



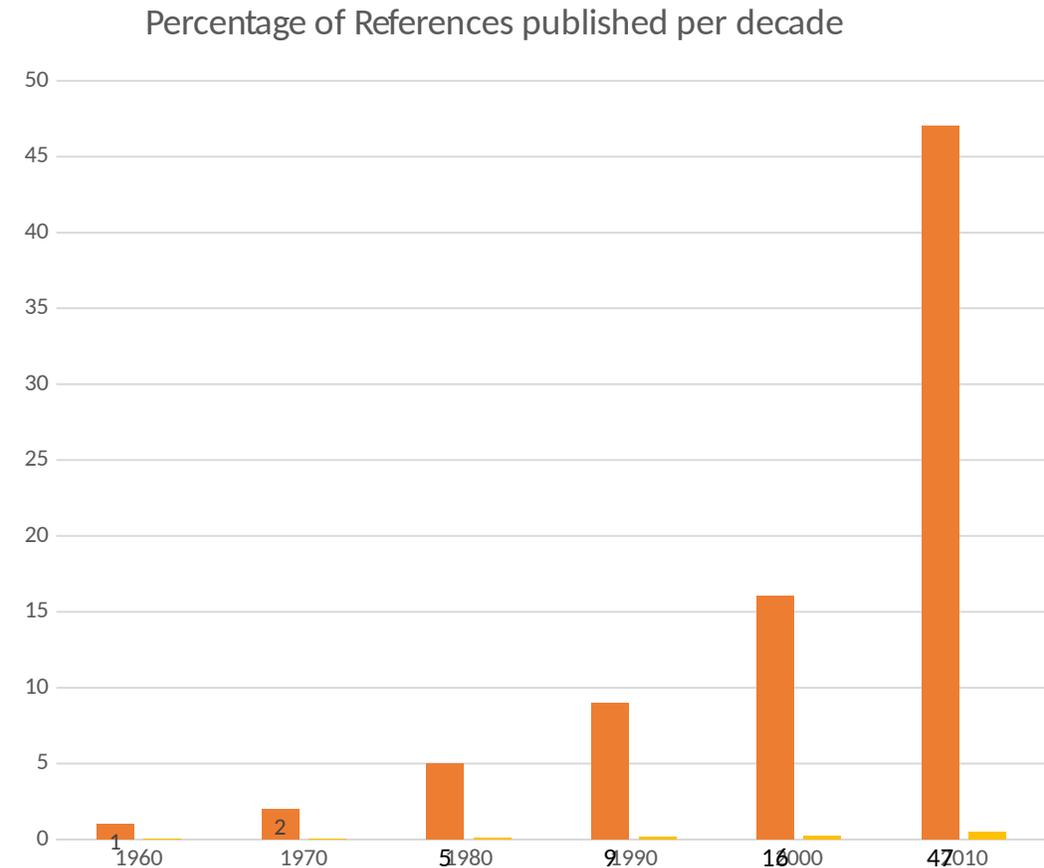
# A Personal Journey through Three Group Minds

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# The Academic Literature

The majority of the academic literature concerning the concept of the Group Mind appears to concentrate on arguments concerning collective ethics, responsibilities, and guilt/innocence. Such arguments seem to diminish the role(s) of the individual members and even provide an excuse for incompetence, ignorance, greed and malice on the part of individuals, and rarely offer an option or mechanism of support for well-meaning minds who desire to cooperate for the common/general good.





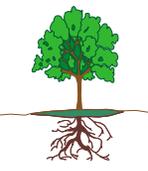
# Outline of a Personal Journey

- Similarity/sameness of purpose, structure and operation of the chosen three
  - Characteristics and consequences
- Where does the individual fit?
  - Membership characteristics and games
  - Consequences
- Culpability, blame and the possibility of nemesis
- Conclusions and Summary



# The Chosen Three (BRA)

- Religion
  - Raised
  - Educated
- Army
  - Volunteer
  - Commissioned Service
  - Staff College
- State and (Big) Business
  - International Consultancy
  - UK and other national business and government clients



# Characteristics of BRA Organisations that aspire to inculcate a “Group Mind” among/across its members

Aspect

Consists of or defines....

- Objective Statement
  - Purpose of the organisation
- Clear hierarchical structure
  - Seniority and authority as clear and stern
- Appetite to expand
  - Growth is a sine qua non
- Induction requirements
  - The right people must be attracted to join
- Ongoing education
  - Get them and keep them up to date
- Ongoing reinforcement
  - Keep them inside the Mind
- Membership life-cycle
  - Manage members from birth to death
- Ensure ethical guidelines are clear
  - Ethics? Wot ethics??



# R: Organised Religion – (non-specific)

## Essential Requirement

- *Objective* - specified by:
- *Enforcement* - belief in:
- *Governance* - managed by:
- *Entry*
- *Retention*
- *Exit* - forced
- *Exit* - voluntary

## Method/Manner

- Creed, Holy Book, Catechism
- Heaven, Hell, Fire, Paradise
- Deep faith in Priesthood, Imam
- Family, culture, conversion
- Routine, refresher, fear, control
- Anathema, defrock, death, nil(?)
- Recant, death, nil(?)



# A: Army- (British)

## Essential Requirement

- *Objective* - specified by:
- *Enforcement* - adherence to:
- *Governance* - managed by:
- *Entry*
- *Retention*
- *Exit* - forced
- *Exit* - voluntary

## Method/Manner

- Political masters, QRs
- MML, CsM, rank structure
- Politics, belief in officer class
- Volunteer, recruitment process
- Commitment, promotion, power
- Dismissal, death(!)
- Resignation, end of duty, purchase



# B: Business World – (private and public sectors)

## Essential Requirement

- *Objective* - specified by:
- *Enforcement* - belief in:
- *Governance* - managed by:
- *Entry*
- *Retention*
- *Exit* - forced
- *Exit* - voluntary

## Method/Manner

- Policy/Politics, SOPs, Vision Statement
- Vision statement, P45,
- Corporate governance, BoD, hierarchy
- Application, selection, \$\$\$
- Promotion, bonus, fear of unemployment
- Sack, side-lined, down-graded
- Notice, walk-out



# Some Emerging Observations.....

1. “same thinking” does raise questions about shared responsibility and individual blame
2. BRA entry selection must include assessing the latent capability of the applicant to participate effectively in “same thinking”
3. Group Minds, emerging from “same thinking” offer easier control, the blurring of responsibility for failure, and the preservation of a hierarchy of reward
4. Group Minds are desirable, are the preferred outcome of systemic growth (fleshware!)
5. Should we ignore employees and identify corporations with only CEO, BoD and sometimes shareholders?
6. ***Surely there is room for the individual?***



# Functional Stupidity in BRA Group Minds

**Refs:** *many, many examples of which these are some obvious choices*

B: The Stupidity Paradox: Power and Pitfalls of Functional Stupidity at Work – A Spicer & M Alvesson pub 2016

R: Generally, religious texts defining rules and regulations for diet, dress, women, etc (ie: not the codes for moral and ethical behaviour)

Ai: On the Psychology of Military Incompetence – N Dixon pub 1976

Aii: British Generals in Blair's Wars – J Bailey and R Iron pub 2013

## **Quick 'n' Easy and Possibly True:**

A: Acting stupid at work is a subtle art. If you underdo it, people will suspect you are putting on an act; if you overdo it, you will be thought a liability.

B: Do whatever everyone else is doing, even if it is wrong.

C: Most stupid ideas are routinely accepted when they are presented well.

D: Corporate language simply does not have the equipment to dissemble subtly.

E: Males' frontal lobes do not fully mature until their late 20s. This plus testosterone (partly) explains why young men will risk all for the sake of a group.



# Ungrouping to find the Individual Minds in BRA

“Smart young [graduates] joining the workforce soon discover that, although they have been selected for their intelligence, they are not expected to use it....If they happen to make the mistake of using their intelligence, they will be met with polite warnings from their bosses. They will learn that those who get ahead are the stellar practitioners of corporate mindlessness.”

The Three BRA Group Minds offer a safe haven for:

- The less than adequate
- The self aggrandiser
- The safe-bet
- The fearful



# A sorry state of affairs!

So we have:

- Slightly dim, enthusiastic young men
- Who are ready to take risks, doing what everyone else is doing
- Communicating in stilted jargon, the coded language of the corporation
- Believing in the corporate vision
- Reporting within a hierarchy that, at each level, is no wiser or less prone to the faults evident in underlings
- Fearful of stepping out of line, and.....
- Propagating the errors of the past
- And who are led by flawed managers

-The real danger of a Group Mind is not authoritarian rule but complacency that becomes over-confidence mixed with a disinclination to look for what might/could go wrong.



# Corporate Leadership – Flawed Managers

1. High Likeability Floaters - never takes difficult decisions or makes enemies
2. Homme de ressentiment\* - seethes below the surface and plots against perceived enemies
3. Narcissist – resists accepting suggestions, takes overmuch credit for successes, avoids acknowledging responsibility for failures

\* Cf Kierkegaard & Nietzsche



# Games and the Players

## Games

Structured and transactional analyses attempts to formalise interactions between “players” and group them as procedures, ritual and games to facilitate discussions and conclusions. Games are not to taken as implying “fun”: they are so called because they follow rules that govern moves and usually offer defensive and offensive strategies/tactics.

*NB: people pick as friends, associates and intimates others who play the same games and are “same thinkers” ....and thus (possibly/probably) share in the Group Mind*

## Players (we have met before)

- a) High Likeability Floater
- b) Homme de resentment
- c) Narcissist
- d) The Self Aggrandiser
- e) The Safe-bet
- f) The Fearful

As JK Galbraith put it:

**From (the) interpersonal  
exercise of power, the  
interaction of the participants,  
comes the personality of the  
corporation.**



# Playing the Game.....

## A Culture of Good Character

*CACI International Inc, is an American multinational professional services and information technology company headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, United States.*

*CACI claims on their website....*

Good character defines who we are, how we act, and what we believe is the right way to do business.

We always do the right thing, stand up for the truth, and put the good of our neighbors and our nation ahead of ourselves. As we work toward CACI's future, our good character will continue to guide our actions, strengthen our reputation, and increase our resolve to meet our customers' and our country's most vital needs.



# .....Badly

At CACI, we take pride in our commitment to:

- a. Quality service and best value for our clients
- b. Individual opportunity and respect for each other
- c. Integrity and excellence in our work
- d. Distinction and competitive edge in our work

On June 9, 2004, a group of 256 Iraqis sued CACI International in U.S. federal court. The plaintiffs, former prisoners, allege that the companies directed and participated in torture, war crimes, crimes against humanity, sexual assault and rape, as well as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment at Abu Ghraib prison.

*The Department of the Army found that "contractors were involved in 36 percent of the [Abu Ghraib] proven incidents" and identified 6 employees as "individually culpable".*



# And Finally (1): Ethics, Morality, Responsibility and the Law

- Can an organisation be held responsible in law?
  1. A company could only be found liable for manslaughter by gross negligence if the fault element of the offence was possessed by someone....who could be identified as the directing mind and will of the company itself (Horder 2012 OUP, p124)
  2. The common law identification principal is also refined further by virtue of the fact that an organisation's liability may now be established by "aggregating the cumulative conduct of a collective of senior managers" (Griffin & Moran 2010 Journal of Criminal Law 74 p380)\*\*
  3. The 2007 Act (Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide) makes it possible to convict (an organisation) on the basis of collective failings that must include, but are not restricted to, failings on the part of senior managers.

\*\*qv J Crosthwait, Moral Personality of Corporations, Oxford PhilSoc Review Autumn/Winter 2015



# And Finally (2): Ethics, Morality, Responsibility and the Law

- Can an organisation be held responsible in law?

A: Soldiers have been and still are liable to be individually held accountable for actions taken “in the heat of battle” or the coldness of the prison, cf Iraq, Falklands, NI

BRA: generally applicable – “I see my role as a strategic one; it is about direction and planning and not about day to day operations”. Senior Manager, busy washing his/her hands

R: Disciples of (especially) monotheistic faiths do not seek freedom of choice, rather freedom *from* choice. If freedom means letting others live as they please, there will be many who are happy to be without freedom themselves\*\*.

\*\* John Gray, Soul of the Marionette, Allan Lane 2015

**FIN**