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ANALYTICAL ESSAY

Classified and Secret: Understanding the Literature on Diversity in the Intelligence Sector

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Intelligence services are important sites of contestation, often the foci of reform and calls for greater transparency. Yet, while growing attention has been paid to intersectionality, gender equality reform, and progress in other areas of international affairs, little of this same transparency and attention has been paid to diversity in the intelligence sector. This paper seeks to bridge the gap, comprising a systematic review of the literature on diversity in the intelligence sector to improve our understanding of what *is* known and what *can be* known about the history and current make-up of the intelligence sector—and those who "do intelligence work". By identifying strengths and gaps in the literature and setting an agenda for future research within these "secret institutions", this paper argues that the lack of transparency, data, and knowledge on the interplay of gender, race, and sexuality, among other aspects of diversity in intelligence, is deeply troubling. It hampers our knowledge of how the sector may be "gendered" or otherwise experienced, as well as how this particular area of the security sector may or may not be integrating gender and other perspectives into their work. This paper finds that diversity in the intelligence and national security sectors is both an asset and a liability to be managed. Diversity is seen as a source of intelligence gathering and analysis strength, as well as a potential threat to hegemonic masculinity in intelligence practice. Further, language and processes for promoting diversity in intelligence can reinforce stereotyped knowledge of marginalized groups that ultimately hamper calls for greater representation, diversity, inclusion, access, and opportunities in the intelligence sector.

Los servicios de inteligencia constituyen sitios de impugnación importantes y, con frecuencia, son el foco de las reformas y activan llamamientos hacia una mayor transparencia. Sin embargo, aunque se ha ido prestando cada vez más atención a temas como la interseccionalidad, la reforma de la igualdad de género y el progreso en otras áreas de los asuntos internacionales, se ha destinado poca de esta transparencia y de esta atención a la diversidad en el sector de los servicios de inteligencia. Este artículo

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busca cerrar esta brecha a través de una revisión sistemática de la bibliografía sobre la diversidad en el sector de los servicios de inteligencia con el fin de mejorar nuestra comprensión sobre lo que se sabe y sobre lo que se puede saber acerca de la historia y la composición actual del sector de los servicios de inteligencia, así como de aquellos que ≪hacen trabajo de inteligencia≫. Este artículo, debido al hecho de haber identificado fortalezas y lagunas en la bibliografía y de haber establecido una agenda para futuras investigaciones dentro de estas ≪instituciones secretas≫, argumenta que la falta de transparencia, datos y conocimiento sobre la interacción del género, la raza y la sexualidad, entre otros aspectos de la diversidad en la inteligencia, es profundamente preocupante. Esto obstaculiza nuestro conocimiento sobre cómo este sector puede ser ≪clasificado por género≫ o sobre cómo puede ser experimentado de otra manera. También obstaculiza nuestro conocimiento sobre la forma en que esta área particular del sector de la seguridad puede estar integrando o no las perspectivas, tanto de género como de otro tipo, dentro de su trabajo. Este artículo concluye que la diversidad en el sector de la inteligencia y de la seguridad nacional constituye tanto un activo como un pasivo que deben ser gestionados. La diversidad es vista como una fuente de fortalezas con relación a la recopilación y al análisis de la inteligencia, así como una amenaza potencial para la masculinidad hegemónica existente en la práctica de la inteligencia. Además, el lenguaje y los procesos que se usan para promover la diversidad en la inteligencia pueden reforzar el conocimiento estereotipado de los grupos marginados, lo cual, en última instancia, obstaculiza la existencia de llamamientos hacia una mayor representación, diversidad, inclusión, acceso y oportunidades en el sector de los servicios de inteligencia.

Les services de renseignement constituent d'importants lieux de contestation, qui font souvent l'objet de réformes et nécessitent davantage de transparence. Pourtant, malgré l'intérêt croissant pour l'intersectionnalité, la réforme sur l'égalité des genres et les progrès dans d'autres domaines des affaires internationales, la diversité dans le domaine du renseignement n'a que peu bénéficié de cette transparence et de cet intérêt. Cet article souhaite pallier cette lacune : il contient un examen systématique de la littérature sur la diversité dans le domaine des renseignements pour enrichir notre compréhension de ce que l'on sait et de ce que l'on pourrait savoir à propos de l'histoire et de la composition actuelle de ce domaine, mais aussi de ceux qui y travaillent. En identifiant les forces et les faiblesses de la littérature et en définissant un programme pour des recherches ultérieures au sein des ≪institutions secrètes≫, cet article affirme que l'absence de transparence, de données et de connaissances sur les interactions entre genre, race et sexualité, entre autres aspects de la diversité au sein des renseignements, constitue un problème majeur. Elle entrave nos connaissances sur la façon dont ce secteur peut être ≪genré≫ ou autrement ressenti, ainsi que sur comment ce domaine particulier du secteur de la sécurité intègre ou non le genre et d'autres perspectives dans son travail. Cet article conclut que la diversité dans les domaines du renseignement et de la sécurité nationale constitue à la fois un atout et un handicap qu'il faut gérer. La diversité est perçue telles une opportunité de collecte de renseignements et une force pour l'analyse, mais aussi comme une menace potentielle pour l'hégémonie masculine dans les pratiques de renseignement. En outre, la langue et les processus utilisés pour la promotion de la diversité au sein des renseignements peuvent renforcer les connaissances stéréotypées des groupes marginalisés qui finissent par entraver les demandes d'amélioration de la représentation, de la diversité, de l'inclusion, de l'accès et des opportunités dans le secteur des renseignements.

Palabras clave: inteligencia, género, diversidad

Mots clés: renseignements, genre, diversité

Introduction

Intelligence services are at the forefront of identifying and understanding complex and multifaceted threats against the state. They span a broad spectrum of roles and responsibilities, from collecting, analyzing, and disseminating information related to threats to the political order of a state (such as terrorism, civil disturbances, or foreign interference), economic stability, or other forms of security threats (organized crime, cybercrime, and beyond). Yet, given the covert and secret nature of the work, little is known about the detailed operations of those who occupy the intelligence community (IC) (Lomas 2021). From an IC practitioner perspective, "gender and racial prejudices can affect an agency's outlook on the world and the knowledge it produces to serve decision-makers" (Van Puyvelde 2021, 674). Van Puyvelde argues that the lack of academic attention paid to the heterogeneity of the IC professionals "distorts scholarly understandings of intelligence as an organization and an occupation", highlighting the need for deeper understanding of the status quo—in the IC and the literature surrounding it (2021, 674). Bean argues that while the intelligence studies (IS) literature features multiple biographies of female intelligence agents and analysts, "feminist approaches to intelligence *theorizing* that foreground gender, sexuality, and difference in understanding what intelligence is/does are nearly nonexistent" (2018, 533). Yet, given that "intelligence has been used to oppress, and to maintain systems of oppression", intersectional, feminist analyses of IS are critical (Warner 2009, 29). This has given rise to feminist surveillance studies, a field dedicated to understanding the "oppressive processes of 'seeing and not-seeing—rendering some bodies and some actions hyper visible while hiding others'" (Braithwaite in Bean 2018, 534).

Drawing on this nascent field of research, the following paper aims to conduct a systematic literature review to assess the state of knowledge on diversity in intelligence, with a focus on gender, race, and sexuality in particular. The literature highlights focal themes around: how diversity is defined in intelligence; why diversity matters in intelligence; the research on gender, race and sexuality in intelligence; learnings from what works on gaining diversity in the sector; and methodological learnings from researching intelligence. To borrow from Proctor, this paper seeks to understand the "invisible functioning" of diversity in intelligence from a qualitative and quantitative systematic review of the literature (2003, 3). In doing so, it seeks to establish a baseline for what is known and unknown about the field and present a call to action for more research on the intersections of gender, race, sexuality, and beyond as they apply to intelligence. Taking a global approach to analyzing the literature, the paper focuses on those working in intelligence, analyzing papers published from 1992 on. While the review did not set out to reflect Western-dominant literature, a combination of the limitations of searching for English-language publications, as well as the limitations of search terms used and search engines, has resulted in a selection of literature that comes broadly from the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Within the literature, intelligence services are defined as state bodies that gather information using covert or secret methods, from wiretapping to surveillance, intercepting communications, and conducting undercover operations. Given that most states have multiple intelligence agencies tasked with specific yet often overlapping roles, from tactical and strategic intelligence to criminal intelligence, domestic and international intelligence, civilian and military intelligence, and strategic assessments, the IC is defined as the community of multiple such agencies/bodies tasked with intelligence services. Seeking to understand those working in intelligence aids in understanding "who" is behind threat assessments, intelligence gathering, and the privileging of some information and analysis over others.

The paper starts by exploring the theoretical contribution that this literature review on diversity and intelligence can deliver to the field, followed by the research methodology and articles analyzed, how diversity is defined in intelligence, why diversity matters in intelligence, how gender, race, and sexuality are explored in the literature, what "works" in gaining diversity in intelligence, and finally methodological challenges and opportunities in researching diversity in intelligence. The paper argues that the study of gender, race, and sexuality in intelligence remains a crucial gap for further research. Further, the literature to date highlights deep tensions between diversity as a critical tool of emancipation and inclusion in intelligence institutions, and diversity as a weapon for co-option and surveillance.

Critical Intersectional Feminist Research in Intelligence

Undertaking this research from a critical intersectional feminist standpoint, analyzing diversity in intelligence enables us to reveal relations of domination and center the obscured, core contributions of critical feminist research to the field. By bringing together disparate literature to analyze gaps and fruitful areas for future study, this paper seeks to elevate gendered, racial, and sexual hierarchies, expose language, and make troubling trends across studies visible. By contributing to our knowledge of secret institutions and practices, Manjikian argues that "the project of political emancipation may be brought forward—since it is necessary to know and name a phenomenon fully in order to question its claims and indeed even its existence" (2020, 10). This is at the heart of this paper, which is to highlight how trends complement and layer upon each other, or show research gaps to interrogate, in order to understand "secret" institutions and provide methodological options to study the understudied.

To do so, it is important to first share our own understanding of concepts like gender or diversity. Connell argues that "[g]ender, like other social structures, is multidimensional; it is not just about identity, or just about work, or just about power, or just about sexuality, but all of these things at once" (Connell 2009, 11). We therefore understand gender as socially constructed, meaning it is negotiated and reinforced through language, beliefs, practices, and so on. Additionally, we see conceptions of gender, race, and sexuality as shifting across time and contexts rather than fixed or absolute constructions. Given that language shapes social reality, an analysis of the literature then helps us in understanding how perceptions of diversity in the IC and the lived experience of the IC are understood, and may be mutually reinforcing (Bailey, LaFrance, and Dovidio 2019). The literature thus gives us insight into working definitions and understandings—for instance, the plethora of writing on female spies in the Cold War era reinforces ideas that "being a woman" was implicated with deception and a lack of loyalty, which is evidently problematic—for women and for the IC (Pető 2020). The literature also hints that even if a goal of the IC is to gain greater diversity, elements of inclusion, access, norms, beliefs, practices, and behaviors may not shift naturally—it is not a case of simply "adding women/marginalized groups and stirring". Simply increasing diversity in the intelligence workforce may not necessarily reduce sexist and racist assumptions and practices in that workforce, meaning that a focus on diversity in the IC is limited by the degree and depth to which wider social transformations and systems change occur within the IC. Ultimately, it appears that hegemonic masculinity prevails—both legitimizing men's dominant position in intelligence and justifying women's and other marginalized groups' subordination (Connell 2009).

Systematic Literature Review Methodology

A systematic quantitative literature review (SQLR) is a structured method for compiling research for a literature review, particularly beneficial for new and emerging research fields, inter-disciplinary fields, and topics with a wide range of techniques that make other analysis methods challenging (Pickering and Byrne 2013). Using specific search terms, all the research currently undertaken on the field is sought, analyzed, and compiled into a database such as Microsoft Excel. Keywords are used to categorize the research articles into critical ideas, including the authors' geographic location and methods used. The result of the SQLR approach is a visual database that can be used to find common themes, authors who write on the topic, and gaps in the field. This helps to define where more research is needed. The articles are quantified, allowing the study to broadly reflect on the number and percentages of key terms, themes, and unknowns. The categorized and quantified data enables reuse of knowledge from the database in the future without having to re-read all the literature, as essential concepts are already captured.

There are gaps in this methodology, namely that the search terms used can result in a selection of literature that is not exhaustive, even when it seeks to be. However, this can also be a finding in itself—the search terms used attempt to specifically target literature that writes on a certain topic. Although publications may exist outside the search results, relevant information may be buried or not be readily accessible by conventional search terms and search engines. This certainly affected the geographic scope of our findings, which reflected English-language publications mostly from Western nations. This is also a comment on the visibility and accessibility of research around a topic—in this case, diversity in intelligence. In other words, like other literature review methodologies, the SQLR methodology may not capture everything written on a certain topic. Yet it is still valuable in quantitatively understanding the most relevant (to the search terms) and accessible academic content, thus revealing core inclusions and core gaps allowing comment on the quality, nature, and substance of the prevailing literature. It is also particularly powerful when combined with a more traditional qualitative review.

Studies surrounding diversity in intelligence are growing, with many relevant ideas, data, and definitions that make the SQLR method particularly relevant. Yet, given the dearth of articles found, a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods was used to systematically review the literature, providing more nuance to the gaps and explaining the findings more deeply. Indeed, while a standard SQLR method usually produces an initial database of around 300 articles that then gets refined to a smaller database, the final database the SQLR method provided for our specific search around diversity in intelligence comprised only thirty-two publications from 1992 to 2021. While still significant enough to conduct a quantitative review, by combining elements of a traditional systematic qualitative review, this article aims to produce the most rigorous account of what is—and is not—included in our current understandings of the literature. It also allowed us to go outside peer-reviewed journal articles to consider annual reports and documents published by intelligence agencies on diversity and inclusion, which helped to triangulate findings by reflecting dominant understandings of what diversity in intelligence "means" in practice.

This article therefore attempts to present a systematic review, particularly of literature on gender, sexuality, and ethnic diversity in intelligence, by focusing on research on the prevalence of diverse individuals, their characterization and experiences, and the gendered, heteronormative, and racialized policies and practices of the IC. The paper does not claim to be an exhaustive account of every article, book, or book chapter written on the topic but rather a comprehensive, systematic review of the most relevant literature found, particularly as it relates to those working in intelligence.

There were inevitably a number of exclusions. For instance, while not the focus of this article, the literature includes publications on how intelligence may be gathered on women and minority groups, often groups perceived as subversive and enemies of the state. Bergman Rosamond and Kronsell explore female intelligence-gathering in Afghanistan, finding that the "gathering of intelligence by female special teams has been associated with the gendered, often imperialist, logics of gender-based interventionism" (2018, 179). While drawing on similar themes, this paper is more directly focused on gender, sexuality, and ethnic and cultural diversity within the IC as a workplace—rather than the recruitment of communities for the purpose of intelligence-gathering in a particular circumstance or locale. Further, publications that focused on intelligence as in giftedness, academic prowess, and so on were excluded, as were historical biographies (which mainly focused on individual accounts of spies and spying). Agency-published short biographies tended to highlight the awards and achievements of hand-picked individuals rather than a much deeper analysis of their experiences and circumstances of employment in intelligence, and were thus excluded. However, we did analyze agency-published demographic reports to gain insights on the current status quo of diversity in practice and understand how agencies understood diversity in practice—this was most accessible in the US and UK cases.

A combination of common databases and search engines was used to capture a range of publications (peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, book chapters, or books), including Scopus, JSTOR, Sage journals, Google Scholar, and Google. Given accessibility limitations, digitized journals and books were primarily sought, which resulted in a more contemporary dataset. A range of keywords were used to search for publications, including derivations of "diversity/gender/race/ethnicity/sexuality/women", "intelligence community/ies", "intelligence service/es", "national security", "surveillance", "spy/ies/ying", and so on. While these search terms listed are not exhaustive, a combination of terms provided a way to capture diversity in intelligence using different common word combinations. Additionally, publications were added to the database from reference lists and bibliographies, with any duplications excluded.

The number of articles found had enough overlap to not obscure findings or leave gaps. As articles were found, they were sorted by relevance and either kept or discarded. We then analyzed this dataset for the following things: methodology used, focus of the article or article details, author location, country focus, key findings, key gaps, primary dimension of diversity analysis (gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, cognitive diversity, etc.), and author gender (where known). These findings were all quantified. We also conducted a manual "sentiment analysis" on the articles to determine the main sentiment and focus surrounding the topic of diversity in intelligence. This was done by analyzing tone and making subjective judgments about the way in which diversity was conceptualized, which was triangulated between the two main authors. We also created a word map based on the article titles to understand the most common words and phrases used to get a sense of the focus and sentiment of articles.

After compiling and analyzing the dataset, we then analyzed the results thematically, drawing on the literature to explain findings, highlight gaps in knowledge, and suggest future areas for research. Publications that focused on the United States or United Kingdom predominated, alongside more "global" studies (although these were still mostly from authors in the United States or United Kingdom), There was a dearth of research and researchers from elsewhere in the world—for instance Asia, Australia, Africa, the Middle East, and former Soviet states. While a vast majority of articles were historical analyses or case studies, including analyses of biographic materials or autobiographic reflection, methodological choices such as ethnographies, interviews, and focus groups were also used.

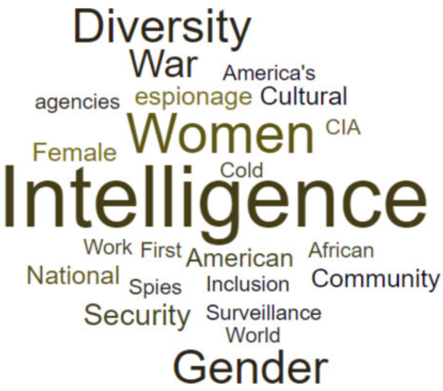

Figure 1. Publication title word cloud (word occurrences > 2)

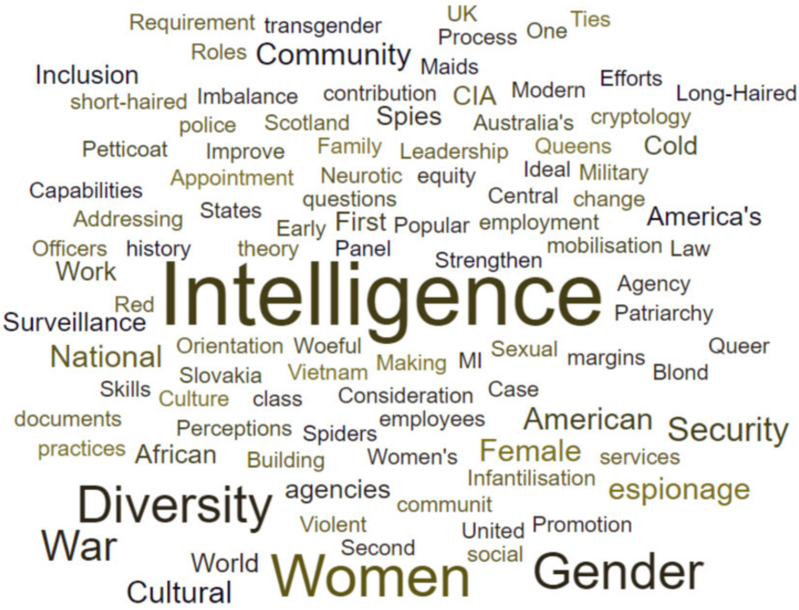

Figure 2. Publication title word cloud (word occurrences = 1 or more)

Including two or greater (2>) occurrences, the following word cloud (see figure 1) was compiled using the titles of the thirty-two initial publications that formed the SQLR dataset. The most predominantly occurring words include: intelligence (17 times), women (10), diversity (8), gender (8), war (6), security (4), and so on. The countries mentioned include American, America's and African (in the context of the phrase "African American"). Other words include espionage, spies, and surveillance, with the only intelligence service listed being the CIA (referring to the Central Intelligence Agency)..

Including word occurrences of one or more (=1 or more), figure 2 further highlights terms used in titles relating to diversity in intelligence. Interestingly, more descriptive, gendered words appear, which will be explored in greater detail later but include words like: queens, long-haired, maids, neurotic, sexual, woeful, violent, queer, petticoat, and blond.

The following sections explain the findings from the database, using a mix of qualitative and quantitative analysis to understand a number of core themes, including: how diversity is defined, the arguments made for diversity, an exploration of gender, race, and sexuality as they apply to those working in intelligence, lessons on what works for gaining diversity in intelligence, and methodological learnings from researching diversity in intelligence.

How Diversity is Defined in Intelligence

Across the literature, there is mixed consensus around what counts as diversity. For instance, Wehbé's (2019) article argues for diversity within the national security law workforce, but focuses particularly on cognitive diversity—differences in perspective or information processing rather than factors such as gender, ethnicity, or sexuality. Callum refers to diversity expansively, "referring to a work force that is varied and representative along all possible cultural discriminators, including but not limited to race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, and physical limitation" (2001, 27). Callum's focus on "cultural discriminators" is interesting and highlights a focus in the literature on conquering discrimination and bias and rectifying imbalances, as well as the IC's often reactive stance rather than proactive approach to inclusion. Indeed, Callum notes that diversity has often been seen as a legal and moral imperative, not an analytical necessity, unlike other fields in which the "business case" for diversity has been more compelling for enabling institutional action.

While not all articles sought to define diversity, three categorical groupings stood out the most and were the focus of our search: gender, sexuality, and ethnicity. In fact, twenty out of thirty-two articles found using the SQLR approach (62.5 percent) focused solely or primarily on gender, with two focusing primarily on ethnic, cultural, or racial diversity (6.25 percent) and two on sexuality (6.25 percent). One covered cognitive diversity (3.12 percent), and the remainder of eight publications covered a mix of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, age, and family (25 percent—predominantly covering gender and sexuality or gender and ethnicity). The focus in the literature on social identity categories reinforces the imperative within the national IC to address long-standing imbalances. Yet, even if it is not the main focus of a particular publication in question, the literature also features a drive for cognitive diversity (as expressed through other forms of diversity) in order to reduce groupthink and deliver on the promises of diversity that are specifically relevant to intelligence.

Additionally, while there are overlaps between the concepts of cognitive diversity and neurodiversity, neurodiversity was not a major focus of the literature. In the literature, cognitive diversity is associated with reducing groupthink through a diversity of perspectives and ideas from a diversity of people's backgrounds, whereas neurodiversity—as supported through a variety of staffing networks and strategies in Australia, the United States, and United Kingdom—is more closely aligned with individual social and cognitive traits associated with Autism, people with disabilities, and other neurodiverse traits and experiences. While neurodiversity was not represented in the academic literature found through the SQLR approach or agency demographic reports in the US, UK, and Australian cases, neurodiversity staffing networks were evidenced in practice in the Australia, US, and UK ICs. Therefore, the minimal attention paid to neurodiversity in the IC is a key gap in the literature, particularly given that some agencies, such as the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) in the United States, have prioritized increasing the number of neurodiverse people entering the intelligence pipeline (for instance, the NGA announced a neurodiversity pilot in 2021 to specifically recruit neurodiverse interns) (National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency 2021).

There were also differences in how the literature and agencies conceptualized diversity. The US annual demographic reports on diversity in the IC refer to "women and minorities", some articles refer to "diverse groups", and others to "historically marginalized groups". The use of terms like women and minorities can be problematic for a number of reasons. Firstly, it implies mutual exclusivity between these populations rather than the reality that these two categories can and do intersect in the lives of racial/ethnic minority women, for instance (Bowleg 2012). Further, care should be undertaken in defining minority groups or historically marginalized groups, which may differ depending on the context. Ultimately, frameworks like intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989)—the study of and attention to the ways various aspects of identity and background intersect, overlay, and interact—are beginning to be taken up (evidenced, for instance, in the US annual demographic reports). Yet, truly intersectional research, data transparency, data collection, and analysis remain a gap in the intelligence literature, in favor of siloed data and statistics on one aspect of diversity over others.

Overall, the literature reflects an understanding of diversity in broader government and other fields. Yet, the recurrent reference to cognitive diversity and diversity of experience alongside other forms of diversity may reflect the imperatives of the intelligence sector, which are to imagine and understand all possible security risks and threats, reduce groupthink, and maximize the utilitarian aspects of diversity. Ultimately, we come to understand diversity in the IC as largely focused on ways of thinking and doing (cognitive diversity), particularly through gaining gender, sexuality, and ethnic diversity foremostly, with neurodiverse traits, abilities, and other elements of individuals' backgrounds being an important but often overlooked element of the literature on diversity in intelligence.

Why Diversity Matters in Intelligence

The "business case" for diversity across many fields and occupations has often stemmed from the private sector. This is reinforced throughout the literature on diversity and intelligence, with private sector arguments and theories around diversity and inclusion frequently used by the intelligence agencies, government oversight bodies, and academic publications studied. In general, diversity and inclusion are justified first using terminology and research from the private sector, reinforced by research and findings from the public sector, before specific national security and intelligence justifications are used. In general, the argument for diversity is made around (a) moral reasons and (b) strategic or instrumental reasons.

The moral case for diversity in many democracies centers on the representative nature of government institutions. Indeed, like other government institutions, the IC should not have to make a case for diversity at all. National security and intelligence agencies in particular have access to a huge number of public resources, hold significant budgets, maintain unique privileges, immunities, and duties under the law, and have significant status and prestige within state societies. As a matter of fundamental principle, diversity matters because government institutions—whether secret or not—should represent their citizenry. Despite this, instrumental and strategic reasons predominated in the literature, perhaps given the hegemonic masculine norms that operate within the IC and the difficulty in arguing for diversity based on principles alone.

Looking to the instrumental reasons diversity is important, diversity in international affairs has been accredited to everything from lowering the propensity for interstate war to increasing collaboration and consensus, improving development outcomes, resulting in more "feminist" foreign policy, and more (Stephenson 2020). In intelligence, the case for diversity follows similar lines, but has some unique, specific features and benefits for the practice of the IC. These include improvements in analysis "by lessening the impact of shared, common biases", as well as limiting unpredictability by foreseeing or forecasting multiple, different futures (Callum 2001, 27). Callum argues that diversity in intelligence rests on two premises: firstly, that the IC needs the insights that other cultures can provide, "piercing through the ethnocentric fog that shrouds most analyses" and secondly, that the IC must expand the range of potential hypotheses under consideration (2001, 33).

Across the literature analyzed and many agency websites and public reports, the argument for diversity is therefore grounded in people as an intelligence asset. Indeed, in 2018, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament in the United Kingdom noted that "people are our greatest asset", reinforcing that "it is important that the IC is able to attract and draw upon the skill, talent and experience of all sectors of our society" (2018, 1). Extending Callum's analysis, the imperative to "blend in with society operationally" is foregrounded (Parker in Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament 2018, 9), while Christofferson (2018) notes that the question diversity answers in intelligence, is the problem of groupthink and a lack of diverse ideas.

Further, in the Gender and Security Toolkit advocated by UN Women (2019) (among others), four core reasons that gender equality in particular is important for intelligence services include: increasing the talent pool from which to recruit; protecting and promoting human rights; reducing the harm of and potential for gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination; and fulfilling obligations under international law to advance gender equality, including those under the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This reflects the need for diversity on individual and organizational levels, as well as state and international levels. It also highlights the socio-legal reasoning behind the case for diversity, appealing to both moral and strategic judgments about why diversity matters in intelligence.

However, these arguments around the strategic/instrumental benefits of diversity are worth further analyzing. For instance, the reliance on women and marginalized groups to bring cognitive diversity to intelligence also relies on stereotyped knowledge of marginalized social groups. This reflects wider debates in the academic literature around men's and women's "sameness" versus "difference", and whether there are, for instance, gender-specific attributes and characteristics men and women (and others) bring to the workforce. This trend is not isolated to the IC, as Mease and Collins (2018) find three core metaphorical systems for thinking and speaking about human differences with regards to diversity in organizations more broadly. They find that diversity work in organizations usually relies on three metaphors—diversity as an asset, as a liability, and as a possibility. They ultimately argue that these metaphorical systems both enable and constrain diversity work in organizations. The perhaps over-reliance on diversity to achieve "difference", reduce groupthink, and expand hypotheses under consideration is therefore fundamentally problematic in reducing diversity to its utilitarian benefits—evidence of which has not fully been studied in the intelligence literature either. Further, the heavily scripted norms associated with the national security and intelligence sectors mean that even with greater diversity of background, cognitive diversity is not guaranteed—with many adopting prevailing (masculine, etc.) archetypes and norms in a bid to survive and thrive.

While troubling, the instrumental case for diversity in intelligence ultimately can be seen from an organizational standpoint to rest on "access": access to particular communities for surveillance and intelligence gathering; access to diverse ideas that reduce groupthink; and access to a broader pipeline of recruits for what can be difficult, dangerous, and thankless work. From a cross-government or even political perspective, the case for diversity can be tied to society's representative aims, with the IC often bound by government-wide policies and strategies for inclusion. Diversity is therefore centered in the literature as a "key" to intelligence activities—opening doors to specific communities for surveillance reasons, while representing diversity to secure the pipeline for future intelligence workers. Yet, through analyzing gender, race, and sexuality in more depth below, it is also clear that while diversity of these different groups is seen as an assertion, the characterizations of marginalized individuals reinforce mixed messaging: They are not only an asset but also a liability to be managed.

Overwhelmingly White and Disproportionately Male: Who Represents the IC?

Delving deeper into the qualitative content and substance of the literature, this section explores three key aspects of diversity that recurred the most in the dataset—gender, race and ethnicity, and sexuality. Given that much of the literature beyond the scope of this review focuses on the operational and policy impacts of intelligence rather than "those 'doing intelligence' and the legacy of past practices still felt by the agencies now", this section seeks to bring together trends on those "doing intelligence" found through the SQLR method (Lomas 2021, 996). The literature had several core weaknesses, including a focus on anecdote, memoir, and popular stereotype, reflecting some of the methodological challenges of researching intelligence as much as the limitations of the current state of knowledge. Even so, Callum notes that "historically, the U.S. Intelligence Community has been a homogenous environment bereft of participation from different races and cultures," and is "overwhelmingly white and disproportionately male" (2001, 26). This holds for the United Kingdom too, with Shahan noting that the white, male, well-spoken, and educated stereotype prevails (Shahan 2019). Callum notes that this leads to many predictable and preventable errors in analysis as a result of "mirror-imaging", the fallacy that antagonists think and act as "we" do and as "we" would in their position. Overall, Van Puyvelde (2021) highlights that in the United States, the CIA has been more reactive, not proactive, when it comes to wider societal shifts around diversity and inclusion. This is reflected in the histories collated across the literature, which speak to lags in adapting to greater gender, ethnic, and sexuality representation (and commensurate improvements in experiences) across intelligence.

Gender

Women have been informants, spies, and analysts in many various periods across human history, including at least since biblical times (Van Seters 1992; White 2007), but mostly in small-scale operations and on an informal basis (Proctor 2003). Womens' "non-threatening" roles as mothers and housewives were used to leverage military secrets, with women recruited as cooks or maids to go undercover and eavesdrop on soldiers without being detected in the American Revolution (Martin 2015, 99). Cryptology and codebreaking were not considered male jobs (Martin 2015), and so by the time of the First World War, women's roles in state intelligence gathering grew (particularly in the West and Soviet states), burgeoning again during the Second World War and Cold War to support the "rapidly ballooning bureaucracies of the secret state" (Proctor 2003, 2). Despite the influx of more women into intelligence during these periods, pre- and inter-war perceptions and assumptions of women remained largely unaffected (Toy and Smith 2018). Women were restricted to subordinate roles and attitudes surrounding intelligence remained to preference masculine ideals that had an exclusionary effect on women.

The literature therefore tends to base the development of the modern IC on the aftermath of World War II, with many gendered, heteronormative, and racialized hierarchies originating, developing, and being reinforced in wartime and post-war intelligence institutions. This is largely since women's growing inclusion in intelligence did not automatically translate into a shift in perceptions, with women's roles and opportunities limited, and their perceptions within the IC fiercely policed. Ellison (2002) notes that historically women in the CIA were seen as "of limited value", yet even since then, Davis notes that the CIA has a "cultivated atmosphere of male-domination" (Ellison 2002, 47; Davis 2018, 26–27). These patterns of gender inequality, discrimination, bias, vertical, and horizontal segregation are all explored to varying degrees in the literature.

In the context of deep secrecy and the absence of transparency, media perceptions of women in intelligence ran wild, popularized by fiction and powerful cultural images of female spies and male intelligence officers (Ellison 2002). Mata Hari is one of the post-war period's most famous icons, a Dutch exotic dancer and courtesan convicted and executed on suspicion of being a spy for Germany during World War I, while Soviet women in intelligence were portrayed as "sexualized *femme fatales* or as merciless, soulless devices of the system" (*emphasis in original*, Pető 2020, 199). Olmsted notes that the media's vision of women spies was often deeply distorted, with (male) journalists seeing these women as "frightening symbols of their own fears about changing gender relations in the early Cold War" (Olmsted 2004, 91). White echoes this, arguing that the perception of women as spies "read as commentaries on specific temporal and cultural femininities . . . aligning them with other indicators of cultural anxiety about femininity" (2007, 2).

In this way, White (2007) argues that while spies and spying are often characterized as male, femininity in the IC has connotations of deception and espionage, which are tied to sexual perversion and moral corruption, problems that Proctor (2003) and Manjikian (2020) argue were associated with women. Although much of the literature on women spies focuses on the incorrectness of such assumptions and media perceptions, such perceptions hold considerable sway over the public. Indeed, Pető notes that Collins' (1990) concept of "controlling images" can be used to explain the naturalization and normalization of sexism in intelligence. Pető argues that the controlling images of women working for intelligence services include: "the lustful, wanton danced; the self-sacrificing, noble spirited woman patriot; and the woman who seeks revenge for the death of a loved on or for lost property" (2020, 198). Today, the term "honey trap" still exists to highlight the purposeful employment of women to seek technological advancement from men technologists through seduction. Such gendered language is rife throughout the literature, buoyed by the opaque nature of the field and mythologized by what little media and public commentary exists on women's roles.

The relationship between media and public perceptions of intelligence, and the language used to describe women, therefore reveals a great deal about gender hierarchies. In 1953, the CIA conducted its first study on the role of women in intelligence, naming the group "the Petticoat Panel" (2021, para 4). Further, across the thirty-two articles analyzed in this SQLR, women in intelligence are overwhelmingly characterized by sexualized and mythologized language. Indeed, while men were often seen as "cool under pressure" and "loyal soldiers of the state", women are referred to as "shrewish wives", "neurotic old maids", "voluptuous young vixens", "neurotic spinsters", "red spy queens", "svelte and striking blondes", "beautiful, doomed exotic dancers", "femme fatales", "long-haired warriors", "short-haired spies", "beautiful seductresses", "iron butterflies", and "trailblazers". Few terms could be considered inherently positive, and almost all are loaded with meaning that diminishes, stereotypes, or otherwise limits the perception of who they are and of what they are capable of. Further, van Seters notes that in Hollywood's imaginations of women in intelligence from 1914 to 1945, "they are all creations of men", and asks whether these stereotypes were ever challenged by female authors (concluding, "no") (1992, 407).

Like the complicated relationship between the media and gender in intelligence, the biographies of individual female spies have also been noted as occasionally problematic. Proctor notes that some authors of these works "unintentionally feed the popular notion that only a few glamorous or exceptional women became involved in wartime intelligence, and that they were virtually alone in this pursuit" (2003, 5). By contrast, Proctor's 2003 book focusing on women in pre-Cold War British intelligence demonstrates the breadth of women's integration in intelligence, concluding that by the 1990s, half of all MI5 staff were women. This topic of the feminization of the field of intelligence is one that is largely missing from the literature, despite its significance in rewriting of the perception that women were and remain marginal and marginalized in the IC.

Turning to experiences, gender relations in British intelligence have resulted in a long-held glass ceiling for women struggling to break through the challenges placed on their careers. While women performed important clerical and administrative work across Britain, their experience was frequently capped below the level of middle and senior management, lasting well into the 1990s. Indeed, Lomas (2021) highlights significant vertical and horizontal segregation, where men were recruited as officers while women had their own separate career pathways—despite the fact that the women were often more qualified. Similarly, Durbin's (2015) research notes the underemployment of women and occupational segregation experienced in the CIA. No women were made full officers in the SIS or MI6 until the 1960s, when "one or two were allowed in before the door was once again slammed shut until the late 1970s" (Corera in Lomas 2021, 1001).

Similar to other fields, the marriage bar also impacted women, with women even into the 1990s remaining mostly unmarried. Promotion opportunities have been reported as slow, if at all, with the gender imbalance in management generally accepted as "the way things were" (Lomas 2021, 1002). The impact of gender imbalances in STEM subjects is also highlighted as a contributing factor to gender imbalances in intelligence, as well as the fact that many intercept operators were drawn from military or marine ranks.

Like those working in the foreign service and as diplomatic personnel, "intelligence workers need to be "known" entities, whose discretion and background can be checked and assured" (Proctor 2005, 451). Proctor describes security vetting examinations as having "a distinctly class bias", with officers hailing from elite backgrounds or wealthy British families in her examination of UK ICs (2005, 451). There has also been a bias for being "from the right sort of family", as well as a gender bias (Proctor 2005, 451). Indeed, Proctor found that gendered assumptions about loyalty in intelligence considered men "to be more patriotic and selflessly loyal", while also vulnerable "to the wiles of women" (2005, 452). Women, on the other hand, encountered many challenges, with their "true and overriding loyalties" familial ones, not national ones (Proctor 2005, 452). Women were vetted through their male connections, with the assumption made that while they may betray the state, they would never betray their husbands, parents, children, or kin. Thus, "women who were well connected to men of status, integrity and patriotism, were deemed acceptable security risks" (Proctor 2005, 452).

In understanding women's experiences, the literature similarly highlights extensive gender discrimination and bias. Among findings, include women being told they were not a "good fit", were not "committed" to the organization, have a "lack of loyalty", and were closely watched because they "stand out" (Chong in Christofferson 2018, 126). They are documented as encountering unfriendly work environments and negotiating competing family responsibilities and "complex job demands" (Barrett in Christofferson 2018, 131). Atkinson notes that in Scotland, "intelligence analysts were frequently considered by police officers to be child-like—as dependent, ignorant, immature, powerless and un-knowing—thus further de-professionalizing analysts and inhibiting their agency" (2017, 243). Atkinson sees this infantilization as part of the gender ordering of patriarchal control, reinforced and negotiated through informal rules and norms like workplace banter and office culture. It also supports Stephenson's (2020) research on gendered institutions, where Australian women in policing were often siloed into "soft" areas like surveillance.

In a historical analysis of female spies in the United States, Martin (2015) found a bias in the bureaucracy, slower promotion progress, and a lack of women in competitive leadership positions. In 1991, the CIA commissioned a study on the glass ceiling to find that women were not achieving promotion and advancement at the same pace or degree as men, were receiving fewer awards, and were not gaining the choice assignments—which were mostly given to men. The report also found widespread sexual and racial harassment. Organizational belief systems hampered women's advancement, as well as a lack of sponsors, subtle forms of bias and harassment, insufficient workplace flexibility, an increasing number of "extreme jobs", defined as working more than 60 hours per week, as well as the pull of outside responsibilities like caring for family (Martin 2015, 102).

The combined findings from the literature highlight an intelligence sector ruled by gendered norms, perceptions, bias, rules, and discrimination that has had a lasting impact on the characterization, representation, and experience of women in intelligence. Yet, our knowledge remains limited, with little research on occupational segregation in intelligence as well as an overwhelming focus on spies and spying to the exclusion of other kinds of intelligence work. There is an overrepresentation of research focused on the United States and the United Kingdom in the literature, and a tendency to present historical analyses over more contemporaneous accounts that could demonstrate how intelligence is adapting over time. For instance, research from parallel fields like diplomacy is finding that despite more women occupying roles in diplomacy, gender patterns have not eroded over time (Kreft, Niklasson, and Towns 2022), and women often experience a diplomatic glass cliff, being appointed in precarious positions and locations where risk is high and the chance of failing is greatest (Stephenson 2022). More research is clearly needed around gender and the IC to interrogate how gender is "done", influences institutions, and evolves over time. Specific research is needed on women's pathways and experiences of intelligence, their representation across intelligence and different lines of intelligence work, the barriers and opportunities to their employment, motivations for joining intelligence and separating from intelligence, and how intelligence agencies are adapting to or resisting institutional change around gender.

Race and Ethnicity

Like women's largescale entrance into the workforce during the Wars, World War II also provided many opportunities for Indigenous, black, and ethnic minority representation in some countries. In the United States, women and African Americans gathered intelligence on behalf of the United States (Martin 2015), while in Australia, despite not having citizenship status, thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people served in the Australian Defence Forces from the 1860s (and possibly earlier) (AITSIS 2021). Even so, like the gendered exclusions witnessed elsewhere in intelligence, racialized norms, beliefs, and practices are evident in intelligence. While at times the IC provided opportunities for ethnically diverse individuals that were not matched by other industries, intelligence has also been found to be deeply structurally racist and exploitative of the benefits an ethnically diverse IC could bring to information gathering and analysis.

Historically, the role of ethnic minority candidates in British intelligence was "near non-existent" even until recently (Lomas 2021, 1003). Traditional methods of recruitment, security vetting, and background checks factored heavily into explicit and implicit discrimination "against those from non-Oxbridge backgrounds", with a small exception for specialist linguists or clerical grades (Lomas 2021, 1003). Some of the limitations were the result of nationality rules, yet latent racism and monoculturalism also prevailed, combined with existing imbalances in "pipeline" studies (STEM-related fields, for instance). There was some flexibility for candidates with dual nationality from Commonwealth or English-speaking countries, yet the growth of the "wrong sort of British subject" led to curbs in security departments (Lomas 2021, 1004). This is akin to recent findings in Australian national security agencies, where Stephenson (2020) noted a reluctance to appoint candidates with an accent (meaning non-Australian/"foreign" accents). In her research, Stephenson found that ethnic diversity in national security agencies was often perceived as a "security risk", and staff faced various forms of overt and covert comments and discrimination based on ethnicity.

In the United Kingdom, the 1968 Race Relations Act made racial discrimination illegal in housing, employment, and so on; however, it also gave the government the right to discriminate on national security grounds—an exemption from the terms of the Act. Therefore, while Lomas (2021) recorded that around 15 percent of the applicants to the SIS were from a Black, Asian, or marginalized ethnic background, just 9 percent of staff overall were from a minority group, and often did not have the highest security clearances.

Where 9/11 resulted in greater counter-terrorism initiatives and a bulking up of national security and intelligence agencies globally, it also provided more opportunities for greater ethnic diversity in intelligence. Indeed, in Britain, in the aftermath of 9/11, intelligence offered opportunities to ethnic minority communities at a time when there was intense opposition from the private sector and other government agencies to employ Arabic speakers. This was largely the result of the perceived and real limitations the IC had with specialist languages, cultural awareness, and infiltrating specific communities. In other words, ethnic inclusion in intelligence became an imperative to better survey ethnic minority communities. Although, as one spokesperson at Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) noted, "contrary to what people think, recruits will not be asked to spy on their own community," the reality of these drives for greater diversity in the service suggests otherwise (Lomas 2021, 1005). Falsehoods, misrepresentations, and a lack of transparency has plagued intelligence as a community and career path, complicating understandings of what the work involves, who is welcome, and what can be expected.

Perceptions about the IC and agencies also played into ethnic minority groups' recruitment. Lomas describes considering working for the British intelligence agencies as "frightening", with one MI5 officer noting that many ethnic minority communities would think "there were crocodiles in the corridors" (Lomas 2021, 1005). Perceptions around loyalty also play strongly into stereotypes and assumptions around ethnic diversity. Many of the themes found in the UK literature translate to the US, with Van Puyvelde arguing that "the CIA has largely failed to anticipate social change and has struggled to adapt to it" (2021, 676). For instance, it was only in the 1950s that Black Americans began to move into the mainstream NSA workforce, prior having been segregated (NSA 2020).

Overall, although there is a growing literature on the intersection between race and the intelligence sector, it remains a nascent field with many gaps in the literature. Indeed, out of all the articles canvassed, only 15.6 percent specifically covered ethnic and cultural diversity or covered it as a sub-category to their main investigation (gender). Like some of the research gaps in gender and IS, more research is needed on race and intelligence as it applies to pathways, experiences, and representation; institutionalized racism in intelligence; barriers and opportunities whether/how race and gender intersect to produce multiple marginalizations in the field; and what raced/racist intelligence institutions mean for those whom intelligence is gathered on—the effect of raced intelligence institutions. A more nuanced understanding of ethnicity, culture, and race in intelligence would produce a more robust intelligence service and community of practice, reflective over bias, discrimination, benefits, and effects of diversity. Interrogating the potential co-option of diverse communities for "perverse" aims is essential.

Sexuality

The study of sexuality, heteronormativity, and homophobia in intelligence is limited. However, it is an important field, particularly given the fact that, like many ethnically diverse communities, LGBTIQ+ communities have long histories of being surveilled and policed. Officially, there were no gay officers in the British intelligence agencies, "their sexuality hidden thanks to positive vetting (PV) rules banning gay officials dealing with secret information" (Lomas 2021, 1005). However, LGBTIQ+ individuals certainly would have existed, having hidden their sexuality for career purposes. The sexuality restrictions on officers stemmed from perceived security risks of employing homosexuals, which went back to the 1950s, and rules that were a result of the Cadogan report on security, which argued that "sexuality was a mark of unreliability that would also undermine the ability of the department to manage Britain's diplomatic relations" (Lomas 2021, 1006). Intelligence was/is evidently not immune to public perceptions of who works in the sector, despite the secrecy and lack of transparency.

Although focusing on the surveillance of transgender people in the United States rather than their employment in intelligence, Beauchamp argues that there is a "persistent relationship between the concept of national security and state regulation of transgressive gender", with the "surveillance of gender-nonconforming people center[ing] less on their identification as transgender per se than it does on the perceived deception underlying transgressive gender presentation" (2019, 7). In this way, Beauchamp highlights how transgender and gender nonconforming people may be viewed with alarm, suspicion, and as something to be feared in intelligence—which resonates with the literature more broadly on the challenges for diverse gender identities and sexual orientations.

Indeed, in the United States, Callum notes that the IC has never been a hospitable environment for sexual diversity. Until 1975, the IC openly barred employing homosexuals, looking for evidence of "sexual deviance" during background checks and security vetting (2001, 28). Among the main concerns included a concern that individuals would be able to be blackmailed; however, the loyalty of individuals was also a subject of contention, and wider homophobia (legally and socially sanctioned at the time) also impacted individuals. Callum notes that while the social stigma has decreased over time, "the logic of prohibition has become increasingly strained" (2001, 28). It was not until 1980 that an openly gay individual was able to retain security clearances in the United States, and it was not until the early 1990s that sexual orientation or preference was removed as a point of emphasis during background screening and vetting.

While there have been several biographical accounts and historical analyses of sexuality in national security, particularly the military, overall, there remains a dearth of literature on sexuality and the IC. Particularly given changes in social attitudes toward same-sex marriage equality and growing rights for transgender people across some countries globally, this represents a missed opportunity to understand the degree to which diverse gender identity and sexual orientation in intelligence are supported or challenged, and the nature of policies, practices, and experiences that go along it. Further, the topic of security vetting as it applies to gender identity, sexual orientation, and sex characteristics is one that warrants greater exploration, given vetting's focus on deviance and secrets and the nature of gender and sexuality identity, which is often deeply personal. Additionally, given the "Lavendar Scare" moral panic during the mid-twentieth century, which saw the overt homophobia and many homosexuals' expulsion from US government service, as well as "Lesbian Witch Hunts" in Australia, the criminalization of homosexuality, and longstanding police brutality, LGBTIQ+ and ethnically diverse communities may have more to fear than most from the IC and vetting requirements. This calls for deeper understanding and knowledge generated now so as not to repeat past mistakes in practice, as well as understanding enduring sites of contention and reform.

What Works? Gaining Diversity in Intelligence

Through canvassing the literature, strategies used by the IC to increase diversity recurred. They include: establishing employee referral programs; increasing the diversity of job advertising campaigns; enhancing web and print media; recruiter training curriculum; invitation-only career fairs; establishing overt policies and staff networks; and language hiring bonus and awards program, among others. “Leveraging diversity” has also been built in as a critical component or KPI for individuals in the NSA (Black 2003, 9). Barrett highlights that technical skills alone “are inadequate” for the complexity of national security and intelligence work (Barrett in Christofferson 2018, 135); therefore, structures that support the recruitment or development of individuals with strong networks, interdisciplinary knowledge, STEM interest, and STEM education are also needed.

The Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament in the United Kingdom noted that lessons on “what works” across UK intelligence agencies include: tangible commitment and leadership from departmental heads; staff networks that galvanize support and recognition for under-represented groups; inter-agency collaboration; external partnerships, particularly with industry associations around gender issues and LGBTI+ inclusion; recruitment campaigns that are increasingly innovative and diverse, promoting “brand awareness” and a more diverse recruitment pool; and progress around flexible work and support for staff returning from parental leave. Areas for improvement include: data collection; representation in senior leadership; a “too bureaucratic” vetting process that takes too long and is considered an “inhibitor to diversity”; a lack of diversity in the vetting cadre, and a need for cultural awareness and training for vetting staff; proactive recruitment of particular under-represented groups; active and tailored talent management for under-represented groups; greater engagement from middle management around diversity and inclusion, and their role in supporting underrepresented groups; agencies need to share more expertise and best practice, open up cross-institutional training opportunities, and make exit interviews mandatory across the IC (Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament 2018, 5).

Given the diversity and complexity of agencies under any one nation’s IC, the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament resolved to focus on three focus areas for improvement: senior leadership and culture, recruitment processes, and career and promotion prospects. In the United States, the 2021 Annual Demographic Report on the IC focuses on four key goals: promoting people-centered leadership at all levels, strengthening compliance with laws and eliminating discriminatory behavior, leveraging external partnerships to increase access to diverse talent, and investing in workforce readiness. The presence of these goals aligns with Acker’s (2006, 2009) theory on inequality regimes, which advocates for concentrated focus on a limited number of priorities for action at a time, to produce institutional progress around gender equality (for instance). Yet, specific time-bound or percentage-based targets relating to diversity are still, for the most part, missing.

Security vetting is also a site to further interrogate, given the “gatekeeping” role that security vetting processes play in intelligence, and the reality that many state vetting processes developed in the 1950s–1960s. There is evidence that security vetting processes are problematic for diversity, and not truly the impartial and dehistoricized processes they aim to be (Stephenson and Rimmer, forthcoming). Indeed, a RAND research report has noted that social factors (financial, drug-related, and criminal) and human judgment factors (affinity bias, confirmation bias, and statistical discrimination) may contribute to racial bias in the security clearance process (Piquado et al. 2022). Significant data gaps exist, however, with the authors noting that "nowhere in the security clearance process [is] data on race gathered, although data on race is collected during the hiring process—a separate and distinct process from the security clearance process" (Piquado et al. 2022). Reform is a critical next step for many nations.

Further research on "what works" is direly needed, particularly given the last two decades have both seen mass growth in the sector responding to 9/11 and the strengthening of a range of diversity and inclusion programs that began with Equal Employment Opportunity policies in the 1960s–1990s (depending on where you are in the world). For instance, in Australia, it has only been the last decade that has seen intelligence agencies take ownership of diversity and inclusion more thoroughly with the establishment of new strategies and networks at a whole-of-government and individual agency level. Now, they have some of the broadest spread of diversity networks and programs out of the whole government. Given that "what works" has only been recorded incidentally in the literature, a systematic review of "what works" to improve diversity and inclusion in intelligence is needed and would deliver critical practical and policy impact for the field.

Gaining more diversity in intelligence also raises a more fundamental question—is it enough to argue for a more diverse IC, or do intelligence organizations perpetuate institutional sexism, racism, and other forms of discrimination to the extent that intelligence structures should be redesigned or abolished completely? This question links with a related feminist enquiry into women in militaries. Indeed, some feminists argue for women's "right to fight", while others argue for an anti-militarist approach under the understanding that women's participation in the military legitimizes an institution that is antithetical to the goals of feminism (Duncanson and Woodward 2016). To what degree should society and government accept and legitimize a more diverse intelligence workforce tasked with surveilling marginalized communities and, through surveillance, data gathering, analysis and flow-on actions, and interventions, perhaps inadvertently (or directly) helping maintain some of the systems of oppression tied to their wider identity or background?

Encouraging reforms in the IC could itself be seen as anti-feminist; as Cynthia Enloe states of the military, "the newest maneuver has been to camouflage women's service to the military as women's liberation" (Enloe 2002, 45). There is therefore serious doubt whether it is possible to re-gender the national security sector—including intelligence agencies—if the sector's primary function remains the organized use of violence to achieve national objectives devised by groupings with few women and marginalized groups represented. At the same time, we argue that while intelligence services exist, they must be diverse. We assert that even if a more diverse workforce does not result in the complete remaking of the intelligence sector, it is, perhaps, more likely to do so than maintaining the status quo has done to date. In other words, we believe it is important to fight for the right of women and historically marginalized groups' inclusion in intelligence, but this does not mean we cannot keep critiquing the institution. Therefore, this article sits at an uncomfortable place for us as authors—wanting to disrupt the instrumentalist way in which the IC views diversity while also holding the promise that you can indeed transform these institutions.

Learnings from Researching Diversity in Intelligence: Methodological Challenges and Research Opportunities

Ultimately, researching diversity in intelligence is consistently and universally challenging, compounded by a lack of transparency and data limitations. Pető (2020) highlights that the gendered rules guiding behavior in intelligence remain unable to be deduced from files alone and rely on access to knowledge on the informal rules guiding behavior. In other words, the gendered rules of intelligence were seldom written down. This has produced difficulties in analyzing historical gender and other kinds of relations in the intelligence sector, where the lack of written rules compounds issues in gaining access to information. Pető also highlights that the universalized approach to intelligence work posits challenges for researchers—everything was captured, yet not everything is available to the researcher (or still exists), and therefore piecing together an accurate picture is not always possible. Finally, Pető highlights the issue of cognitive closure: "women were not only unrecognized actors, but even today it is impossible to write about their stories, exploitation, manipulation—in protection of their privacy rights" (2020, 202). Researching intelligence is therefore complex.

Challenges in sourcing accurate and timely data have resulted in the overwhelming preponderance of historical analyses of intelligence in the literature. This can be attributed both to an interest in wartime and past intelligence practices and narratives, as well as the time delay required to access declassified records (which, depending on the country context, are only declassified after a set period of years, usually decades). Publications often rely on personal accounts and letters, official documents, media reports, and biographies. Given that critical feminist research often seeks to understand core silences and gaps, it is worth exploring methodologies that "read into" these historical silences. Mirror methods (Eggeling 2022) of studying fiction as a window into the practices of non-fiction in real life are one option. However, it is also worth noting that many of the most difficult, problematic, or indeed traumatic gender, race, or sexuality challenges may not have left a trail of public or published evidence.

In the United Kingdom, Shahan notes that "organizational secrecy and an inconsistent availability of archival information" presented a major methodological challenge in her research of the British Secret Service (2019, 17). Restrictions on information-sharing make timely, relevant communication difficult between intelligence agencies, which has ramifications for research as well as sharing on best practice around diversity and inclusion (Christofferson 2018). Additionally, many organizations, including police, for instance, are seen as "segmented, specialized, and covert", hampering access to information across divisions even within one agency (Atkinson 2017, 237; Manning 1978).

Declaration rates are also a methodological challenge that hamper the collection of accurate data. Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), LGBTI+, and disability declaration rates in the British IC vary. Data collected to date is "not sufficiently robust", however does indicate that women are a minority across all agencies in Britain's IC, particularly in senior leadership (Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament 2018, 15). Representation of BAME staff is noted as "lamentable", with only one agency (GCHQ) with any BAME staff at a senior level (representing only 4.8 percent of its Senior Civil Servant cadre) (Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament 2018, 15). In this same agency, 92.9 percent of staff chose not to declare LGBTI+ identification, which may be indicative of on-going perceptions around the ramifications of declaration (whereas only 4.4 percent of GCHQ staff chose not to declare disability status). In some nations (like Australia, for instance), anti-discrimination legislation that is designed to protect individuals from organizational discrimination also hampers the collection of the same data on sexuality, ethnicity, disability, and so on (unless voluntarily offered). Given the learnings from the British case, the declaration of diversity markers may be affected by perceived, real, or historical surrounding discrimination and bias, and therefore there remain challenges in data collection and accuracy around organizational make-up and diversity.

Because of the methodological hurdles involved in researching intelligence, the insight of "insiders" is a common methodological choice used in the literature, either by relying on biography and narrative or by the researcher having an insider status of a kind (Atkinson 2017). Gaining insight from insiders has also been seen as critical to grapple with prevailing stereotypes, tropes, and the mythology surrounding intelligence—to reveal "truths" and dispel myths. Such insider accounts remain challenging to achieve in practice, due to high levels of secrecy, a lack of transparency, the prevalence of backlash, and a lack of whistleblower protections.

Ultimately, as much as contemporary accounts of diversity in intelligence remain a major gap and limitation of the literature, so too do methodologies to overcome critical silences. Developing and sharing methods for researching diversity in intelligence are therefore crucial. Main questions that seek evidence, research, and debate include: How can we ethically research diversity in intelligence, particularly in a contemporary period? How can researchers gain and maintain access to the information needed, and how do they navigate issues around secrecy and a lack of transparency? More methodological reflections on researching diversity in intelligence are needed.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the following sentiment summed up by Black is reinforced throughout the literature: "[d]iversity is not just about fairness; it is mission critical" (2003, 9). Yet, it is also clear from the literature that diversity in intelligence is a challenge, with people from diverse gender identities, sexualities, and ethnicities variably characterized as a security risk, unreliable, and disloyal to the IC, on top of the "regular" discrimination and bias they may face. The literature from 1992 to 2021 canvassed through the SQLR approach, and supplemented with additional literature from agencies, think tanks, and more recent analyses suggests that the way in which gender, race, and sexuality are experienced in secret institutions is multiply problematic with challenges layered and obscured by the lack of transparency. Secret institutions both replicate challenges in other forms of government while (re)producing unique constraining environments for gaining diversity—and studying diversity. Additionally, processes of promoting diversity in intelligence can rely on and reinforce stereotyped knowledge of marginalized social groups, ultimately hindering effective diversity activities.

It is also important to problematize the notion of diversity and inclusion in intelligence as an integral strategy to better watch, gather intelligence on, and "police" diverse communities. The instrumental or strategic value or "use" that diverse people provide to intelligence is an enormous benefit to the identification of security threats, as well as somewhat problematic, with diverse communities potentially coopted into their own surveillance entrapment. This may indeed be a key reason why diversity is not always widely evidenced in intelligence—the bargain with the state is not one with which individuals are willing to agree. Overall, the IC views diversity as both an asset and a liability to be managed, gate-kept, or vetted. These tensions highlight the urgency of further research—not only to fill core research gaps but also contribute to robust policy and practice that balance risk and reward in intelligence.

This literature review has shown that while there is a predominance of qualitative studies and historical analyses, quantitative data and contemporary accounts of gender, sexuality, and race in intelligence are largely missing. Additional areas of interest include an analysis of gender and ethnic vertical and horizontal segregation, which is hinted at by a number of articles but remains understudied. Future research on diversity in intelligence is both critical and timely.

Our final argument is that, fundamentally, the IC should not have to make a case for diversity. These agencies have access to a huge amount of budget and resources; they have significant and very special privileges, immunities, and duties under the law; and they carry significant status in state societies. Access to intelligence institutions should therefore draw on the full diversity of the state's citizenry as a matter of fundamental principle, not merely instrumental benefit. Moreover, even as we address diversity issues in intelligence, we must continue to problematize and question the institution itself.

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