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Abstract

A subject that eludes a consensus definition, security is an amalgam of disciplines that is moving inexorably towards professionalisation. Yet identifying who or what defines a security professional remains as difficult and elusory as a comprehensive definition of security that captures all of its modern facets and many actors. The view of elevating such a discipline as security to the status of a profession provokes polarised opinions. This article reviews the literature, examining what elements identify a security professional and exploring the significant themes and issues. To support these elements, security experts (n=27) were surveyed using a multidimensional scaling technique to assess what constitutes a suitable and validated body of knowledge. It is concluded that many of the issues pivotal for progressing security towards professionalism are being addressed; however, there exists a need for research into developing a consensus and functional unity among the various branches of the security profession, and to identify emergent issues that affect security as a profession. One approach put forward by this study was that a singular body of knowledge, in part, that can aid in the understanding of security.

INTRODUCTION

The role of security in society has evolved to encompass a myriad of disciplines, giving rise to challenges in defining a modern concept of security. This has been characterised by "something of a cottage industry" (Baldwin, 1997, p. 5) that churns out definitional variations of security in a vain attempt to explicate the concept before it broadened further by political and social changes. The definitional difficulties that have plagued the concept of security have also extended to the roles of its practitioners. The problems of defining a profession appear to be at least as contentious as those of defining security, with reactions to definitions either "polarised toward an unenthusiastic and uncritical acceptance or toward a rancorous and defensive rejection" (Cogan, 1955, p. 105). The combination of these two definitional conundrums naturally leads to some difficulty in identifying who or what constitutes a security professional. Despite these challenges, the evolution of the practice of security has been remarkably contemporaneous with the shift towards globalisation.

Kavalski (2009), asserts that security is alone among professions in "taking the discontinuities of global life seriously… [and] dancing to the timescaped rhythms of uncertainty, cognitive challenges, complex risks, and exasperation prompted by the heterogeneity of global life" (p. 527). Yet it is the increasing complexity of the relatively young profession of security, which continues to keep step with an "increasingly complex and interdependent world" (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 181). Such complexity results in the security professional being "extremely difficult to identify and describe" (Cogan, 1955, p. 105) or multidimensional in nature, with many practising domains and heterogeneous occupations (D. J Brooks, 2010, in review).

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to determine what elements identify a security professional through a review of the literature, to explore the significant themes and issues, and to identify any emerging issues. Therefore the study considered a number of discrete objectives, namely:

1. What elements define and support the security professional?
2. What elements will most assist the drive to a security professional?

There is an ever increasing reliance by both public and private sectors to deliver security, as public policing no longer has a monopoly on such services (Bradley & Sedgwick, 2009, p. 468). It is as important to be able to provide an understanding and demarcation of security discipline; however, there has been limited research in presenting an understanding of security.

A DEFINITIONAL DILEMMA

Securus is the Latin root of the English word 'security', meaning "free from danger" (Craighead, 2003, p. 21), which according to Fischer and Green (2004) "implies a stable, relatively predictable environment… without disruption or harm and without fear of disturbance or injury" (p. 21). In an astute observation, Borodzicz and Gibson (2006, p. 182) point out that security should not be so much defined as an objective, but rather as a dynamic process that is responsive to time and place. The concept of security has gradually altered throughout history "as a response to, and a reflection of, a changing society" (Fischer & Green, 2004, p. 21). As Brooks (2006) states, "security may present very different meanings to different people given time, place and context" (p. 11).

Changes in social structure and perceptions may be gradual, or they may undergo sudden and dramatic shifts caused by events such as the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in 2001. The advent of globalisation and the information age has created the ability to broadcast news as fast as it occurs via "hypercoverage" (Reid, 2002, p. 63), creating a "CNN effect" (Taylor, 2002, p. 23) which compounds dramatic shifts in social perceptions, creating more pronounced, widespread, and swift changes in concepts such as security than at any other time in history. Undeniably, the world has undergone a dramatic shift in the perception of security in the last decade, creating the most significant changes to the field since the Second World War (Fischer & Green, 2004, p. 3). This has inevitably led to debate over the new conception of security, the responsibilities of the security practitioner, and how the role of the security professional should be defined.

According to Burke (2008), "imagining security as a universal experience obscures the concrete *practices* it names and mobilises" (p. 9). To be useful, security must be defined in terms of its practices. Burke (2008) argues that simple positivist interpretations of security risk create sweeping generalised and ambiguous definitions. One of the key issues to arise out of the post-9/11 security environment is whether the concept of security should be broadened or narrowed. According to Rasmussen (2004), a division was created post-9/11 between those academics who proposed simply adding terrorism to the list of issues that made up the concept of security and those who argued that the continuous broadening of the concept pre-9/11 had clouded an understanding of the "new dangers of the 21st century" (p. 384). Despite efforts to narrow the concept of security in order to aid the quest for a universal definition (Manunta, 1999), the "international fight against terrorism and related threats has shifted security into an ambiguous arena where security is presented within many diverse domains" (Brooks, 2006, p. 11). If the concept of security is constantly shifting in response to social and political forces, so too must the definition of security professional.

Compounding the problem of identifying who or what constitutes a security professional is the difficulty in pinning down what constitutes a professional. Cogan (1955), attempts to clarify the term *profession* by identifying three levels of definition, including a *historical* definition, a *persuasive* definition, and an *operational* definition, (Cogan, 1955, pp. 106-108). A survey of the body of literature that attempts to define the term *profession* by the Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce (2008a), revealed several key principles that embody the concept of *profession* "across such occupations as legal practice, medicine, education and pharmacy" (p. 26), including knowledge, competency, learning, ethics, and membership within an association of peers (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 26). More recent work by this industry driven group, part funded by the Australian Attorney-General's Department, includes attempting to raise the professionalism of the security industry by having a security practitioners register, based on the principles of professionalism (Australasian Council of Security Professionals, n.d.).

Traditional professions such as law and medicine meet each of Cogan's (1955) three levels of definition; however, the relatively young profession of *security* appears to suffer from somewhat of an image problem. In the past, the Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce (2008a) have cited "a lack of understanding… of the difference between… those providing front-line operational services… and those providing professional services" (p. 4) as one of the key factors in limiting the contribution of security professionals to Australia's security and safety.

FACETS OF SECURITY

Borodzicz and Gibson (2006) present a useful framework, which identifies the "four key internal drivers of security" (p. 180), as criminology, risk, terrorism and management. The shift in the conception of security in the 21st century has "pushed security to the forefront of the criminological agenda" (Zender, 2009).When security is considered as a criminological function, it naturally opens up the debate of public versus private security. According to Borodzicz and Gibson (2006), "security is no longer an exclusive organ of the State; it is now a commercial service industry available to those who can afford it" (p. 183). Crawford (2006) argues that perceiving security to be solely a function of criminology and policing tends to focus attention on "the question of who employs officers rather than the interests (public or private) that they serve" (p. 462). Security provides freedom from danger (Craighead, 2003, p. 21), and freedom from danger naturally implies some level of safety. Safety is a value held by "individuals, states, and other social actors… [and] may include physical safety" (Baldwin, 1997, p. 13). Kavalski (2009), states that the concept of

security includes the "need to seek safety and avoid harm" (p. 535). It is here that a criminological interpretation of security is insufficient, as security must encompass a wider range of risks "than simply those caused by criminal activity" (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 185). Whether a risk is characterised by purely natural events or by human activity, either deliberate or unintentional, "it is likely that the security function will be involved in dealing with the consequences, particularly if unpredicted" (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 186).

The pre-emption of risk, therefore, becomes the domain of security through risk management (De Goede, 2008, p. 158). According to Standards Australia's Security risk management handbook, the management of security risk "is a key and fundamental part of… wider risk management activities… [and] should be interlinked… with all other risk management activities" (Standards Australia, 2006, p. 3). The only difference between security risk management and the wider risk management activity is "the application of discipline specific knowledge" (Standards Australia, 2006, p. 3), suggesting that security holds a large enough body of knowledge to warrant a specific application of risk management. However, the distinction between security related catastrophic risks and those of a non-security nature is becoming increasingly blurred, expanding the security professional's portfolio to also include business continuity and crisis management (Omand, 2004). Paradoxically, it has largely been the response to the perceived increase in the risk of transnational terrorism that has stimulated the growth of security responsibility to encompass other crises.

As terrorism has lost its borders, so too has security in its role as a counterterrorism function. Lefebvre (2003) states that "the transnational nature of several terrorist organizations… implies that their detection, disruption, and elimination can succeed fully only if done globally" (p. 527). As a result, there have been calls for further research into and development of transnational security networks (Wood & Dupont, 2006) as the increasingly "transnational nature of security threats makes isolation an impossible option" (Lefebvre, 2003, p. 537). This has stimulated dramatic growth in private security, with "transnational corporations… becoming increasingly important contractors of private security services" (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008, p. 134). Nowhere has this been more infamously apparent than in Iraq where the United States military has increasingly outsourced many security related activities, resulting in the blurring of distinctions "between private security companies, private military companies, and defence contractors" (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 182). Now that it has gained momentum, the privatisation of military activities has expanded to become global big business, raising "fundamental analytical, political, and ethical questions" (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008, p. 132).

THE ROAD TO PROFESSIONALISATION

A review of the literature shows that security is continuing to evolve through the uncertainties of globalisation and the information age (Kavalski, 2009, p. 527) towards a "new professionalism" (Fischer & Green, 2004, p. 32). Brooks (2006) is confident that security is moving towards becoming a more united discipline, as it "becomes more professional, concepts are developed and defined, and tertiary education increases to support the discipline" (p. 11). At present, security appears to have begun its journey down the road to becoming a profession, and the question is now *how far has it come* and *how far does it need to go*? In 2008, the Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce published a discussion paper (2008a) with the aim of generating debate on a range of key issues facing security professionals including defining the security professional, key standards, professional status, education requirements, professional regulation and accountability, and professional unity (p. 8). These key issues stem from five criteria identified as being the required characteristics for the security profession "to be considered a profession in its own right" (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 10). These include agreed and enforced standards of behaviour/ethics, standards of education, formal requirement for professional development, a college of peers and a distinct body of knowledge (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 10).

Education and training

Burnham (1998) states that professions emerged historically through a process of passing on "an inherited body of knowledge that practitioners followed and professed" (p. 7). Professional bodies of knowledge are both "academic and practical" (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 27) and therefore require both training and education in order to be passed on (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 192). How well defined is security's knowledge base has also been the subject of debate. It has been argued that security lacks a defined knowledge structure (Smith, 2001), and that much of the knowledge structure remains in the realm of expert knowledge (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2008; Smith, 2001) making the task of providing appropriate education and training a difficult one (Brooks, 2006, p. 10). In order to rectify this situation, the Security Professionals' Taskforce have proposed creating an security umbrella entity which would be tasked with, among other things, defining and promoting "the development of formal bodies of knowledge [and] recognising the need for qualifications and competency standards" (Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008, p. 4).

A code of ethics

Ethical considerations are also one of the core issues at the heart of the debate over security professionalisation. There are emerging issues that are receiving little research consideration, including the influence of globalisation on "emergent hybrid and transnational security practices" (van Buuren, 2009, p. 6). Evetts (2006) identifies standards and codes of ethics "that are monitored and operationalised by professional institutes and associations" (p. 141) as one of the key features of occupational professionalism. One of the broadly supported outcomes of the 2008 Security Professionals' Congress was the development of an in principle statement for the advancement of security professionals, which states that associations involved with security professionals should "have an enforceable code of ethics that recognises the importance of stakeholders including the community, clients and professionals" (Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008, p. 4). Codes of ethics must be legitimised through some form of peak regulation, as well as through legislation and regulation (Borodzicz & Gibson, 2006, p. 184). Pepper (2003) also argues that a code of ethics implies "that there must be a governing body that will control the actions of members of the profession" (p. 2), and that security has no such governing body. The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce (2008a, pp. 33-34), proposed a variety of solutions to this issue, including an association of associations, appointing a lead association, or creating an associated society for all of the security related professional and industry associations in Australia. The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce (2008a) noted that even using the behavioural standards adopted by well established professions, the question of a code of ethics for the security professional is "a matter for considerable discussion and debate" (p. 28).

Professional development

The concept of continuing professional development as a hallmark of professionalism is becoming more widely used in a variety of occupations a workplaces (Evetts, 2006, p. 134). Requirements for competency and continuing professional development are also one of the key elements of professional codes of ethics (The Interim Security Professionals Taskforce, 2008b). The Interim Security Professionals Taskforce (2008a), identified four possible frameworks on which to base the "standards, qualifications and continuing professional development requirements… for security professionals" (p. 15), including the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which would be based solely on qualifications rather than a combination of qualifications and experience; certification levels based on responsibility and competence which would combine the AQF and relevant experience into a points-based system; a role-based requirements framework, where the level of experience in strategic, operational, and tactical responsibilities are used; or alignment with Security Risk Management Body of Knowledge (SRMBOK) Practice Areas and Activity Areas where the activities of security professionals are assessed against five practice areas (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 11). The disciplinary diversity of modern security also creates challenges in the area of professional development, and developing functional unity among the various branches of the security profession is another issue requiring further research.

A college of peers

A college of peers refers to an "association or organisation of people with a common interest, religion, or profession" (The Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romae Project, n.d.). According to the Interim Security Professionals Taskforce—renamed Australasian Council of Security Professionals (n.d.; 2008a)—a college of peers would provide security professionals with "arrangements that link peers together and recognise other practitioners of the discipline as their fellows" (p. 28). Hadorn et al (2007) state that any attempt to integrate transdisciplinary research "requires the development of integrative methodology and a college of peers" (p. 411). Given the transdisciplinary nature of the security profession, and the need for some form of functional transdisciplinary unity, a college of peers provide a focal point peer association and the establishment of ethics and standards (The Interim Security Professionals' Taskforce, 2008a, p. 28).

A body of knowledge

There is some debate as to whether there exists an adequate body of knowledge to meet the needs of the criteria for professionalisation of security (Pepper, 2003, p. 2). Morin (cited in Knyazeva, 2004) laments over the "disjointed, piecemeal, compartmentalized" (p. 531) state of human knowledge in general, although his discourse is remarkably applicable to the state of security's body of knowledge, which is also increasingly "polydisciplinary, transversal, multidimensional, transnational, [and] global" (p. 531). This view is echoed in Bergin, Azarias, and Williams (2008) argument that security practitioners' "lack of mutual understanding and respect for each other's knowledge is a key factor that has limited the successful interaction between [security] sectors" (p. 2). Cogan (1955) asserts that a profession requires a "unified body of knowledge" (p. 106), which cannot be achieved while there is a dearth of adequate standards that define the knowledge expected of the security professional (The Interim Security Professionals'

Taskforce, 2008a, p. 4). However, there have been a number of studies that have put forward relevant security bodies of knowledge.

DEFINITION THROUGH A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The study reviewed existing bodies of knowledge studies that focused on what could be considered appropriate security. These studies included an introductory course in organisational security (Nalla, 2001), Integrated Framework of Organisational Security (Brooks, 2009), Security Risk Management Body of Knowledge (Talbot & Jakeman, 2008) and ASIS International Symposiums (ASIS International, 2009). The integration of these studies and multidimensional analysis resulted in a singular framework of security.

Security bodies of knowledge

Nalla (2001) explored the core components of an introductory course in organisational security, where nine security topics were ranked important drawn from benchmarking security textbooks, security professional's interviews and proceedings of the ASIS first academic/practitioner symposium. The study emphasised, to a lesser degree, the consensus on the conceptual and methodological components of security education such as fire safety, workplace violence and workplace drug use. However, this study was considered too narrow in approach and lacking core and relevance put forward by others, such as Brooks (2008; 2009), ASIS International (2009), and Talbot and Jakeman (2008).

Brooks (2008; 2009) investigated and critiqued 104 security related undergraduate security courses from Australia, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States. From this critique, 2001 security concepts were extracted and 14 implicit practising areas of security proposed with a framework (Figure 1). In addition, this study used other related body of knowledge studies (American Society for Industrial Security, 2002; Bazzina, 2006) to support and valid these security related practising areas.

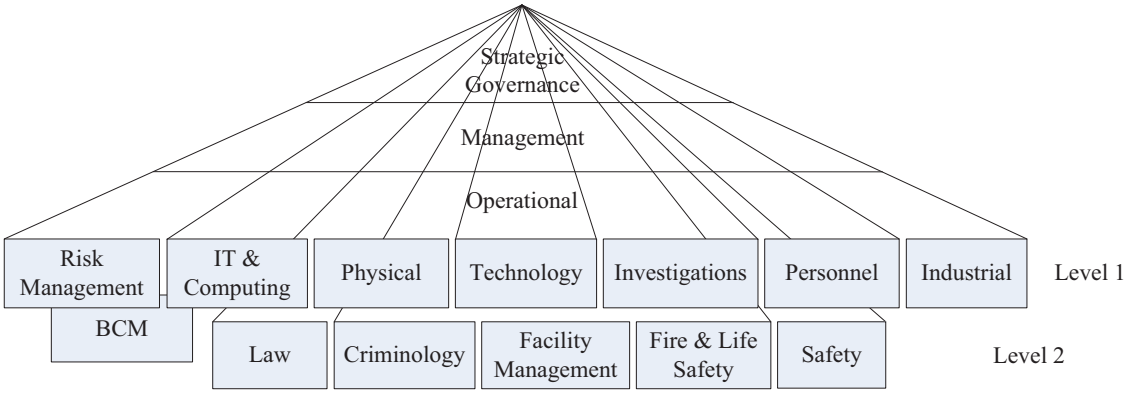

Figure 1. Integrated framework of organisational security. (Brooks, 2009)
Note: BCM = Business Continuity Management, comprising of crisis, emergency and business recovery

ASIS International (2009) academic/practitioner symposium continues to develop a security body of knowledge. The most recent 2009 symposium attempted to gain an understanding of the security body of knowledge, understand what disciplines security may extract its knowledge categories from, what knowledge categories are core, how can these knowledge categories be used and to consider if consistency and consensus can be gained? In addition, a list of 18 knowledge categories was put forward as the symposium's security model (Table 1).

Table 1
ASIS International Symposium security model.

Security model		
Physical security	Personnel security	Information security systems
Investigations	Loss prevention	Risk management
Legal aspects	Emergency/continuity planning	Fire protection
Crisis management	Disaster management	Counterterrorism
Competitive intelligence	Executive protection	Violence in the workplace
Crime prevention	CPTED	Security architecture & engineering

(ASIS International, 2009)

Multidimensional analysis of a security body of knowledge

Using the sum of the knowledge categories from these past studies, the study used multidimensional scaling (MDS) to map the participating experts' knowledge structure (Figure 2). The categories of *security* and *security management* were both located relatively central in respect to the other knowledge categories, indicating more abstract ideas. In addition, the categories of *law* and *industrial security* were located between these two categories. Why *law* was located in such a locality would require greater research, perhaps with greater in-depth interviews with the expert participants. Nevertheless, it is postulated that law may be located at this point because it is a fundamental principle by which society and its members exists, and is therefore a foundation for security.

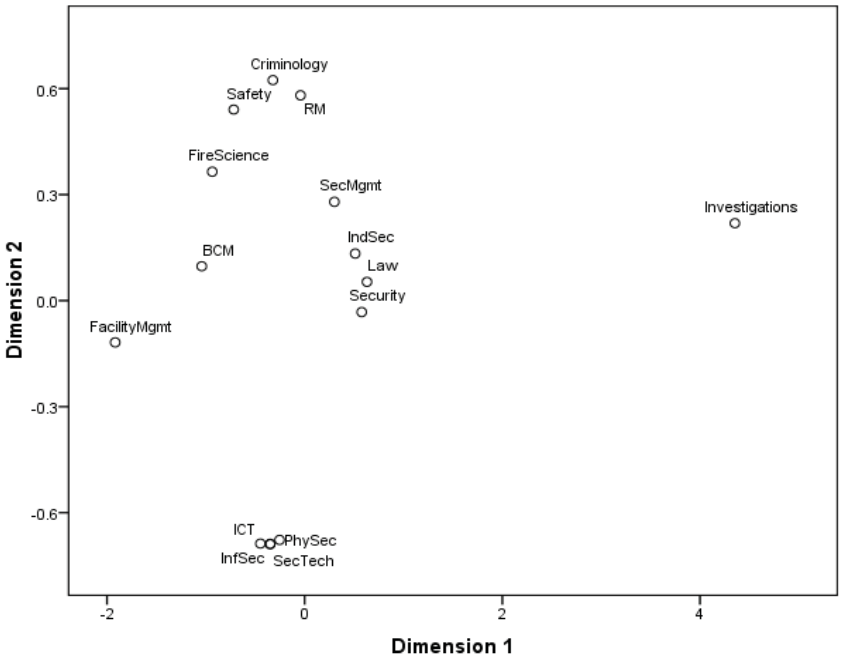

Figure 2. MDS expert knowledge structure of organisational security.
(SSTRESS1=0.222; 0.992 Cronbach Alpha)

The technology categories of *physical security*, *security technology*, *ICT* and *information security* were spatially clustered, indicating similarity of concepts and that these functions are closely related. Nevertheless, it was proposed that *information security* was not necessarily a technology category, related more to *security management* as a procedural function. As Talbot and Jakeman (2008) states, the knowledge category *information and computer* should be divided into two discrete categories, namely *information security* and *information communications technology* (ICT); however, according to the MDS knowledge structure these were viewed as similar categories and should perhaps remain as one knowledge category. *Investigations* was found relatively separated from the other knowledge categories and b Based on this locality, suggested that investigations is not a core knowledge category of security. Finally, Figure 1 put forward that *risk management* and *business continuity management* (BCM) would be similar and therefore clustered. Nevertheless MDS placed these two categories relatively apart from each other, indicating that these categories as quite discrete functions.

Reflecting from the interpretations of the MDS knowledge structure of security (Figure 2), the integrated framework of security (Figure 3) was adjusted. Adjustments to the framework included the relocation of *business continuity management* to Level 1 and *investigations* to Level 2. The categories of *security technology* and *information technology and computing* were integrated into a single category of *security technology*. From discussions with the participating experts, it was suggested that *security intelligence* should be included as a supporting organisational security category.

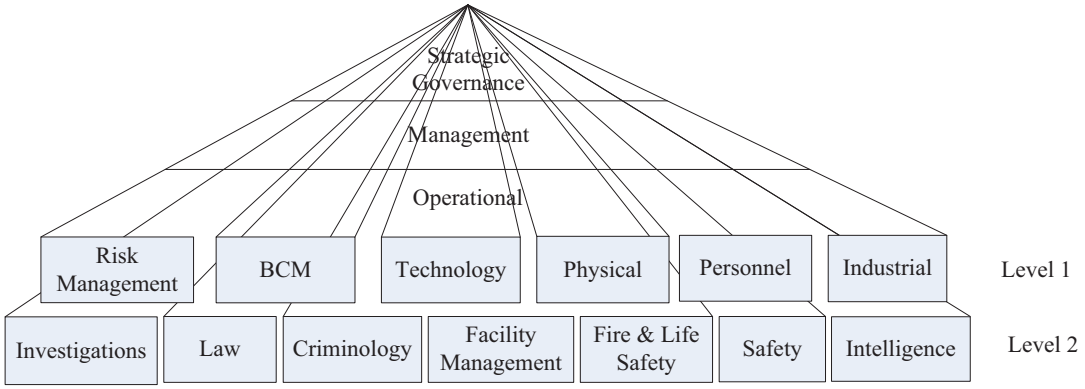

Figure 3. Integrated framework of security or Security Science.
Notes: BCM = Business Continuity Management; Technology = security technology, information technology and computing

PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Simonsen (1996) has argued that security may be considered a profession, due to the fact that "individual groups of security practitioners" (p. 229) are approaching fulfilment of a set of criteria consisting of standards and ethics, a body of knowledge, a recognised association, a certification program, and an educational discipline. Nevertheless, Pepper (2003) argues that security is not a profession due to its failure to meet "certain criteria such as those normally expected of the medical and legal professions" (p. 1), such as a having a governing body to regulate standards and ethics, and a its relatively small body of knowledge. However, holding security up the standard of the medical profession may be misleading. According to Burnham (1998), it was twentieth century historians that began treating medicine as the "model profession" (p. 2) based on a definition of *profession* that involved altruism and power, "of which medicine, of all professions, had the most of both" (Burnham, 1998, p. 2).

If a combination of philanthropy and authority is the necessary standard of professionalism to which all other professions must be measured, one wonders whether the legal profession could still be considered as such. Simonsen (1996) may see the glass as half full and Pepper (2003) may see it as half empty, but either way, there is something in the glass. Given the "ambiguous arena" (Brooks, 2006, p. 11) in which security resides post-9/11, the difficulty in defining the security professional is knowing where the definitional boundary lie today and where it may lie tomorrow. Nevertheless, the article has put forward a body of knowledge developed from others that may allow some of issues raised in this article to be addressed and boundaries presented. Once such a consensual body of knowledge has been validated and supported at the tertiary level, some of the other professional elements such as education and training, professional development and a college of peers may have a better opportunity of being achieved.

CONCLUSION

The role of security in society has evolved to encompass a myriad of disciplines, giving rise to challenges in defining a modern concept of security. Compounding the problem of identifying who or what constitutes a security professional is the difficulty in pinning down what constitutes a professional. Security is many faceted and is a dynamic process that is responsive to time and place. Identifying a security professional by the practices and functions that currently define security is as problematic as satisfactorily defining *security* or *profession* in isolation. Security is continuing to evolve through the uncertainties of globalisation, and so too is the burgeoning security profession. Although many of the issues that are pivotal in progressing security towards professionalism are being addressed, there exists a need for research into developing a consensus and functional unity among the various branches of the security profession, and to identify emergent issues that affect security as a profession, such as ethical considerations of transnational security practices. There is little agreement on definitions, but there is also little argument against the fact that the dramatic change in social structure and perceptions post-9/11 has changed security forever, and that change appears to be pushing security inexorably towards becoming a new profession.

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