Academic Intelligence and Security Studies - AISS 2011: Intelligence Cultures and Communities (November 18-19, 2011, Bucharest)

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Abstract

An introduction to this special issue, the paper argues for increased research on academic intelligence and security studies from the perspective of smaller countries than the Unites States, which is the classic case for theory testing. At the same time, it emphasizes the need to take into account the complex web of factors at stake for the study of intelligence and security in Europe, especially since the supranational (i.e. European Union), as well as the transatlantic (i.e. NATO) are relevant variables for understanding these objects of research.

Keywords: academic intelligence, security studies, research programme.

Democratisation challenged security and intelligence agencies both in well-established political cultures and throughout the emerging democratic environments, in Europe and worldwide. In various international competitive arenas, issues related to intelligence affairs reached new levels of complexity, transparency and publicity. Scholars with different intellectual backgrounds fostered and tackled this process and its consequences looking increasingly beyond the usual political, social and economic factors. Long-lasting practices, conceptual frameworks and the pathway between theoretical viewpoints and operational intelligence have been challenged as never before. Within this context, young democracies turned their attention to more experienced democratic societies, searching for guidelines and support when defining a democratic intelligence, culture and community, with both professional and academic representations.

Beyond the "classic" topics one might expect to find when dealing with intelligence issues, new subjects of inquiry emerged out of our networked society. Both practitioners and academics have learnt about new meanings of secrecy and openness, about new structures of cooperation between

intelligence-enabled organisations, with less clear intentions to be uncovered, with thinner layers of separation between civilian and military projections, within more permeable political borders.

In intelligence and security studies many started to approach such subjects in a comparative manner, matching patterns of systemic evolution from various political spaces. Such analyses are more often aimed at observing change through similar developments than at questioning the commons in favour of particularly valuable initiatives. Researchers in intelligence and security studies got more connected due to all these shifts, even if the idea of an integrated academic community still lacks a tangible representation at European level.

The conference held in Bucharest in November 2011[1] from which many of the papers in this issue have been developed originates in our pursuit to develop an academic dimension of the Romanian intelligence culture. The mimetic reproduction of the procedures employed in Western democratic societies is appealing, yet unachievable as it completely ignores the local specificity. The questions which arise are thus related to the development of an identity, in terms of research agendas, as well as curricular and educational programs, in short, a school of intelligence with its own intellectual orientation. Therefore, the first goal of the conference was to critically look at such pursuits, searching for conceptual unity out of diversity in a field far too much oriented towards the United States' experience. Academic intelligence developments in small states could thus represent an innovation potential for the global intelligence culture.

At European Union level, intelligence matters are a subject specific to the complicated puzzle of European security, with national interests interlaced in a loose web of perspectives, missions, and strategies. It is the chance of the researchers confronting only the scientific unknown to strengthen the ties in their networks of academic interests. The second goal of the conference was thus to explore possible pathways of collaboration between institutions involved in academic intelligence programs, ranging from curricular development to focused research projects.

The current issue of *Analele Universității din București: Seria Ştiinţe Politice* put together some of the conference papers authored by participants coming from United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Turkey and Romania. These contributions compare state and corporate competitiveness by taking into account national and regional cultures, as well as policies and practices related to security and intelligence, showing that during the last decade, in the development of different theoretical approaches around security issues in general and intelligence in particular, the theory has outstripped the pace of case-study and applied research.

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[1]   This second edition was an event organized and hosted by the KROSS Association and the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Bucharest; http://kross.ro/aiss-2011/