchy within military

organizations interferes with the importance of "speaking truth to power." In line with this, the fact that defense intelligence agencies are embedded within military organizations that are also their primary client, can make them more susceptible to (in)direct pressure.

Third, as with civilian intelligence, defense intelligence can be discarded by decision-makers. This article suggests that due to their military character, defense intelligence agencies are more prone to the use of models, such as the intelligence cycle, to explain the way intelligence should impact decision-making. As they are an over-simplification however, these models do not contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between intelligence producers and clients. Intelligence studies debates on this topic that suggest concepts such as the "web of intelligence," are useful to provide new insights into this relationship. Another way to explain how defense intelligence impacts decision-making is by adapting the Janus-face metaphor and picture a spectrum from "very cold" to "very hot" intelligence. When strategic intelligence agencies provide "hot" – which generally is more of a tactical or operational rather than strategic nature – instead of "cold" intelligence, the receptivity on the client's side increases. As illustrated above, hierarchy and authority also play an important role in this, as well as a lack of experience with strategic intelligence until a commander reaches a senior rank.

This article has showed that the specific context of defense intelligence warrants different considerations compared to civilian intelligence. Further research into the defense intelligence producer-client nexus is necessary to look more closely into these characteristics. The notion that this nexus and the intelligence process are multifaceted, layered and networked create the need for a more nuanced sociological approach, for which structured empirical research will be particularly insightful.

Notes

1. Because most literature is concerned with the strategic level, the term "intelligence – policy relation" or "intelligence – policy nexus" can often be found in literature. Considering that this article looks beyond civilian intelligence, and therefore incorporates a larger body of decision-makers within a defense context, the choice has been made to use to more inclusive term "intelligence producer – client nexus" or "intelligence producer – client relation". In line with this, the term "policymaking" can often be found in literature. In this article, the term "decision-making" will be used instead, to include military decision-making beyond the policymaking levels. When the term policy is used in this article, this is because it is quoted from literature that looks at the strategic level.
2. Some intelligence agencies that are part of a Ministry of Defense are not included in the scope of this article, such as the *Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure*, (DGSE) in France and the *Militära underrättelse- och säkerhetstjänsten* (MUST) in Sweden (e.g. De Graaff and Nyce 2016), as they are the prime or sole agency responsible for the collection of foreign intelligence, and are therefore involved in a broader scope of foreign intelligence for national security. Specific subtopics such as economic Defense Intelligence are also not included within the scope of this article.
3. Due to their classified nature, not all intelligence agencies provide details on their staff.
4. This does not only include existing capabilities but also new capabilities, which can lead to a potential conflict of interest between intelligence judgments and defense acquisitions. This issue requires a more detailed discussion on self-serving bias for which there unfortunately is not enough space within the scope of this article. Nevertheless, we recognize the

importance of this topic, which inter alia has played an important role in the missile/bomber gap during the Cold War.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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