

### Police and Military as Good Strangers

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this project was to understand why and how some police officers and military personnel are more effective than others at managing civilian encounters without creating hostility – “Good Strangers” (GSs). We conducted Cognitive Task Analysis (CTA) interviews with 17 U.S. police officers and 24 U.S. warfighters (Marines and Army soldiers). The interviews yielded a total of 38 incidents (17 police, 21 military), which we used to identify critical skills for functioning as GSs. These skills centered on having a sensemaking frame that established a professional identity as a GS – someone who seeks opportunities to increase civilian trust in police/military. This frame requires skills in gaining voluntary compliance, building rapport, trading-off security and other frames versus trust building, and taking the perspective of civilians.

#### **Practitioner Points:**

- To work effectively with civilians, police and military personnel need to use a Good Stranger frame, which casts each encounter as an opportunity to build trust.
- This GS frame requires skills such as trading off security in order to be seen as trustworthy, perspective taking, gaining rapport, gaining voluntary compliance rather than coercive compliance, and de-escalating tense situations.
- The GS frame may be surprisingly easy to acquire for some police and military; observation of role models and their effectiveness seems to be a powerful training opportunity. Other training leverage points involve peer pressure, becoming more effective at gaining civilian cooperation, and recognizing the problems created by failing to build trust.

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this project was to understand why and how police officers and military personnel can interact with civilians to gain good will and reduce antagonism. We studied warfighters and police officers because they face many of the same challenges and have learned lessons that might be useful. For police, civilian encounters are a primary aspect of the job, whereas civilian encounters have not been a high priority for the military until recently. Police officers have a variety of responsibilities in maintaining law and order (e.g., arresting criminals and providing security in their jurisdictions). Police are trained to gain coercive compliance including various forms of force and direct threats of firearms or tasers. However, some officers are skilled at gaining voluntary compliance, which is less likely to make civilians resentful and antagonistic.

The military faces similar issues. Historically, the U.S. military trained warfighters to engage against traditional national forces. They were prepared in the strategies and tactics of the battlefield that involved well-defined adversaries and clear rules of engagement. Soldiers were to adopt a ‘warrior’ mindset. However, United States troops are increasingly called upon to engage paramilitary forces and nationless adversaries in unconventional actions that are less well defined and predictable. They often are charged with fostering the stabilization of local communities. To succeed in these tasks they have to cultivate good relations with citizens. Simultaneously managing two roles – fighting adversaries and supporting civilians – presents difficult challenges. Just like police, warfighters are more effective in encounters with civilians if they can reduce coercion and prevent antagonism.

But how can police and military personnel obtain voluntary compliance? We recognize that in this context, compliance is never truly voluntary because it is backed up by the potential

to escalate to more coercive forms. However, this type of “voluntary” compliance – compliance gained without direct threats and overt coercion – is less likely to make civilians resentful and antagonistic than compliance gained through physical force, overt threats, and outright coercion.

In 2011, DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Programs Agency) initiated a program, “Strategic Social Interaction Modules” (SSIM), to use experiential simulation and other techniques to teach social skills so that military personnel can consistently gain voluntary compliance and maintain cooperative working arrangements with civilians. The goal of the SSIM program is to help military personnel develop the social interaction skills and human dynamics proficiencies demonstrated by those who are Good Strangers (GS) – to prepare them to create positive outcomes in social encounters. The nickname for the SSIM program is the “Good Strangers” project because the intent is to transform military personnel into agents who elicit trust and cooperation rather than hostility.

There is a large literature on ways for police and military to accomplish their missions without being provocative. We surveyed a range of publications on using “soft” methods of persuasion and influence (e.g., Cialdini, 1993; Thompson & Jenkins, 1993/2004; Glennon, 2010; Wilson, 2011; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). There is no lack of speculation about the skills needed by GSs, but we did not find any in-depth studies of how these skills were formed and implemented by police officers and warfighters. Therefore, we conducted Critical Decision method (CDM) interviews (G. Klein, Calderwood & MacGregor, 1989), a form of Cognitive Task Analysis, with police and military personnel who were identified as GSs, to try to understand what enabled them to work well with civilians. We reviewed 41 military and police reports and identified 24 different Knowledge/Skills/Abilities mentioned in these documents.

Currently, police academies include some form of preparation for interacting with civilians but have expressed a strong interest in expanding this type of training. The military has sought to provide GS training as a result of the counterinsurgency efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but the training is extremely expensive, involving a large number of role players in mock-up villages and city neighborhoods. With the cessation of U.S. military activities in Iraq and the wind-down in Afghanistan, and the reduced interest in counterinsurgency operations, these training facilities are being shrunk or closed. Nevertheless, military forces will still have to interact with civilians, and to act as GSs even when they aren't conducting counterinsurgency missions. Therefore, the SSIM GSs program should continue to be relevant to the military as well as to police departments.

As part of the SSIM program, we conducted Cognitive Task Analysis interviews with police and military to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of GSs, develop training materials and programs and advise other SSIM partners who are developing advanced experiential simulations. This paper describes our initial findings about how police officers and military personnel GSs make sense of challenging civilian encounters.

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

The participants were 17 experienced police officers from four jurisdictions within the U.S. and 24 warfighters, including both Marines and Army soldiers. The mean age was 39.7 years. Three of the police participants were female, and all of the military participants were male.

Supervisors from each organization selected the participants. We requested interview time with police and military personnel who were acknowledged by their supervisors to be GS

exemplars – professionals who had demonstrated superior abilities (compared to their peers) in engaging with civilians and in de-escalating rather than escalating situations involving conflict. The objective of the data collection was to identify the skills used by GSs and to understand how GSs make sense of challenging civilian encounters.

### **Data Collection Method**

**Job shadowing.** The interviewers conducted four ride-alongs: 8-10 hour shifts riding with four police officers as they conducted their patrols. The job shadowing involved one observer and one police officer in a patrol car during a shift.

**CDM interviews.** We used the Critical Decision method (CDM) as our CTA approach (G. Klein et al., 1989; Crandall, Klein & Hoffman, 2006). The CDM is an interview-based knowledge elicitation technique that elicits critical incidents to expose different types of expertise. The rationale is that expertise becomes important in handling tough cases. The CDM is a qualitative method, intended to complement more quantitative data collection efforts used by other research teams within the DARPA SSIM program. Two interviewers conducted all 41 CDM interviews, usually as a team except for four cases where, for scheduling reasons, they had to conduct solo interviews in parallel. Both interviewers have many decades of experience conducting CDM interviews. The interview data were collected in office spaces at the participants' work settings.

Each CDM interview consisted of four sweeps through every incident: a brief initial description, a timeline for the entire incident, identification of decisions and of changes in situation awareness during the incident, and final probes (e.g., hypothetical variations). We asked about specific incidents that the interviewee found challenging. The interviews with police examined challenging encounters with civilians. The interviews with military personnel examined critical

incidents the interviewee had experienced with civilians and with local military personnel during overseas deployments. The interviews lasted 39-123 minutes. The interviews were voice recorded and yielded more than 1,000 pages of transcripts.

Most interviews explored one or two incidents, but several had as many as three or four incidents. Three participants lacked any incident with sufficient detail to allow scoring. We excluded one story that came prior to a participant's military experience as well as six undeveloped stories.

The 41 interviews yielded 92 incidents (44 police, 48 military). We recorded the specific features of each incident along with the initiating event and the interviewee's early sense of the situation, including goals, threats, and key participants. We also recorded the decision points the interviewee encountered in each incident. We defined decision points as critical moments in the incident requiring the interviewee to make a decision. The police incidents included domestic violence calls, patrolling a gang funeral, and traffic stops. The military incidents involved a variety of missions, such as dispersal of protestors, transporting supplies, providing bank protection during money deliveries, de-escalating community anger at an accidental shooting, and handling check points. The material that follows includes examples from our interviews. The details of the examples have been altered to guard the anonymity of participants while retaining the dynamics of the interaction.

### **Data Coding**

**Interviewer global Good Stranger ratings.** Both interviewers independently reviewed each interview transcript and rated the interviewee on a 7-point scale, where 7 = Good Stranger and 1 = Bad Stranger. These ratings were based on a global impression from the interviews and the way the incidents were handled. Intraclass correlations (ICC) were used to evaluate rater

consistency (Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). The interviewers showed significant agreement ( $ICC(3,2) = .944$ ) in their ratings. Subsequent to the ratings, to justify their global impressions, the interviewers tried to identify the criteria they were using. The following characteristics contributed to their GS ratings: showing genuine concern for the needs of civilians, wanting to make a difference in people's lives, anger at other police officers acting inappropriately (e.g. abusing their authority), refusal to take provocations and insults personally (e.g. perspective taking and emotion regulation), taking pleasure in getting thanked after giving citations, and wanting to stay calm in tense situations.

**Incident & decision point coding.** To better understand the behavioral and cognitive strategies involved in being a GS, we selected each participant's most reflective incident for more thorough analyses. A participant's most reflective incident had to be a complete incident in which the interviewee was heavily involved in the decision-making and outcome of the situation. If the interviewee provided multiple incidents meeting these criteria, we selected the incident that contained the most decision points.

Two independent raters, not involved in the interview process, independently analyzed the selected 38 critical incidents (Police: 17 incidents, Military: 21 incidents). Three of the forty-one interviews did not generate an incident that could be coded. Prior to coding, both raters attained mutual understanding of the working definitions of the GS cognitive and behavioral dimensions described below.

**Coding scheme.** The interviewers' global impressions and additional research conducted within the DARPA SSIM program were then used to develop a behavioral and cognitive model of GS sensemaking. To mitigate overlapping features, we identified the core cognitive and be-

havioral principles involved in comprising the GS mindset (See Tables 1 & 2). Due to the nature of our data, we differentiated behaviors from cognitive processes.

***Behavioral strategies.*** These strategies involved six actions: de-escalates tense situations, builds rapport, reads non-verbal cues, takes prudent risks, shows curiosity about the civilian's odd behaviors, polices his/her own colleagues who may be acting inappropriately. These behaviors could be easily identified within the incidents. Raters coded actions taken by the interviewee. For every decision point within an incident, the six behavioral strategies were coded as -1 = maladaptive, 1 = adaptive, or 0 = not present (some incidents did not contain relevant context to each strategy). Cohen's Kappa was used to evaluate rater consistency (see Table 1).

***Cognitive strategies.*** We identified five frames that comprise that GS mindset: Building trust in civilians, perspective taking, long horizon for anticipating consequences of actions, voluntary compliance, and self-control. Coders inferred the cognitive strategies from transcript data as holistic beliefs and ideologies. Unlike the GS behavioral coding scheme, where strategies were coded for each decision point within a selected incident, cognitive strategy ratings were based on global impressions from the entire incident. Although frame types (i.e. cognitive strategies) and actions (i.e. behavioral strategies) were aligned, there were multiple incidents in which a participant's actions did not reflect his/her frame type. Each cognitive strategy was scored using a seven-point Likert scale (-3 = strong avoidance to 3 = strong preference) with zero indicating no preference for the strategy. A 7-point scale was used because the cognitive strategies were more subjective than behavioral strategies. With this scale, we hoped to gauge the extent to which the participant demonstrated each cognitive strategy. We would be unable to do this using the "yes"/"no" scale employed for the behavioral strategies. Intraclass correlations (ICC) were used to evaluate rater consistency (see Table 2).

## RESULTS

The interviewers' GS ratings were averaged for each participant, generating individual GS scores. The GS ratings for police ( $M = 5.09$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ) and military ( $M = 5.23$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ) participants did not differ,  $t(35) = -.26$ ,  $p > .05$ . Despite our request for interviews with professionals who were all GSs, our ratings showed that some stood out from the others.

This was an inductive, exploratory study of the qualities and capabilities of GSs. Therefore, we were not testing a specific model or hypothesis. A correlation matrix was used to investigate individual relationships between behavioral and cognitive GS strategies (see Table 3). De-escalation, Building Rapport, Prudent Risk, Perspective Taking, Long Horizon, Voluntary Compliance and Self-Control were significantly related to participant's GS Ratings. Conversely, the participants' ability to read Non Verbal behaviors, Curiosity, and Policing Own did not relate to the GS Ratings. Most notably, we found that Building Trust was strongly related to participants' GS Ratings,  $r(35) = .69$ ,  $p < .001$ .

All but three behavioral GS strategies (Non-Verbal, Curiosity, Policing Own) were significantly related to Building Trust. All cognitive GS strategies were significantly related to Building Trust. Among these four cognitive strategies, Perspective Taking was the most strongly related,  $r(35) = .84$ ,  $p < .00$ .

### Behavioral Good Stranger Strategies Model

A multiple regression analysis was used to examine whether the GS behavioral strategies significantly predicted the participants' GS rating (see Table 4). This model, containing six predictors, explained 48% of the variance ( $R^2 = .48$ ,  $F(6, 30) = 4.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Interestingly, none of the individual GS behavioral strategies significantly predicted GS Rating. Two of the behaviors achieved a marginal level of significance, Building Rapport,  $\beta = .33$ ,  $t(30) = 1.87$ ,  $p = .07$ , and

Prudent Risk,  $\beta = .25$ ,  $t(30) = 1.73$ ,  $p = .09$ .

### **Cognitive Good Stranger Strategies Model**

A multiple regression analysis was also used to test whether the cognitive GS strategies significantly predicted participants' GS Ratings (see Table 5). The result of this regression indicated that the five predictors explained 51% of the variance ( $R^2 = .51$ ,  $F(5, 31) = 6.39$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This model revealed that Building Trust was a highly significant predictor of GS ratings,  $\beta = .71$ ,  $t(31) = 2.73$ ,  $p = .01$ .

An additional multiple regression model was employed to identify behavioral and/or cognitive GS factors that loaded onto Building Trust. This model significantly predicted Building Trust, explaining 86% of the variance ( $R^2 = .86$ ,  $F(10, 26) = 15.44$ ,  $p < .001$ ), matching the finding from the correlational data presented in Table 3. Two behavioral GS strategies, Perspective Taking and Prudent Risk significantly predicted Building Trust,  $\beta = .47$ ,  $t(25) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .01$  and  $\beta = .22$ ,  $t(25) = 2.56$ ,  $p = .01$  respectively.

## **DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this project was to better understand what it means to be a "Good Stranger" in encounters with civilians. Our study suggested multiple factors are significantly related to participant's GS ratings (see Table 3). Among all cognitive and behavioral GS strategies, Building Trust stood out as the most significant predictor variable of participant's GS Ratings. Multiple regression analysis revealed that the ability to take another's perspective and gauge prudent risk significantly predicted Building Trust. There was a temptation to formulate a GS model around these factors, given that they have some empirical support. However, we chose a different approach. We didn't want to compile a laundry list of GS features – a list that could be expanded in the future but lacked coherence.

Instead, we used a sensemaking perspective to understand GSs. We reviewed our interview materials to try to capture how GSs make sense of civilian encounters in ways that the participants with lower GS ratings did not. We used the Data/Frame model of sensemaking (G. Klein, Moon & Hoffman 2006a, 2006b) to guide our approach. We did not apply all or even most of the aspects of the Data/Frame model to our findings. We used the aspects that we believed would help us gain a better understanding of GSs. We posited a GS frame based on our CTA interviews. The concept of a GS frame was not hypothesized at the outset of our research. Our interviews suggested a GS frame of seeking to build trust, and that this trust-building frame could be considered as a form of sensemaking. Warfighters and police officers with this frame seem to interpret situations differently than those who lack the GS frame and rely on the standard frames of self-protection, mission accomplishment, and compliance with regulations to sort out what is important in a situation.

We then augmented this account by drawing on the Recognition-Primed Decision (RPD) model (G. Klein, 1998) which postulates that recognizing a situation involves four aspects: cues to monitor, expectancies, plausible goals, and potential courses of action. We used these four aspects as four slots in a sensemaking frame. In so doing, we believe we have made a theoretical contribution by synthesizing aspects of the RPD model with the Data/Frame model. Thus, police and military personnel with a GS frame will notice different cues, form different expectancies, generate different goals, and consider different courses of action than those who lack or don't use a GS frame.

### **Good Stranger Frame – Gaining Civilian Trust**

We speculate that the basic GS frame is about trying to gain the trust of civilians. Figure 1 shows trust building as the core GS frame. The slots in this frame identify what a GS would

expect in the process of building trust, the cues a GS would be sensitized to, the goals a GS would have relative to building trust, and the kinds of actions a GS would consider in an encounter. The GS frame would involve different expectancies, cues, goals and actions than alternative frames such as trying to ensure security, accomplishing a mission, following regulations, or establishing dominance over civilians. Figure 1 shows these other frames; the GS frame co-exists with the others. The frames for security, mission accomplishment and adherence to regulations are essential for police and military personnel; it is the GS frame that is optional. Many police and military personnel do not have or use a frame for building trust in their encounters with civilians.

Trust appears to be critical for establishing and maintaining the good will of civilians and even adversaries. Mayer and his colleagues, (Mayer, Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Schoorman, Mayer & Davis 2007) working primarily with Westerners in organizational settings, identified Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity as dimensions critical for establishing trust during encounters. Their research suggests that trust can reduce hostility, increase information flow, and garner co-operation. Trust eases negotiation, and increases operational effectiveness during complex and dynamic interactions. Gottman (2011) has investigated the centrality of trust for relationships between couples. The dimensions used to assess trustworthiness vary significantly by national group and situation (H. A. Klein et al., 2014). Dimensions beyond Mayer's three, include cognition (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), social values and priorities (Hofstede, 1980) as well as the ones identified by H. A. Klein et al. (2014): Affect, Non-Verbal Communication, Dialectical reasoning, Interdependence, and Status. Drawing on a variety of literatures and research, but primarily from the CDM data we collected in this effort, we define GSs as police

officers or warfighters who seek to increase trust during encounters with the local populace while carrying out their responsibilities.

The GS frame is about wanting to increase trust from beginning to end of an encounter, and boosting the trust given to the organization (i.e., other police or military), not just the individual. The GS activity seeks to build social capital. In contrast, the interviewees with low GS scores showed little evidence that they viewed encounters with civilians as opportunities to build trust.

One question to consider is whether military personnel are operating under the same constraints as police. Warfighters need to gain immediate compliance and are less concerned with establishing relationships because they rotate fairly often in contrast to police who usually work within the same community. Therefore, police may worry more about trusting relationships than military personnel. However, when we asked our military participants if it was important to build trusting relationships, they argued that while they themselves might never see a civilian again after an encounter, other warfighters would bear the consequences of their interaction. Thus, GSs in both police and military saw value in short-term and long-term perspectives.

Building trust has a short-term component – viewing any encounter as a means of gaining more trust for oneself and one’s service. From the start to the end of the encounter a GS is trying to “move the needle,” and be seen as more trustworthy, which will bear dividends in the short-term, such as gaining immediate compliance, and the long-term, such as increasing cooperation with warfighters who enter into the next encounter.

Building trust also has a long-term component, which is to engage in actions and policies that encourage civilians to take actions that have some risk, such as reporting on Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), providing information about insurgents, asking for help, providing help,

and so forth. An example of the long-term trust created by GSs is the incident we heard of the Scorpions in Iraq – the nickname of an Army National Guard unit from Idaho. The Iraqi populace was struck by the benevolence and integrity of the Scorpions, especially in comparison to the unit they replaced. The preceding unit had shown little regard for trust building. Instead, they sought to use intimidation to gain compliance, and the civilians resented this treatment. After the Idaho National Guard unit rotated in, they had a lot of damage to undo. This unit took a different approach. Despite maintaining a firm defensive posture at all times, they strived to be polite and courteous to the community members. They respected the local populace, and recognized they were visitors on their land. To work effectively, they explained their actions and demonstrated transparency when possible. This unit worked hard to show the Iraqi civilians that they were trustworthy, and their efforts paid off. When Iraqis saw vehicles with a Scorpion logo, they acted differently, and were more cooperative and trusting. Soon the Scorpions were labeling all of their vehicles with a Scorpion sign (sort of like gang graffiti), and, more importantly, were united in their desire not to spoil their “brand”.

While our sensemaking account of GSs centers on their trust-seeking frame, in other contexts we might refer to a *mindset* that they have, or a *stance* they take. All of these terms describe what sets them apart – at least in our interpretation of the interview records. We primarily use *frame* in this paper because it fits with our views on sensemaking.

### **Acquiring the Good Stranger Frame**

The interviewees showed great variety in how they became GSs. *Early family experience* was important for some people. One military interviewee reported: “It’s probably from my family. At dinner, you could have an argument but you always listened to what the others said. That way everyone come out getting along. Now when I walk into a meeting I’m prepared for

arguments but I try to listen to others needs and come up with plans that make my actions more acceptable to people.” Another interviewee said: “For this mission, I went back to how I was raised: to greet people, to smile at people, to shake hands, because that’s what I knew and what I’m comfortable doing.”

Some interviewees adopted a GS frame as a *rejection of negative experiences*. One military NCO (noncommissioned officer) explained that “when I just started there was a lot of issues with hazing. Things happened that I didn’t particularly care for. I decided I was going to do the opposite of what some of the people I encountered did.”

*Prior work experience* also shaped interaction with citizens. Military interviewees with experience as police, social workers, or missionaries (several of the National Guard participants were Mormons) would mention these past experiences. One officer described a less usual experience: “One summer, I was a security guard at a shopping mall. People were there to have fun. But people can get angry if somebody pushes them and it’s crowded and hot. One of the things I learned was how to defuse the tensions before you have a situation. I used this ‘defuse the crowd concept’ overseas. I’m good with groups where not everybody gets along as long as they have a common goal.”

Finally, some interviewees were *driven to be more effective*. They adopted the GS frame because it helped them accomplish their missions. One reported: “To get anywhere with Afghanistan or Iraqi nationals the nicer you are to them, the nicer they are to you.”

Particularly for the police, a GS frame can be an important aspect of professional identity. For example, a number of police officers described how they started out expecting that the job of the police force was about catching and arresting criminals and drawing on their authority to gain compliance. But somewhere along the way, often with an experienced mentor – e.g., a Field

Training Officer – they observed a different approach. They encountered role models who spoke softly rather than yelling, who treated civilians with genuine respect, and as a result were extremely effective. One officer explained that after working with such a mentor he cut the number of fights and violent encounters by 90%, by using methods he had learned for gaining voluntary compliance.

Our interviews suggest that some professionals may never acquire this GS frame. It is not part of their conceptual repertoire. Others may have acquired the frame but don't activate it very often. These were the participants to whom we gave low GS ratings.

### **Training Police and Military to be Good Strangers**

We believe that it may be possible in a relatively short period of time to convince military (and police) of the value of having a GS frame, and to start them on their journey to acquiring the skills to put this frame into action. It is like making a discovery, although the discovery will have to be followed by practice and refinement so that the GS frame becomes more natural.

The reason we think that the acquisition of a GS frame can happen relatively quickly is that the interviewees, particularly, the police, offered many examples of how they started off without any appreciation of the GS frame and then were struck by seeing it in action, used effectively by others whom they respected. We identified several different pathways contributed to the acquisition of a GS frame:

- Role Models
- Peer pressure
- Increased effectiveness
- Norms and performance expectations
- Increased security and consequences

The most dramatic incidents revolved around *role models*. The police in particular described how watching a mentor, perhaps a first Field Training Officer, opened their mind and changed their professional identity. Watching someone speak softly and respectfully and gain compliance illustrated a power they wanted to have. We did not obtain comparable examples of GS role model inspiration in the interviews with military personnel. Even when asked about potential role models, none of the military interviews could think of anyone.

*Peer pressure* was another motivation. Police officers don't want to ride with Bad Strangers because they increase risks that simple conflicts will escalate unnecessarily. Military personnel seen as creating unnecessary hostility were sometimes sidelined and prevented from engaging with civilians, even though their courage and combat skills were appreciated. The pressure was primarily negative, not to behave stupidly and disrespectfully to civilians, but there was also a positive component: to skillfully elicit voluntary compliance where possible.

Several participants, both military and police, explained that they wanted to learn to be GSs because of *increased effectiveness*. In many situations, GSs can accomplish their mission more quickly and effectively, and with better consequences.

*Norms and performance expectations* came up in some of the interviews. In some settings, the lesson conveyed was that this is what other military/police are able to do. In these situations, the leaders expected subordinates to act as GSs.

*Increased force security* was a surprising item, especially in the military. Several participants explained how long-term security is enhanced if the unit is perceived as trustworthy, as in the example of the Scorpions. This factor ties into the finding in the Results section about the importance of *long-term consequences*.

The law enforcement community already has some training programs for the supporting skills shown in Figure 1, i.e., building rapport and resolving conflicts. The Verbal Judo approach to gaining voluntary compliance (Thompson & Jenkins, 1993/2004) is widely used throughout the U.S. The military is just starting to stand up training in these GS sub-skills. As stated earlier, we identified 41 police and military documents addressing different aspects of GS behavior. However, most of these documents simply acknowledged the importance of the skill, rather than setting forth a training program. Furthermore, none of the material we reviewed took a sense-making perspective to GS behaviors, or conceptualized a GS frame of seeking to build trust from the beginning to the end of each encounter with civilians.

### **Skills for Supporting the Good Stranger Frame**

The behaviors we identified in Tables 3-5 informed the GS diagram shown in Figure 1, which shows a set of other frames the GSs may be using in conjunction with the GS frame. Figure 1 also refers to tactics and skills that are needed to augment trust-building efforts; these emerged from our research.

We also heard several examples of deliberate attempts at “swift trust”, a skill at rapidly gaining trust in encounters with strangers (Meyerson, Weick & Kramer, 1996), particularly in the police interviews.

**Coordinating the Good Stranger frame with active sensemaking frames.** Police officers and warfighters have several ways for making sense of situations, particularly maintaining control during encounters (Alpert & Dunham, 2004), ensuring security, and accomplishing missions. The concept of a GS frame does not mean police or military can, or should, abandon their other frames. There will be times when police and military need to escalate to the use of force to maintain control of others (Pinizotto, Davis & Miller, 2006).

Each frame (e.g., security, mission accomplishment, GS) affects cues, expectancies, goals, and actions. Some police and warfighters also have a frame about how to dominate others. Police refer to such officers as “badge-heavy”; the military tries to keep them away from civilians. This frame to dominate and intimidate others is inconsistent with the GS frame; we list it in Figure 1 because it is a frame that some police and military have, and a frame that some GSs have had to shed.

We also appreciate that some situations discourage the use of a GS frame. Police and warfighters must put self-protection first. Yet even in these situations, GSs can sometimes find a way to maintain their own security without totally sacrificing trust building. Police officers may have to arrest lawbreakers, but they can make the arrest in ways that are less humiliating.

One of the factors that was significantly related to the GS ratings was awareness of long-term consequences. The long-term perspective acknowledges that security can be increased when one accepts a slightly greater immediate risk in order to gain trust. Therefore, the issue may not be trading off security versus trust building, but rather considering long-term consequences as well as immediate motivations. The skill here is to determine how to take prudent risks while using a GS frame.

One of our incidents involved a Marine captain who was assigned the mission of restoring stability in an Iraqi town. He arranged a meeting with the town leaders, which went well, but as the meeting drew to a close, he heard shots. He rushed outside and learned that one of his own Marines had accidentally discharged his weapon into the peaceful crowd gathered outside the meeting hall. Three children were wounded, one seriously. He had his medics treat the wounded. The next day he had another meeting scheduled, and he had to decide how to show up. Should he bring a full contingent of Marines, for protection? Or should he just bring the same

size unit that he had the previous day, so as not to be provocative? He chose a third course. He brought only four other Marines, and he walked to the meeting, carrying just a pistol concealed under his protective vest and wearing a cap instead of a helmet. He explained that he deliberately wanted to be vulnerable in order to reduce tensions. He also explained that his actions in treating the wounded and taking responsibility for the tragic accident helped him to gain trust. The incident actually worked in his favor because of the way he handled it.

**Perspective taking.** In order to effectively take on a GS frame, the warfighter will need to be able to take the perspective of others. The skilled GS can grasp what is motivating others and how these others are making sense of a situation. They can also anticipate how the civilians are likely to react. The skill of perspective taking seems essential to taking on the GS frame, and our data showed a significant relationship between them. Perspective taking allows genuine respect rather than contempt because the GS will appreciate that there is a reason for unusual behaviors. It permits genuine empathy because it acknowledges the goals of others. Field Manual 6-22 *Army Leadership* recognizes empathy as a critical attribute to leadership and a useful tool to win support of a population (U.S. Army, 2006).

One police officer that happened to be head of a SWAT unit described an encounter with a man who had stabbed another man and was barricaded inside his house. The officer decided to try to get the man to come out peacefully. The man shouted that he wasn't coming out – he knew the police were just going to throw him to the ground. The police officer realized he now had an opening. He told the man that they would not throw him to the ground. If he followed directions and came out peacefully they would handcuff him but would not force him to the ground. Relieved, the man did agree to come out and was arrested quietly and without incident.

The GSs try to get into another person's head, to feel what another might feel and to sense what the person would see as a satisfying resolution. If GSs can imagine how it would feel if people were to push their way into their own homes, they would be more likely to seek a less offensive way to carry out their missions. For example, one soldier explained how he managed interactions respectfully, "When I worked a check stop, I try to keep in mind how it would feel to have a stranger from a foreign country stopping me and demanding my identification."

Culture imposes limits on perspective taking. Military interviewees often arrived in country lacking knowledge of cultural variation. They might understand the universal imperative of demonstrating respect but not the culture-specific ways of doing this. Assuming Western signs of respect to be universal can convey the wrong message. Direct eye contact may indicate respect one place while in another one should divert one's gaze to convey respect. Warfighters cannot readily put themselves in the other person's shoes (which is a standard technique in perspective taking when dealing with one's own culture). The warfighter has to really stretch to imagine how foreigners are making sense of a situation.

Perspective taking often depends on careful observation to gather information on the other's goals, fears, and values. It depends on understanding how status differences (gender, age, kinship, power status) contribute to the situation. Recently, some research has examined factors supporting multicultural perspective taking (Rentsch, Gunderson, Goodwin & Abbe, 2007), and ways to increase perspective taking skills (Roan, Strong, Foss, Yager, Gehlbach & Metcalf, 2009; Gelbach, Young & Roan, 2012). There is also some literature on the process of gaining empathy with others to understand what they think and feel (e.g., Ickes, 2003), but we did not locate any guidance for police/military personnel. H. A. Klein (2004; H. A. Klein & Kuperman,

2008) described a cultural training approach, the cultural lens model, which is specifically aimed at helping people gain the perspective of someone from another culture.

In trying to understand why another person has acted in an unexpected way, a GS might consider a few factors: The person may have a different motivation; the person may have a different set of priorities; the person may be operating under a different set of constraints; there may be a mismatch in knowledge – the person may lack some knowledge or, conversely, the person may have knowledge that the GS lacks.

**Gaining rapport.** The skill of gaining rapport with others seems very useful for building trust and for voluntary compliance and cooperation. It was significantly correlated with the GS ratings. Rapport covers a variety of sub-skills. Collaborators on the DARPA SSIM program identified a set of important rapport-building behaviors (Damari & Logan-Terry, 2015), and these are listed below:

- Acknowledging the goals of the civilians. Where appropriate, helping to pursue these goals
- Searching for shared goals. Where appropriate, adding those goals to yours
- Establishing and demonstrating empathy
- Getting civilians to like you
- Promoting common ground, and repairing common ground when it has been breaking down
- Demonstrating respect for civilians, as opposed to contempt for the way they conduct themselves
- Having a positive attitude and orientation toward civilians
- Showing appreciation and offering praise

- Refusing to personalize insults
- Trying to remain calm
- Using social gaze – maintaining eye contact as a sign of connection except in cultures where prolonged eye contact creates discomfort or is seen as rude
- Being able to listen well
- Being familiar with rituals such as greetings, farewells, thank yous
- Being ready to engage with strangers

During this project we heard about the “chat-up man” identified in British Army units – the soldier that others turn to for meeting and connecting with unfamiliar civilians. Such soldiers reduce fear and offer reassurance to nervous populations.

**Voluntary Compliance and Cooperation.** The skill here is to bend the person to your will without using force or threats. This is the power of influence and persuasion. It goes beyond the simple formulae of Verbal Judo, as used by police officers (Thompson & Jenkins, 1993). Voluntary compliance taps into the work of Cialdini and colleagues (e.g., Cialdini 1993; Goldstein, Martin & Cialdini, 2008) on influence and persuasion. It is a key method for implementing the GS frame because military and police have to get people to choose to do what they don’t want to.

We identified a range of different approaches to gaining voluntary compliance. These include the work of Cialdini and colleagues on influence (Cialdini, 1993; Goldstein et al., 2008), Wilson (2011), Thompson & Jenkins (1993/2004), Glennon (2010), Haley (1963), D. E. Klein (2009), Amdur (2011), Thaler & Sunstein (2008); and Carnegie (1936). One of the striking features of this literature is that with very few exceptions, none of the authors cites any of the others. This is a very fragmented literature, suggesting an opportunity to try to synthesize the

different traditions (e.g., G. Klein, 2013) into a general account of voluntary compliance. Weinschenk (2013) has provided a good summary of voluntary compliance methods.

**De-escalation.** Some of the incidents showed impressive mastery of de-escalation in difficult situations. For example, a military participant described an incident during a tense period, when rumors started that a shrine in a neighboring district had been desecrated and worshippers mistreated. An angry crowd moved towards the military base. The officer in charge decided to engage the crowd rather than confronting it. He directed his subordinate Marines to stand by while he, his translator, and a senior civilian aid worker made the encounter with the crowd. He was able to separate the leaders of the crowd, whom he knew, and to ask them to sit down and talk. He explained that he did not believe these rumors to be true but that he would have them investigated and report back to them. As their discussions lasted a long time, the crowd dispersed. He quickly followed up by investigating the accusations and confirming their falsehood with photographs. In the following week, he brought the pictures to all of the leaders involved in the initial confrontation and discussion. The interviewee indicated that there had been no further trouble in that region during the remainder of his deployment there.

The GS frame encourages the use of de-escalation tactics to lower emotional affect before tensions arise out of hand. The interviews suggested four strategies for de-escalating conflicts. First, military personnel need to remain cognizant of the tradeoff between trust building and prudent risk. Police have learned how dangerous it is when they intervene in domestic violence incidents to try to de-escalate the fight. Second, the earlier a de-escalation effort is initiated, the greater the chance of success. Conflicts may have tipping points, after which de-escalation is more difficult. Third, perspective taking provides tools for attempting to understand the dynamics underlying the escalation. If, for example, the growing anger stems

from differences in motivation, it may be possible to reframe the situation to highlight advantages for both sides. It will be important to look for different constraints and/or different knowledge that have created such resulting anger. Finally, rapport-building activities can prevent and break the cycle of hostility. For example, it will be important to remain calm and listen carefully. It will also be important to avoid taking insults personally.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of our study was to gain a better understanding of what makes police and military who are GSs so effective. We achieved that goal with the concept of a GS frame of seeking to build trust, distinct from alternative frames, using the Data/Frame model of sensemaking to explain professional identity.

We relied on a cognitive task analysis method, a qualitative approach better suited to generating descriptions and hypotheses than to testing hypotheses and providing quantitative evidence. We believe our findings have potential value for identifying and training GSs.

We formulated a sensemaking account that views GSs as seeking to gain the trust of civilians, as shown in Figure 1. Note that we are not suggesting that GSs increase their trust in civilians – there is no reason to make GSs unnecessarily vulnerable.

We also considered whether any of the other skills we examined might serve as the top frame, but our opinion is that none of the others has the same capacity for organizing and directing behavior. It is not enough for GSs to be trustworthy. They have to demonstrate their trustworthiness to civilians. They have to perform actions and in other ways convey to civilians that it makes sense to trust these warfighters or police.

Being able to take someone else's perspective is a pre-condition for demonstrating trustworthiness, but it is not directly communicable. That's why *perspective taking* is a supporting

skill for gaining trust. If *rapport-building* was the top frame, police and military might ask why – what is the purpose of the rapport? If *voluntary compliance* was the top frame then it would fail to address situations that don't involve compliance with requests, such as civilians proactively offering information and suggesting cooperation. If *de-escalation* was the top frame it would fail to address situations that do not involve interpersonal conflicts. Our conclusion was that the frame of seeking to build civilian trust was the most useful for organizing behaviors and guiding the actions of police and military. Certainly, the issue of trust has come up many times before but never, to our knowledge, in the form of a sensemaking frame that is different from other frames (for security, mission accomplishment, compliance with regulations, or exerting dominance over others).

**Caveats.** In all but one case, we interviewed police and military personnel identified as GSs, so we do not have a basis for speculating about the wider population of police and military other than through the comments of the interviewees about their colleagues and about other units.

**Next Steps.** One follow-on study would be to examine a broader population of military personnel, not hand-picked for having GS qualities. We are currently in the process of conducting that study. In order to train GSs it is not enough to determine what skills and frame they need – it is also necessary to see if those skills are missing in the general training population.

A second follow-on study would attempt to train military personnel to acquire a GS frame or to strengthen such a frame. We are also in the process of conducting that study, using the ShadowBox training method (G. Klein, Hintze & Saab, 2013). We are also developing a training module for one of the enabling skills shown in Figure 1, gaining voluntary compliance and cooperation.

A third potential direction for follow-on research would be to explore the notion of sensemaking frames for professional identity in many specialties; areas other than police or military work.

A fourth potential direction is to test some of the cognitive frames listed Figure 1. If it was possible to independently identify police or military as relying on a GS frame versus one of the other frames (e.g., to dominate others, to maintain safety, to adhere to regulations), then it should be possible to predict their behavior when shown challenging scenarios. The professional frame they use should predict what cues they notice, what goals they prioritize, what they expect to happen next, and what response options they favor. Just as people use their frames to understand the world, we should be able to use our knowledge of their frames to understand them.

One final contribution of this research, with potential for follow-on work, is the expansion of NDM theory and methodology. Instead of just cataloguing a list of GS skills, we chose to capture a GS sensemaking frame. We also expanded our concept of a sensemaking frame, drawing on the Recognition-Primed Decision model, to identify four primary slots, expectancies, cues, goals and actions. For future work we might use those slots, and the concept of alternative frames, in conducting interviews and gathering data. Our study expanded how we view sensemaking as a framing process, and illustrated the potential for viewing a person's professional identity in terms of the way he/she makes sense of situations, in contrast to alternative frames.

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Figure 1: The Good Stranger Frame of Building Trust

Table 1

List of SSIM GS Behavioral Strategies, Descriptions &amp; Inter Rater Reliability Agreement

Strategy	Description	Kappa
De-escalates	Attempts to reduce the intensity of a situation or conflict; remains calm and is able to explain actions rationally.	.52**
Building Rapport	Seeks to develop a positive relationship with others using an inviting approach.	.67**
Reading Non-Verbal	Reads body language and facial cues to help make situational assessments.	.85**
Prudent Risk	Understands importance of security but is able to gain cooperation without provoking antagonism (e.g. trading off security for trust).	.51**
Curiosity/Ground Truth	Seeks to understand the heart of the problem; impartial and lets the evidence direct blame.	.46**
Policing Own	Able to manage team members, holding everyone accountable. Addresses problems when they arise and admits personal faults.	.57**

*Note.* \*\* Significant at the .001 level

Table 2

List of SSIM Cognitive Strategies, Descriptions &amp; Intra Class Correlations (Rater Agreement)

Strategy	Description	ICC
Building Trust	Promotes positive encounters, uses the situation to gain the faith of civilians. Displays Meyers et al. 1995 dimension of trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity.	.74 <sup>**</sup>
Perspective Taking	Understands other's actions through ability to see a situation from another perspective.	.85 <sup>**</sup>
Long-Term Mindset	Understands long-term consequences for their actions; considers long-term implications before making taking certain actions.	.65 <sup>**</sup>
Voluntary Compliance	Shows willingness to employ verbal and nonverbal strategies in order to gain voluntary rather than coercive compliance.	.37 <sup>**</sup>
Self-Control	Careful not to project arrogance or dominance in a negative way; does not take provocations personally. Able to control own body language.	.75 <sup>**</sup>

*Notes.* ICC = Intraclass Correlation Coefficient; <sup>\*\*</sup> Significant at .001 level

Table 3

## Correlations Between GS Ratings, Behavioral and Cognitive Good Stranger Strategies

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. GS Rating	–											
2. De-escalation	.49**	–										
3. Building Rapport	.56**	.59**	–									
4. Non Verbal	.26	.25	.09	–								
5. Prudent Risk	.42**	.24	.41	.10	–							
6. Curiosity	.01	-.22	-.01	-.06	.08	–						
7. Police Own	.20	.02	.03	-.24	.01	.45**	–					
8. Build Trust	.69**	.66**	.74**	.06	.57**	.09	.09	–				
9. Perspective Taking	.55**	.66**	.62**	.14	.42*	.13	.23	.84**	–			
10. Long Horizon	.49**	.47**	.66**	.17	.36*	.10	.23	.71**	.76**	–		
11. Voluntary Compliance	.42*	.75**	.69**	.22	.41*	-.22	-.08	.71**	.73**	.60**	–	
12. Self-Control	.58**	.79**	.73**	.27	.37*	-.06	-.01	.76**	.73**	.62**	.75**	–

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4

Summary of Multiple Regression for Behavioral Predictor Variables to GS Rating

Predictor Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
De-escalation	1.22	0.86	.25	1.43	.16
Building Rapport	1.26	0.67	.33	1.87	.07
Non Verbal	-2.11	1.07	-.28	-1.97	.06
Prudent Risk	1.98	1.14	.25	1.73	.09
Curiosity	-0.24	1.31	-.03	-0.19	.85
Police Own	0.71	.88	.13	0.82	.42

*B* = un-standardized beta coefficient, *SEB* = standard error,  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient, *t* =

*t*-test statistic, *P* = significance value

Table 5

Summary of Multiple Regression for Cognitive Predictor Variables to GS Rating

Predictor Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
Building Trust	.70	.25	.71	2.73	.01**
Perspective Taking	-.01	.26	-.11	-0.40	.69
Long Horizon	.05	.17	.06	0.28	.78
Voluntary Compliance	-.25	.21	-.25	-1.17	.25
Self-Control	.24	.20	.27	1.22	.23

*B* = un-standardized beta coefficient, *SEB* = standard error,  $\beta$  = standardized beta coefficient, *t* = t-test statistic, *P* = significance value \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level

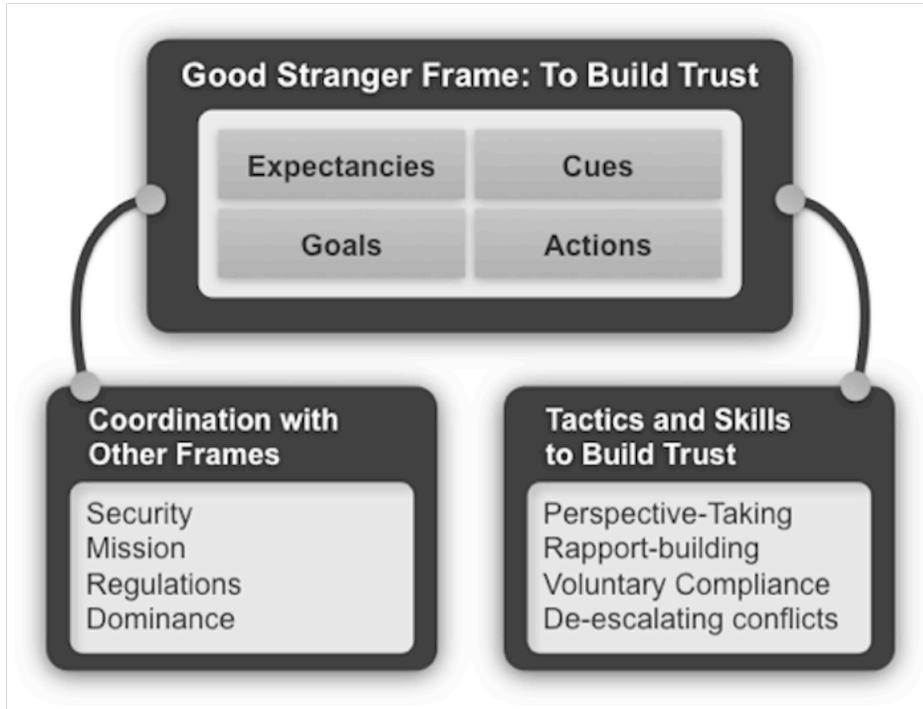


Figure 1. The Good Stranger Frame of Building Trust.