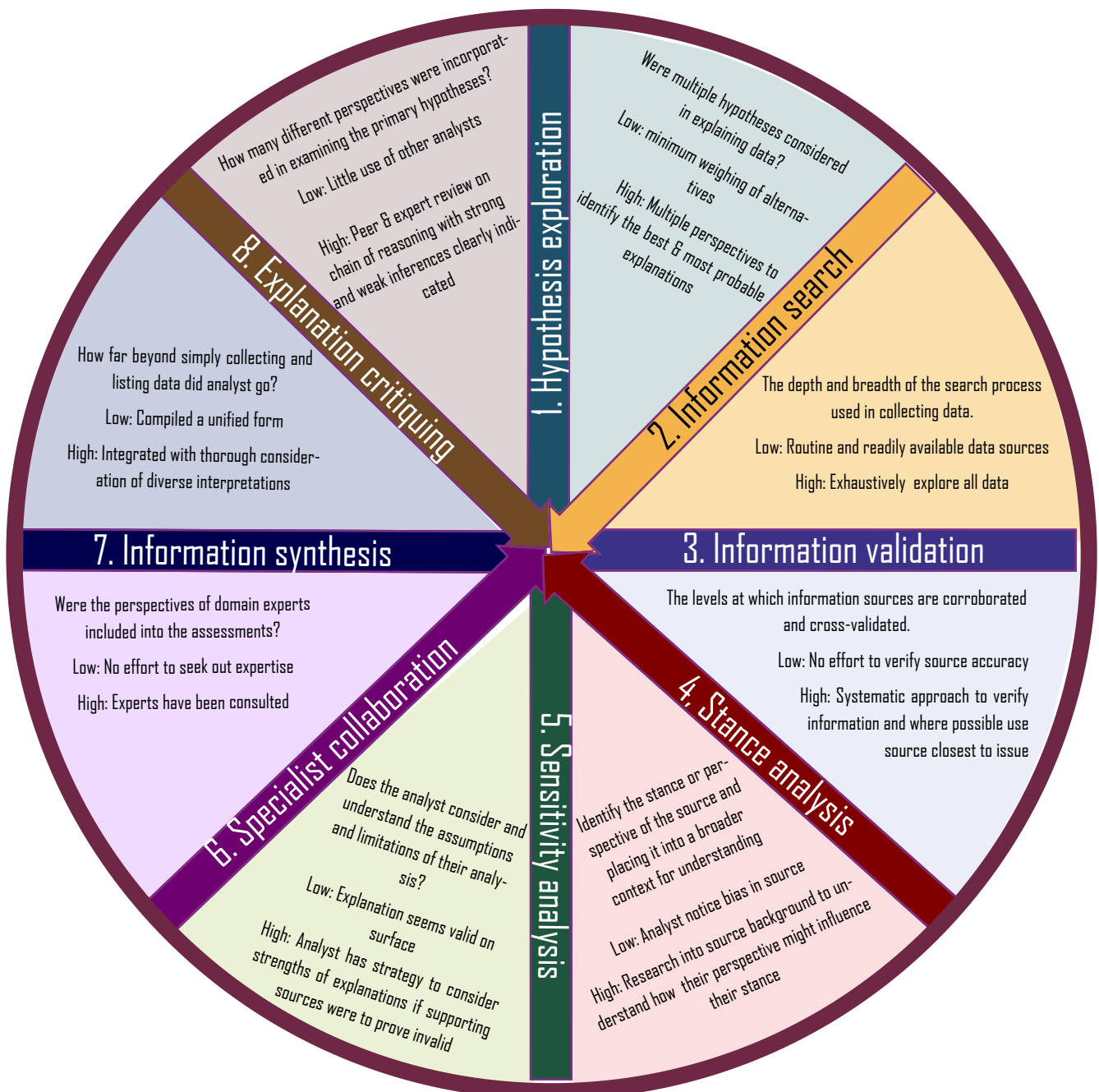# Analytic rigour

The previous pages stressed how important it is that we as analysts are honest in our thinking, analysis and communicating the threat to our clients. A few scholars and practitioners are now developing methods and tools to enhance mindfulness and rigour in our quest to provide insight and foresight to clients. In this issue we look at Daniel Zelik *et al*'s rigour model which tries to answer the question:

"How can intelligence analysts ensure that they have been rigorous in the analytical process?"

Dalene Duvenage

1. Hypothesis exploration
Were multiple hypotheses considered in explaining data?
Low: minimum weighing of alternatives
High: Multiple perspectives to identify the best & most probable explanations

2. Information search
The depth and breadth of the search process used in collecting data.
Low: Routine and readily available data sources
High: Exhaustively explore all data

3. Information validation
The levels at which information sources are corroborated and cross-validated.
Low: No effort to verify source accuracy
High: Systematic approach to verify information and where possible use source closest to issue

4. Stance analysis
Identify the stance or perspective of the source and placing it into a broader context for understanding
Low: Analyst notice bias in source
High: Research into source background to understand how their perspective might influence their stance

5. Sensitivity analysis
Does the analyst consider and understand the assumptions and limitations of their analysis?
Low: Explanation seems valid on surface
High: Analyst has strategy to consider strengths of explanations if supporting sources were to prove invalid

6. Specialist collaboration
Were the perspectives of domain experts included into the assessments?
Low: No effort to seek out expertise
High: Experts have been consulted

7. Information synthesis
How far beyond simply collecting and listing data did analyst go?
Low: Compiled a unified form
High: Integrated with thorough consideration of diverse interpretations

8. Explanation critiquing
How many different perspectives were incorporated in examining the primary hypotheses?
Low: Little use of other analysts
High: Peer & expert review on chain of reasoning with strong and weak inferences clearly indicated

Based on Zelik, Daniel et al 2007. Understanding Rigor in Information Analysis papers here, here and here