PRESENCE OF INTELLIGENCE SERVICES ON FACEBOOK

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This study is based on the need to demonstrate the opportunity that social networks represent for the recruitment of human resources in terms of information that is constantly shared by users. We chose to focus on intelligence services because they are more reluctant than the other structures empowered to ensure national security in terms of social media activity.

Through this analysis we discovered that although many intelligence services own official pages on social networks, there are few intelligence services that share content on them. Of the 12 Facebook pages analyzed, we identified posts with content related to human resources recruitment only on the pages of four intelligence services.

Keywords*: intelligence services; Facebook; recruitment; human resources; posts; users.*

Introduction

The present study aims at identifying the need for intelligence services to use social networks in the process of recruiting human resources. Many of the military organizations, including the intelligence services, are publicly present on social media. In order to achieve the objective, we will analyze the work carried out on social networks by the most important intelligence services in the world. Through this research, we aim to establish whether they are intelligence services that use social networks as a means of attracting human resources and how they do so.

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1. Choice of Reference Group

The first step in conducting the research was to identify the social network that in question, and the second step was to establish the intelligence services we will analyze. In order to achieve this, we have set a criterion to help us objectively choose the social network and a criterion on the basis of which to objectively choose the intelligence services. When choosing the social network, we will consider the number of users, and in the case of choosing intelligence services, we will identify the latest research in which the classification of the best information services in the world has been carried out.

Since we cannot carry out research on all existing intelligence services, and also we do not have the necessary tools to achieve a new ranking of them, we will look for a classification made by other researchers of the intelligence services that have established themselves worldwide over time. Through a single search of the phrase *best secret services in the world* on the search engine, we identified several articles in the foreign press in which the classification of the secret services in the world was made. The most recent list was made in June 2021, by Anuj Tiwari of the India Times (Table no. 1). Being the newest classification, we will include the results of this research in the reference group of intelligence services taken into consideration in the present study. We cannot confirm the validity of the data in the identified classification, but our research is not influenced by this, nor is it intended to classify the best intelligence services. It is important to choose objectively the intelligence services whose activity in the online environment we will follow.

For the choice of the social network that we will use in this research, we have taken into account the number of active users. According to the information identified on the Data Reportal website, Facebook is the social network used by most people (DataReportal 2021). Since its emergence, Facebook has been the most used social network, globally, this being the reason for its inclusion in this research. Notwithstanding, intelligence services are also officially present on other social networks, presumably Twitter and Instagram.

Facebook is a social network that allows users to create an online profile through which to interact with other users. Through their profile, users can get involved in various online activities, such as: sharing photos, posting comments, sharing the location or distributing personal information (Padyab, and Others 2016). A large amount of information can be shared on Facebook, all that matters is how willing users are to share their personal data with other users.

Therefore, Facebook's features show the intelligence services could use this social network to identify or attract potential candidates. The activity that potential candidates perform on Facebook can determine their compatibility or incompatibility with the specifics of the intelligence services. Their posts, the people who are on their

list or the likes they make, help to sketch a candidate profile which can be compared to the profile sought by the intelligence services. Intelligence services may also use Facebook to send messages aimed at attracting potential candidates.

Table no. 1: The best information services in the world
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), USA
Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India
Mossad, Israel
Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan
Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), UK
Main Intelligence Agency (GRU), Rusia
Ministry of State Security (MSS), China
National Investigation Agency (NIA), India
National Security Agency (NSA), USA
Federal Security Service (FSS), Rusia
Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), Germania
Intelligence Bureau (IB), India
General Directorate for External Security (DGSE), Franța
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USA
Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), Australia
Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Canada

The next step in our research was to verify the existence of a Facebook page associated with each previously identified intelligence agency. To achieve this, we have introduced the name of each intelligence service, in part, on the social network Facebook, both in English and in the official languages of the countries of origin. As a result of the searches, we identified official pages on Facebook for twelve intelligence services out of the 16 previously identified. The results of the searches performed on Facebook are shown in Table no. 2.

The four intelligence services for which we have not identified official pages on Facebook come from: Australia, Canada, India and Russia. Canada and Australia each have one service in the list identified, instead India owns three, and Russia owns two, therefore Australia and Canada are no longer the subject of our research. The best services in the world with official Facebook pages belong to the following countries: USA, India, Israel, Pakistan, UK, China, Russia, Germany and France.

Table no. 2: List of intelligence services that have official Facebook pages
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), USA
Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India
Mossad, Israel
Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan
Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), UK
Ministry of State Security (MSS), China
National Security Agency (NSA), USA
Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan
Federal Security Service (FSS), Rusia
Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), Germania
General Directorate for External Security (DGSE), Franța
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USA

2. Research Methodology

Our research was based solely on public social media posts shared by intelligence services. All the information obtained complied with the terms and conditions imposed by social networks. We also mention that in the research we used only public information, posted by the intelligence services, without asking them for additional information. The intelligence services have nothing to do with the conducted research (McCulloh, and others 2020).

Most of the activities conducted by the intelligence services are secret, which is why there have been situations in which citizens misunderstood the need for secrecy of activities and accused the intelligence services of lack of transparency in the execution of missions. To eliminate this aspect, some intelligence services have decided to take advantage of the opportunity offered by social networks and be publicly present in the online community. This can be an *indicator* of the importance that social networks have for intelligence services. In terms of quantity, we have determined that most intelligence services are publicly present in the online environment, having official pages on the social network Facebook. The next stage of the research was to qualitatively analyze their presence on Facebook, and this we did, using content analysis as a research method. The analysis involved tracking the posts shared on the Facebook page of each intelligence service, in part. We distributed the identified posts in three categories: recruiting human resources,

promoting the institution, and informing the citizens. The category of interest in this research is the category of posts related to the recruitment of human resources, but we found it useful to quantify all posts so we could observe, compared to the other categories, the attention paid to this stage. To categorize the posts, we considered the message that the post was sending.

To determine the time frame that we will have as a benchmark in the research, we considered the event that caused changes worldwide. Initially, we had planned to follow the activity of the intelligence services on the social network Facebook during a year (July 2020 – July 2021), but we considered that there is a possibility that the coronavirus pandemic will change the data obtained and the importance of the role of social networks for intelligence services. So, we decided to frame the study between the time of the outbreak of the pandemic and the time of the research (July 2021). The next step in conducting the research was to check each official page of each service and to quantify the posts from each month of the established period. We analyzed each post to identify its message, and later placed the post in one of the established categories.

3. Analysis of the Activity of the Intelligence Services on the Social Network Facebook

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), USA

The CIA joined the social media community in 2014. The intelligence agency became visible in the online environment to be close to the citizens, given the agency's activity has the citizen at its core. The first social network in which the CIA appeared was Twitter, and the first post was meant to amuse the followers: "We can neither confirm nor deny if this post is the first" (Crilley and Pears 2021), but also to convey the message that from that moment on they will be present in the online environment, publicly. The status of posts shared on the CIA's official Facebook page between December 2019 and July 2021 is shown in Table no. 3.

Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Pakistan

ISI was founded in 1948, with the main purpose of facilitating the distribution of information between the armed forces, naval forces and air forces. Following the introduction of the name of this service in the search box of Facebook, several pages have been aidentified. We checked these pages to pinpoint the one belonging to ISI. The first criterion taken into consideration was the option that shows the verified pages, but none of the pages were checked, so the next criterion we had in mind was the existence of the link that connects the Facebook page to the official website of the service. This is how we identified the Facebook page on which we carried out the research of the posts, and their situation is shown in Table no. 4 (Banerji 2011).

Table no. 3: CIA activity on Facebook
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Month and year	Informing citizens	Promotion of the institution	Recruitment of human resources
July 2021	7	6	9
June 2021	9	5	10
May 2021	6	8	7
April 2021	8	10	6
March 2021	8	9	7
February 2021	11	11	4
January 2021	11	7	3
December 2020	10	4	8
November 2020	7	7	10
October 2020	11	8	8
September 2020	10	13	8
August 2020	9	9	9
July 2020	8	9	10
June 2020	6	5	7
May 2020	8	18	7
April 2020	15	10	11
March 2020	10	17	9
February 2020	6	10	8
January 2020	6	6	11
December 2019	13	11	8

National Security Agency (NSA), USA

This American intelligence service owns a page on the social network Facebook on which posts were distributed every month during the analyzed period. The purpose of the posts differs from month to month, as we can see in Table no. 5, that is, there are months in which posts predominate that have the role of either informing citizens or promoting the work of the NSA, and there are months in which posts with reference to the recruitment of human resources predominate.

Table no. 4: ISI activity on Facebook
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Month and year	Informing citizens	Promoting the organization	Recruitment of human resources
July 2021	2	1	0
June 2021	3	2	1
May 2021	6	5	1
April 2021	3	1	0
March 2021	0	1	0
February 2021	4	4	0
January 2021	5	9	0
December 2020	0	0	0
November 2020	0	0	0
October 2020	0	0	0
September 2020	0	0	0
August 2020	0	0	0
July 2020	0	0	0
June 2020	0	0	0
May 2020	0	0	0
April 2020	0	0	0
March 2020	0	0	0
February 2020	0	0	0
January 2020	0	0	0
December 2019	0	0	0

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), USA

The FBI is the last foreign intelligence service for which we conducted the research on the Facebook page. The number of posts to inform citizens is much higher than the number of posts are meant to promote the institution and the number of posts that have the role of recruiting human resources. The status of posts, for each month, is shown in Table no. 6. Posts with content about recruiting human resources may be in the form of information related to certain institutions in which schooling for the FBI is conducted, or they may be direct calls to citizens to fill vacancies.

Table No. 5: NSA's facebook activity
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Month and year	Informing citizens	Promoting the organization	Recruitment of human resources
July 2021	4	3	8
June 2021	6	6	10
May 2021	2	2	1
April 2021	4	5	4
March 2021	3	9	10
February 2021	5	4	4
January 2021	0	6	3
December 2020	7	8	8
November 2020	6	4	4
October 2020	8	8	10
September 2020	3	1	7
August 2020	3	2	9
July 2020	5	3	9
June 2020	3	5	5
May 2020	3	3	8
April 2020	5	2	4
March 2020	5	10	8
February 2020	6	11	15
January 2020	3	3	10
December 2019	6	1	13

4. Inactive Information Services Present on Facebook

Of the intelligence services identified as the best and being present on the social network Facebook, there are a few that do not use this social network for sharing posts. We followed their activity during the researched period, and we presented the situation of each intelligence service in this subchapter.

One of the intelligence services that does not have activity on the Facebook page is RAW (The Foreign Intelligence Agency of India). This intelligence service did not provide much information to citizens about the work they carry out, and so there were many assumptions about the actions in which RAW was involved (Shaffer 2015). Although RAW created a Facebook page, only two posts were shared in 2013,

the same year in which it was created, and since then the activity on this page has stopped. During the time we conducted the research, no posts were shared. We could not conduct an analysis of the work carried out on Facebook of this service, which is why we stated that RAW agents do not follow the recruitment of human resources through the social network Facebook. While entering the Facebook community was an attempt for RAW to be more visible to citizens, this attempt was abandoned shortly after the initiation.

Table no. 6: FBI Activity on Facebook
Source: (Tiwari 2021)

Month and year	Information to citizens	Promotion of the institution	Recruitment of human resources
July 2021	61	7	2
June 2021	61	14	7
May 2021	69	29	25
April 2021	98	13	38
March 2021	96	15	26
February 2021	87	5	20
January 2021	113	4	16
December 2020	87	13	19
November 2020	53	12	15
October 2020	71	13	14
September 2020	68	10	12
August 2020	92	12	15
July 2020	87	11	9
June 2020	67	14	13
May 2020	59	9	7
April 2020	101	15	16
March 2020	87	14	11
February 2020	99	17	15
January 2020	85	14	9
December 2019	88	16	13

We continued with the analysis of the Facebook page of the Israeli intelligence service. In the case of Mossad, the situation is similar to that of RAW, which means that only one post was shared this year, on July 21, and the post prior to it was shared in 2019. This year's post was aimed at presenting the Facebook page and

guiding citizens to address the intelligence service through it, assuring them that it is a very secure means of communication. Therefore, within Mossad, the social network Facebook is not used to recruit candidates.

For The Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), the foreign intelligence service of the United Kingdom, a page was created on the social network Facebook in August 2019, but there has been no activity on this page since then until the time of this research. Although MI6 leaders acknowledge that social media offers the opportunity to find out valuable information, they did not focus on creating a page that would attracts citizens.

The Chinese intelligence service, The Ministry of State Security (MSS), has a Facebook page created in 2015, but no posts have been shared since then. A single post appears on this page describing the mission of the service. We have identified the Facebook page of this information service using Chinese, although the English translation also appears on the name of the page.

The Russian intelligence service, The Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSS), created an official Facebook page in November 2019, just before the outbreak of the pandemic. On the day the page was created, several posts were shared, but subsequently we did not identify any other activities, apart from a single post at the beginning of 2021, specifying the ways in which possible terrorist acts can be reported. Therefore, the FSS Facebook page does not track the recruitment of human resources.

The German intelligence service, The Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), is not active on Facebook. Although there is a Facebook page related to this intelligence service, there is no recorded activity. Therefore, the recruitment of human resources through the social network Facebook by the German intelligence service is not pursued.

The French intelligence service, The General Directorate for External Security (DGSE), is present on the social network Facebook, but the Facebook page does not imply the existence of a profile yet presupposes that there is a way for other persons to be able to mention that they have visited that service. For this reason, we affirm that DGSE is not one of the intelligence services that uses Facebook to recruit new employees.

5. Interpretation of Results

Drawing a parallel to a research conducted by Landon-Murray in 2015, where the work carried out by the US intelligence services for a fixed period was tracked, we note that there are both differences and similarities between the activity conducted by the intelligence services on social networks in 2015, compared to the activity carried out by them in 2021.

In 2015, CIA was the American intelligence service that shared the most posts on Facebook (Landon-Murray 2015), but according to our research, in 2021, FBI is the U.S. service mostly active on Facebook. In the same study conducted in 2015, it was shown that the NSA predominantly distributes on its Facebook page posts that have the role of recruiting human resources (Landon-Murray 2015). At the time of our research, as can be seen in Figure no. 2, posts that have content related to the recruitment of human resources continue to predominate on the NSA's Facebook page.

The research carried out showed us that from the list of the best intelligence services in the world, during the research period, it is the FBI that shared the most posts on Facebook, followed by CIA, NSA and ISI. Instead, NSA is the intelligence service that has shared the most posts related to human resource recruitment compared to other types of posts.

ISI does not have a lot of activity on Facebook, and regarding posts for recruitment purposes, ISI shared only one post in May 2020 that referred to the possibility of being part of the ISI community. Since then, there have been no posts that attract candidates to the service, which is why we can deduce that this way of recruitment is not a priority for this intelligence agency.

The efficiency of the recruitment of human resources by the FBI in the online environment is a topic that has been addressed in other researches. For example, the results of a research in which a case study on the FBI was conducted showed that organizations that post messages on social networks to recruit human resources can identify more people to meet the requirements, and the financial implications are much lower when using social networks as a tool for recruiting human resources (McCulloh, and others 2020).
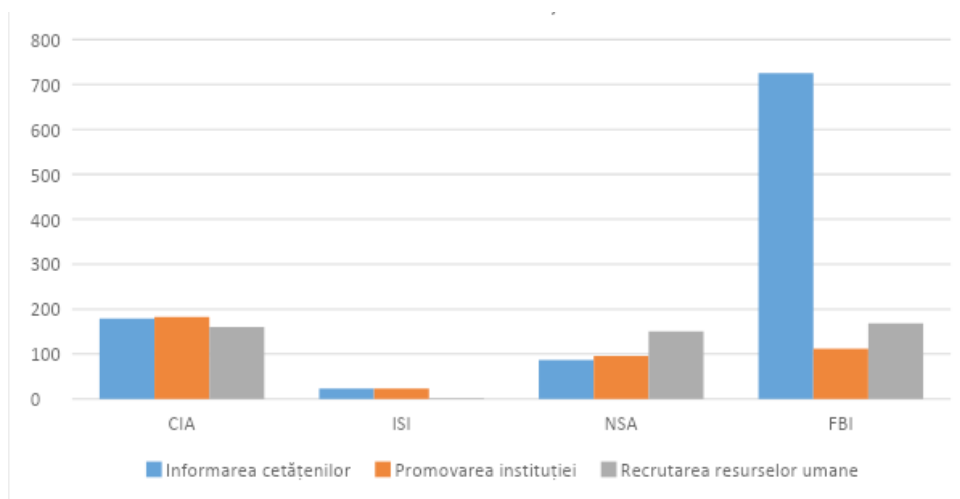

Figure no. 1: Posts shared on Facebook by foreign intelligence services

Conclusions

Researching intelligence services' posts shared on Facebook pages has helped us understand they are taking advantage of the opportunities offered by social networks. The large number of social media users and the increased time they spend online determine the need for intelligence services to be part of the social media community.

Although we have analyzed the activity on the social network Facebook of some intelligence services, from several states, we can see that only the US intelligence services are focused on the distribution of posts aimed at recruiting human resources. Moreover, of the twelve intelligence services that are officially present on Facebook, only four are active, and of the four, three are American intelligence services, the fourth being Pakistani.

Thus, the conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that, at international level, although the need for intelligence services to be officially present on Facebook has been identified, most intelligence services do not use this social network to attract potential candidates.

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