

## Comments from the Editor

Preparing this issue of *Insights* I realized how quickly time passes. This issue represents three years of what I still think of as the AIB's "new" publication. It is appropriate, as I plan to turn over the editorship to a new editor, to have a bit of a retrospective of what *Insights* has accomplished in the three years since it began. I believe *Insights* has filled an important niche – it publishes thought provoking articles that do not really 'fit' elsewhere. We have had many complimentary comments about the publication, as well as many requests to use the material published in *Insights*. A new editor will soon be appointed, and will put her/his own unique stamp on upcoming issues, but the concept of providing 'insightful' articles will continue. During the past three years, *Insights* articles have ranged from commentaries on dramatic current events (the September 11 terrorist attacks in the USA) to reflections on past events (the first attempt at a non-USA AIB meeting, in Turkey). *Insights* has included issues with a particular focus (Down-Under international business perspectives) to issues with essentially unrelated articles. A major feature of *Insights* is the ability to react quickly, and publish articles that are particularly relevant to current issues and events.



Betty Jane (BJ)  
Punnett, Editor

A recent sad event serves as the main basis for this June, 2003 issue of *Insights* – one of our well-known and well-respected colleagues, Michael Brooke, passed away. Michael was among the "founding fathers" of the academic international business field. It seems appropriate at this time to review Michael Brooke's own review of his international business career, to provide a retrospective on the development of the field. The main article in this issue of *Insights* is based on Michael's 1994 paper written for JIBS. Jean Boddewyn suggested this focus for the current *Insights*, and he has written an introductory note to accompany the excerpts from Michael's article. There are many insights to be gained from the founders of the field, and their thoughts remain valuable guides for all of us. We, therefore, dedicate this issue of *Insights* to Michael Brooke.

A second article in this issue highlights a perennial challenge that academics and researchers face – ensuring that research adheres to the highest standards of ethics. John Rushing's article entitled "The Challenge of Research Ethics" is based around a dialogue with a student, and illustrates the issues that surface when we, maybe subconsciously, hope for certain research results. We probably cannot eliminate our subjective biases, but this article offers valuable insights to help increase our awareness of them; and awareness, itself, offers insights into our likely biases, thus allowing us to minimize their influence.

*Comments and suggestions should be sent to the Editor*

*Please send articles and classroom material to the editor for consideration for upcoming Insights - consider reprints of speeches you have made*

*Readers are encouraged to submit comments, for possible inclusion in future Insights*

*Insights* provides an outlet for short, topical, stimulating, and provocative articles. Please submit materials for consideration to the editor - Betty Jane Punnett at [eureka@caribsurf.com](mailto:eureka@caribsurf.com). Submissions are reviewed by the Advisory Board

These can be accessed through the AIB Website  
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## Submission Information

- Submissions to *Insights* can be sent at any time to the editor.
- Submissions may be electronic, by fax, or by mail. *Electronic submissions are preferred.*
- Submissions will be reviewed by the Editor to ensure material is appropriate for *Insights*, then the advisory board will comment on submissions.
- For consideration for specific editions, submissions must reach the editor by the following dates:

1st Quarter: December 15

2nd Quarter: March 15

3rd Quarter: June 15

4th Quarter: September 15

- Articles should be approximately 2-3 printed pages.
- Exercises, simulations, and other material should include all the information needed for use in the classroom. Material submitted should not contravene any copyrights.
- Blunders should be based on real-world events and should be new - i.e., not previously published, or disseminated in other media.

*We look forward to your comments and submissions.*

- BJ

# Remembering Michael Brooke

Jean Boddewyn - Baruch College

**M**ichael Brooke passed away at the age of eighty-two on 1 April, 2003. He was a Fellow of the Academy of International Business, the Founder of the AIB's UK Chapter in 1973, and the writer of more than 20 books, including one on New Product Development, published shortly before his death. I knew him for many years as a spirited person and scholar, as well as a friend. I last saw him in 1994, when he took my wife and me on an energetic tour of Manchester and its environs – one of his side businesses in later years. What a tragedy it was when diabetes led to a leg amputation for a man in constant physical and intellectual motion.

The piece in this issue of *Insights* is based on the autobiographical piece that Michael Brooke wrote for JIBS in 1994 (together with three others by John Fayerweather, Richard Robinson, and Raymond Vernon). It highlights his professional itinerary, as well as his research and service philosophies.

For those of us who came to international business research and education in more recent decades, Michael recounts many crucial life passages, of which we are the beneficiaries:

- Introducing an IB program amidst much indifference
- Finding qualified teachers for an essentially new field
- Doing research from a rare sociological – rather than economic or psychological – perspective
- Relying on intensive interviews and the longitudinal analysis of company documents – rather than mail questionnaires and statistical analysis
- Emphasizing consultancy and other in-depth projects to develop a body of knowledge about international business
- Fighting to keep European scholars within the AIB, rather than in a separate organization (EIBA) - underscoring his dedication to the AIB.

Michael's 1970 book (with Lee Remmers) on *The Strategy of Multinational Enterprise* constituted a milestone when few monographs were available. For those interested in centralization and autonomy, this book remains a classic in terms of its still-relevant and thought-provoking analysis of control challenges in multinational enterprises.

Michael Brooke started his academic career at forty, and left it at sixty to do other worthwhile things - he was an ordained minister (as at least two other AIB Presidents have been). This little known background of some AIB members underscores the importance of moral and universal concerns in the study of international business. Michael's life and accomplishments can inspire us all to greater aspirations and contributions.

# Some Excerpts and Paraphrases from “The Brooke Story: A Professional Half-Life in International Business”

Michael Z. Brooke

Journal of International Business Studies, 1994, Fourth Quarter, 667-673

Professor Brooke begins his story:

“So the Journal of International Business Studies wants my autobiography. Right. I am (of course) much amazed, deeply honoured and even more bewildered”

He continues:

“My move into international business scholarship was *pure chance and serendipity* .... My first two published articles were both entitled ‘A Bachelor of Arts on the Coalface’. In a prolonged fit of youthful idealism, I left the pit to train as an Anglican priest, eventually becoming an industrial chaplain.”

Fortunately for the International Business field, Professor Brooke found Mayo’s Social Problems of an Industrial Civilization and a reference to Le Play – he read Les Ouvriers Europeens and was fascinated by the cameos relevant to management across cultural boundaries. He obtained funding from the University of Manchester and the French government to develop studies of Le Play. At the same time he worked on a master’s degree in industrial sociology.

Michael Brooke responded to an advertisement, in the 1960s, for a research assistantship into strategy

formulation in multinational companies. He worked with Peter Smith, who commuted between Manchester (UMIST) and Fontainebleau (INSEAD), who also supervised Lee Remmers, who was then working on financial policies in multinationals.

According to Professor Brooke:

“A bringing together of the two research programmes – Remmers and mine – produced a book entitled *The Strategy of Multinational Enterprise* (1970). The title undoubtedly helped the book’s sales but I deplore it nowadays when the word “strategy” is applied to every petty decision and when the word “multinational” has given rise to swollen and time-wasting bureaucracy of definition-mongers.”

Professor Brooke was appointed to a teaching post “in a department called Industrial Administration” and “As the department expanded, I had to fight to introduce courses on international business”. Staffing was a major challenge, because of the shortage of suitably qualified people, and “In order to achieve agreement on the launching of international business courses, I undertook in the first year to co-opt colleagues in other specializations to take part in the programme.” He was “appalled

at the results – the international dimensions hardly surfaced.”

Michael Brooke proceeded to “plan a series of researches”, intended to promote a body of knowledge on “the various specializations that confront the international manager – export, knowledge agreements, investment, finance, planning and staffing across cultural boundaries as well as industry and regional studies.” Of The Strategy of Multinational Enterprise, he says “My small contribution was to re-examine observed phenomena in international firms in the light of concepts devised by sociologists studying complex organizations (especially Amitai Etzioni).” He goes on to say that his most important contribution was Centralization and Autonomy, which was “a serious and sustained attempt to reach behind concepts like centralization to give them a meaning they lack in most writings on the subject.” Unfortunately the book did not receive much exposure because its publishing house was closed by the parent company and he comments “I shall die convinced that my dearest wish – to promote a dialogue that would carry otherwise banal studies of a once-fashionable business style onto a higher plane – was thwarted by the machinations of one multinational firm”.

Professor Brooke headed a research unit – the International Business Unit (although he comments that he prefers the title “International Management because it promotes a more active and realistic image than International Business”). This unit arranged a one-day conference in 1973, which was organized “in the

way I consider ideal for such events, that is, apart from one formal speech, no one was asked to submit a paper but *everyone* was invited to talk about their research and teaching activities.” This meeting was stimulated by an invitation to become chair of the United Kingdom chapter of the AIB. His support for AIB is evidenced in the statement “Meeting with fellow AIB members is always a great experience; one knows that one is rubbing shoulders with others who have lived with and absorbed the fascinating complexities of the subject.”

In contrast, his visiting professorships in North America left him with a distaste for the case method – “I cannot believe that I shall ever get used to the case study method of teaching with its pretence of realism that only succeeds in stimulating ineffective and mannered verbal gymnastics. Nowadays, I find the alleged realism remote from the decisions I have to take in business.”

Professor Brooke concludes his JIBS paper by highlighting three main themes:

- The wonderful openings that luck can provide
- The effort to bridge the canyon between academic research and management practice
- The gradual emergence of a professional approach to international business

He summarizes his major aims and accomplishments as follows:

- A life-time commitment to the subject
- A willingness to study develop-

ments at length and in depth

- Construction of a body of knowledge
- A sociological base for understanding and interpreting actions and interactions of a variety of groups (“a problem of international business, like all management, is that it has been taken over by economists and accountants using narrow and ill-defined concepts”)
- Membership in the premier professional organization – AIB – and attendance at its meetings
- Involvement in academic and business activities without compromising academic rigour, impartiality and detachment.

He concludes while listening to “the evocative music of ‘Les Chants d’Auvergne’ .... – the haunting music recalling the haunting fascination of these mighty international octopuses that we call multinational firms.”

Clearly, Professor Brooke was fascinated by international business and management, and his lifetime achievements give us all much to remember, consider, and emulate.

# The Challenge of Research Ethics

By Dr. John A. Rushing, Sr.

“I am confused,” my student said as she pointed to the journal articles on the table. “They are both written by respected authors. They both are published in respected peer-reviewed journals. They both describe research on the same problem and they reach very dissimilar conclusions. How do I know which is right?” It is difficult not to be a little self-satisfied when undergraduate students are behaving like intelligent consumers of information. But I had that niggling disturbance in the temple that suggested the student may have surfaced a very real question we need to ask ourselves. It has to do with the ethics of research.

I replied “And what did we discuss in class about the first questions we might want to ask in evaluating articles?” “Well, who wrote the article, that is, the credentials of the authors. Also, where is the articles published; is the source a peer-reviewed respected journal.” “What is the key question?” -- I waited -- “Not sure what you mean.” She hesitated. “Who paid for the research? Who sponsored it?” -- I waited.

“But if this is science conducted by ethical people and published in quality journals, why should that matter?”

“Why indeed?” I thought. But we know the answer.

In the classic science fiction film “Forbidden Planet” a very advanced race discovered the way to transform their thoughts into reality. This accomplishment doomed the entire race, as “monsters from the id” were unleashed from the recesses of their subconscious minds and made real – these ravaged their society. In our society, Geert Hofstede and Sigmund Freud, writing in different times and for different audiences came to one similar conclusion - as humans we are often guided by mental programs and motives which are largely below our conscious minds (Hofstede, 2001; Freud, 1937). This conclusion has important implications for research ethics. As professors and leaders we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard, lest we be destroyed by our own monsters from the id.

## An Example

Recently, there has been a great push toward distance learning via the web, but for a long time little attention was paid to quality or learning outcomes. At best, superficial attention was paid in terms of asking students how they felt about their learning. A vocal few, such as

Ted, teaches at a small and very reputable university. He was encouraged to explore the comparative merits of online versus face-to-face course delivery (many of our institutions are responding to market pressures to offer on-line or blended course delivery and many academics are being encouraged to develop on-line courses). He craft-

teaching to the test. It was also clear that the term papers should have been double blind reviewed, to eliminate any possible grader bias or tendency to “stabilize” grading outcomes. Subconscious minimizing scoring differences would cause class averages to converge and thus make moot tests such as independent samples t-tests.

*“...even well intentioned, honest and professional individuals can fall prey to ethical difficulties in designing and executing research.”*

David Noble, have forced academe to look at the economics of distance learning as well as the quality of learning outcomes. (Noble, 2001). Consider the implications for research:

Let us suppose that your University has made it clear that “to be competitive in the global economy” the institution is committed to web learning.

Also suppose that after a heavy investment in faculty, infrastructure and marketing the institution wants to validate its conviction that students are being well served by web-based instruction. One final supposition -- you are to design, implement and evaluate a study of the comparative quality of learning outcomes in traditional face-to-face classes and web-delivered classes. It is apparent to you that the desired outcome is that web-delivered classes are fully equivalent to traditional classes, or better yet superior to them. Now what do you do?

A colleague of mine, call him

ed a research design which included measures of learning outcomes and student satisfaction:

Multiple professors taught two classes each, one face-to-face and one on-line, generating a sample sufficiently large for quantitative analysis. A standardized final exam was administered and the means of the class averages were compared to determine if there was a statistical difference in outcomes. Term projects were undertaken in each of the classes. The projects included term papers, graded using a standardized rubric. A sample of individual students was interviewed after the classes to better understand student satisfaction with the on-line and face to face classes

On reflection, Ted and his co-investigators reached the conclusion there were serious flaws in what they had done. The standardized test opened the door to subconsciously “teaching to the test”. In retrospect, use of a valid and reliable test bank, from which random exams could be drawn, would limit

The self-criticisms that arose from the research are a reminder that even well intentioned, honest and professional individuals can fall prey to ethical difficulties in designing and executing research. My friend told me he had the very uncomfortable feeling that below the conscious level he had been influenced to deliver outcomes which were preferred by his institution. He wondered aloud why he had not built into his initial research the safeguards he subsequently incorporated in the follow-up studies that are now in process. I have no doubts concerning “Ted’s” ethics. Quite the contrary, his ability to self-criticize and self-correct confirms his basic integrity.

What is to be learned from this case? Ted pointed out that there was no intention of the institution to reach false or misleading conclusions. That would not be in the interest of the institution either in the long run or the short run, and it would be grounds for dismissal for staff. Ted felt he had learned to stop, take a deep breath, and criti-

cally review research designs not only for best practices, but for “creeping self-deception.”

Thinking of Ted, I did my best to explain to my student that even ethical people may be influenced subconsciously to select methods, samples or processes that will bias outcomes. Since research methodology is complex to a high order of magnitude, the bias might not be apparent either to the researcher or even to a peer reviewer.

How then can we surface our own mental programs or motives to avoid subtle self-deception? Some find that checklists are helpful. Each of us may develop our own ethics

check-list, but however the list is crafted it must consider the lessons taught by Freud and Hofstede. Open and honest dialogue with our peers, including expressed concerns about mental programs and motives can act as an ethical mirror. The courage to confront our own motivations as well as those of sponsors of our research is critical. It is easy to suggest to a colleague that it is ethical to refuse to do questionable research or use methods that may skew results. It is altogether something else when one knows that refusal may have dire consequences for our own careers. Ethical research is a consequence of both intellectual hon-

esty and unrelenting courage. There is no magic bullet, no easy answer for these challenges. It is up to us to support and encourage each other in critical self examination, to defend courageous colleagues, and to challenge any who would attack our highest ethical values.

If we support the ethical high ground, perhaps, then, we can answer our students when they ask, “Why should that matter?”

## Research

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