BOOK REVIEW: PERCEPTION OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INTELLIGENCE

Aneesha Mohan¹ & Balajikarthik Kothuru Chinnadurai²

Master’s Programme in Industrial Management and Innovation

School of Business and Engineering

Halmstad University, Sweden

DETAILS OF THE BOOK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title:</th>
<th>Introduction to Private and Public Intelligence: The Swedish school of Competitive Intelligence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Klaus Solberg Søilen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher:</td>
<td>Studentlitteratur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of publication:</td>
<td>Lund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of publication:</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pages:</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URN:</td>
<td>urn:nbn:se:hh:diva-18034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIVA:</td>
<td>diva2:534522</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABSTRACT:

Purpose: This paper presents a critique of the book “Introduction to private and public intelligence: The Swedish School of Competitive Intelligence” by Klaus Solberg Søilen (2005). The purpose of this book is to get an overview of the subject private and public intelligence which would be helpful for both students and intelligence professionals to enhance their careers as Analysts.

¹Master Degree Student at Halmstad University, Sweden.

Email: anemoh16@student.hh.se

²Master Degree Student at Halmstad University, Sweden.

Email: balchi16@student.hh.se
**Method:** This book is a systematic review of the topic private and public intelligence. It provides practical examples and the author has discussed relevant theories in accordance to the topic. The author got inspiration from a student discussion at Lund and Malmo university as well as from other researchers and scholars.

**Authorship:** Klaus Solberg Søilen is Professor of Management at Halmstad University, Sweden and an external at Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business (JISIB) and has now published a dozen books and more than forty scientific articles for journals like Journal of Business Research, European Business Review and Knowledge Organization. His research can be divided into 3 areas: intelligence studies, digital marketing and political economy. Søilen has previously worked at the Copenhagen Business School and Blekinge Institute of Technology.

**Audience:** students and Intelligence professionals

**Impact:** the subject matter of this book deals with competitive intelligence, competitor intelligence, business intelligence and marketing intelligence. This book has received several responses from multiple authors. Many agree and accept the contributions made by the author and use them as a foundation for the study in the field of private and public intelligence. However, there are some arguments against the author’s opinion which will be discussed later in this book review.

**INTRODUCTION:**

This paper presents a critical book review of “Introduction to Private and Public Intelligence: The Swedish School of Competitive Intelligence” by Søilen (2005). This book provides a perception of private and public intelligence for the students to use in an introductory course and also to educate private and public intelligence analysts. The author focuses much on the academic foundations of private and public intelligence rather than using extensive examples to teach. He has also tried to show the logic behind the analysis to help students build their own analysis to fit any problems. The author has written this book in an attempt to gather some research in business intelligence and provide an insight to non-Swedish students and professionals.

First, a short overview of the book is presented, then comes the content description, which leads to the discussion, which helps us to explore the aim, background, methodology, structure and presentation of the book. Finally, the overall perception of private and public intelligence is presented in the conclusion.

**CONTENT DESCRIPTION**

_In this section, we provide a brief description about the contents in each chapter, which leads us to the discussion part._
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction to the study of private and public intelligence</td>
<td>Overview of the study of private and public intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Elements of private and public intelligence</td>
<td>Presents basic building blocks of the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Analysis in private and public intelligence</td>
<td>Describes the analysis and methodology of the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The technology of innovation</td>
<td>Explains the use of technology in the intelligence process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intelligence ethics</td>
<td>Discussion of the ethical questions related to the study</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INTELLIGENCE**

in the first chapter the author gives a short overview of each chapter. Then he discusses about historical references which provide a basis for the study in the field of private and public intelligence. The author discusses about historical references from Alexander the great, Romans, Venetian Republic to contemporary scholars like Marcus Wallenberg (1903), Dedijer (1998) and Pagels-Fick (1999). The author explains the terminology intelligence which is understood differently across different timeline from 19th century until recent days in 2005.

According to author, this field of study is closely related to the fields of geo-economics, which is a combination of economic problem and geopolitical theory. The author ends the chapter by explaining two terms private and public intelligence. Private intelligence is the focus of consideration of this book. The author differentiates between private and public intelligence in relation with customer relation management and knowledge management. CRM deals exclusively with customers but on information, whereas knowledge management is more occupied with development of knowledge from a sociological perspective. Thus, in the end author clarifies the difference between PPI and knowledge management to infer that it focuses on techniques and processes for solving practical problems of information.

**CHAPTER 2. ELEMENTS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INTELLIGENCE**

The chapter also shows different strategies that is used for information gathering. Three broad categories of intelligence sources are defined in which the business and public intelligence deals with information directly from people and from the traces of human activities. The traces made by nature refers to non-human intelligence. The information gathering in business is ruled by laws and ethical codes. Based on the classification by ethics the author defines 4 main strategies for information gathering: defensive, offensive, ethical offensive and ethical defensive. The basic
distinctions between intelligence, information and data are provided to understand private and public intelligence. Information asymmetry occurs when a company has more information than its competitors. This creates a situation of competitive advantage. The competitive advantage is analyzed in terms of information asymmetry. After having talked about intelligence the author talks about security and counterintelligence which comes under the tripod compositions of the study along with intelligence. Many companies use counterintelligence as a defensive strategy by a company to steal the intelligence operations of other companies. The other area of study discusses about security, which prevents a potential attacker from gathering information.

Information gathering is conducted at different locations within the organization simultaneously but intelligence is not undertaken as a core activity until now. In the later part of the chapter, the author also introduces the reader about the intelligence working process and its strategy process by providing examples of the experience with private intelligence systems in Nordic companies. Classical intelligence cycle with 4 stages namely direction, collation, elevation, dissemination are illustrated. Key words for a successful interdisciplinary process are pointed out, particularly problem of communication between the consumer and the analyst. The business intelligence cycle tells the analyst how to work based on a well-defined intelligence strategy. The time perspective in PPI is also discussed.

CHAPTER 3. ANALYSIS IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INTELLIGENCE

Chapter 3 is about intelligence analysis which helps audience to learn how to make models of reality from an organizational perspective which helps in the analytical process. The author also illustrates an example of the implementation of business intelligence solution from an analytical point of view. Short presentation of frequently used analyses for a given problem is given and discussions are made on what qualifications are necessary at different stages of the intelligence process. Finally a brief discussion of the methodological aspects of analysis in intelligence is done to have a deeper understanding of the subject.

The analysts mostly ignore certain dimensions and focus on new dimension that they “know” is relevant for their business. The report becomes erroneous if it fails to identify and analyze important intelligence signals and the best way to avoid risk is to use models and checklists. The author explains the need to conduct different environmental analysis on the organization operating in private and public intelligence sector, since the public intelligence is controlled by the government to a greater extent.

In the following section, different models used for the analysis are mentioned by the author. They are the factor x model, industry analysis model, the submarine allegory model. The business intelligence programs are illustrated using The submarine Allegory model which intend to extract the “need-to-know” from “nice-to-know” information that makes business intelligence irrelevant. This model can be used in combination with other analytical tools like SWOT. The below table provides an overview of different models used by the author in this study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model / Analysis</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor X model</strong></td>
<td>Detects unexpected dimensions and provides possibility to define all actions in an organization related to one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankelius &amp; Rosén</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industry analysis model</strong></td>
<td>Detects unexpected dimensions in the value creation process which allows analysts to include indirect influential forces of macro as well as micro environment in the past, present and future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hussey &amp; Jenster (Modified from Porter)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Submarine Allegory model</strong></td>
<td>Explains how business intelligence should be used in an organization, also forms a base for environmental analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph LeBihan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 4. THE TECHNOLOGY OF INTELLIGENCE**

Chapter four is about the technology used in private and public intelligence. The author emphasize on computer systems and software, but starts with a general description of terminology. The author then gives a introduction to eavesdropping equipment and technical devices used in private and public intelligence.

Information gathering using sophisticated technology has developed rapidly since the second world war. The use of technology to gather information has both advantages and disadvantages since it maintains a distance between the agent and the source. The advantage is that the agent can provide the information easily since she is not being seen and the disadvantage is that the agent may use counterintelligence to tackle eavesdropping. The author states that the biggest source of non/technological intelligence as HUMINT by which the information is gathered through talking with people. The advantage with HUMINT is the cost, whereas technology only allows to register but not to participate. The author also insists that most market research is obtained through HUMINT.

The importance of using technology to gather information is increasing which leads to the use of counterintelligence. It is being perceived as a risk mitigation method by which the companies can safeguard their information from eavesdropping through the use of new technology. Many companies worldwide offer BI service through internet. Many companies have developed their own business intelligence software named as web/based intelligence solutions. The author uses the term “media monitoring” to explain the scanning of mass media which is a popular service on the web. Today there are many different technological solutions available to BI problems in the form of software.

To understand the performance of each software the author categorizes them into 1. Relationship analysis, 2. Analysis of unstructured text, 3. Comparative analysis. The author also explains two important concepts from the BI literature namely, *data mining* and *data warehouse*. Data mining
gives the technological foundation for Customer Relation Management (CRM). The author classifies 3 types of intelligence risks faced by employees in international organizations. From its internal environment. From its external environment. From its own organization. The implementation of this software is often criticized by employees since it makes them feel uncomfortable and threatened.

CHAPTER 5. INTELLIGENCE ETHICS

Previous chapters in the book has given the reader insight in the terminology, concepts, analytical processes as well as technological aspects of business intelligence. The author goes deeper into the subject of business ethics used in the study of private and public intelligence and feels that it is impossible to treat a subject like intelligence without discussing its ethical implications. Throughout the book, the author shows how well the established subjects like strategy, entrepreneurship, and marketing research which are related to the study.

The author argues that financial interest has the highest power to reduce the impact of business ethics. The higher the competition the lower the ethics in the case of international business. Ethics can be hard to deal with on a global scale and the competition among companies may lower the priorities regarding ethics. In this chapter the author connects the lack of technological security discussed in chapter 4 with the ethical responsibilities. The author discusses different cases in this book where ethics has been put aside, in history as well as in the present, to increase company profits.

To describe the use of illegal and unethical means of obtaining strategic information from the organization, the author uses the concept, industrial Espionage. Much has been written on industrial espionage but there are only few based on research. The author describes different types of ethics used in this chapter mainly legal limits, ethical limits and the internal limits of the organization.

DISCUSSION AND EVALUATION

In this section, we shall discuss about the validity of the book, how well the author has achieved his purpose, about the logical structure of the book and the methodology used by the author and its impact towards the audience.

AIM AND BACKGROUND

The main aim of the book is to gather ideas and concepts of the area of study private and public intelligence and to provide a perception for the students to use it as an introductory course for their study. This is explained in the preface chapter where the author describes the logic behind his analysis and also states the significance of the book since it has its background in the roots of Swedish culture and not many authors have discussed about this topic in English literature. The author focus more on private intelligence and also considers some parts of public intelligence.

In the introduction chapter the author presents the overview of the book by summarizing what issues each chapter includes. The author explains the various definitions within the topic of
business intelligence and their nature of origin. The author introduces the reader the most important terminologies used throughout the book.

The author has structured the book to provide a deep perspective of the concepts used in the study of business intelligence. The focus of the book lies in the existing research and practical examples to provide an insight to the audience. The author conveys that several research and studies have been made on this topic in Swedish but only very few research has been done in English language, because the topic has its roots in the Swedish culture.

**METHODOLOGY**

The author clarifies that his main focus of the study is private intelligence and also that some areas within public intelligence is omitted. The book does not consider the historical background of the subject. Secondly, the author clarifies that this study has its roots in the Swedish culture and this leads to biases and implications that may not be applicable to many geographical areas.

To gather idea and information for this study the author discussed with students from Malmo and Lund university and some contributions were made by other researchers and scholars which inspired the author to write this book.

**ORGANIZATION**

The authors give a short synopsis of the book in the introduction part and gives a small hint about the contents of each chapter. The author has used several examples and models to illustrate the concept and also connection is made with practical examples. The author uses an informal engaging tone of writing and the book is well argued. The author clearly articulates and answered questions raised in the book. This book is accessible to all intelligent readers as well as specialists.

The book can be considered as a foundation for future research in the field of private and public intelligence. The author does not focus on certain areas of public intelligence like military intelligence and suggest this area as a topic for further research.

**VALIDITY OF THEORIES**

The author has received several responses from other scholars against his arguments from the book.

Søilen (2005) states that the study of PPI should be considered as a positive science in the sense that it should not mix science with too much philosophy. Further, he describes Gilad’s (2008) work as important contributions to traditional writing and academics should stick to this tradition in building an intelligence science. The suggestions received opposing arguments from Hoppe (2015) stating that different philosophical foundations should be accepted for a true science to emerge.

The author’s explanation about porter’s model of competitive advantage is adopted by Cavalcante (2007) who also agrees with Søilen (2005) about the need to differentiate among data, information and intelligence to understand the private and public intelligence. Along with Søilen (2005), there are several authors such as O’Guin and Ogilvile (2001) and Drucker (2002), who point out formal analytical method for information gathering. The Swedish authors lacked adequate translation of the terminology used in the study, hence the author Søilen (2005) has used English intelligence
CONCLUSION

This book discusses relevant concepts and ideas of the field of private and public intelligence and gives an insight to students who can use this as an introductory course who wish to pursue their career as an analyst. The author adopts deep and vast professional information from his own expertise and also from different sources to form a foundation for this study. The author has discussed the topic from the Swedish perspective to a non-Swedish perspective for easy understanding and perception of the non-Swedish audience.

The author presents different models and practical examples to explain the concepts from the field of study. The book follows a clear structure which helps the readers to easily follow the book with ease and the author uses suitable structural devices in the form of tables, indexes, transitions and headings to support the purpose. The book is divided into sections under each chapter with appropriate length in order to balance the author's focus. The author uses informal engaging language which is suitable for the target audience to keep them engaged and interesting. The author has achieved his purpose by using several professional information of his own and also from other sources to provide a deep perception of private and public intelligence. Overall the book is effective and worthwhile reading.

REFERENCE


Søilen, K. (2013). Exhibit Marketing & Trade Show Intelligence - Successful Boothmanship and Booth Design. Springer Verlag, Berlin