

Risk Analysis Beyond Government Agencies: Conceptualizing Private Sector Intelligence

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Introduction

For most of the past century, a young person with an analytical mind who was interested in security issues would traditionally pursue a career at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the National Security Agency (NSA), the military, or other public-sector entities devoted to promoting national security. In 2018, such an individual can now pursue a promising intelligence analyst career at an airline, financial services organization, technology company, non-profit organization, or one of many other entities that now have dedicated Corporate Security or Risk departments and intelligence analysis teams. Moreover, a multitude of private sector security companies have emerged to conduct tailored risk analysis for both government and industry. These vendors further expand the private sector's capacity and ability to conduct a type of work on which, in the past, the public sector had a near-monopoly. In an era of high political instability and terrorist threats, intelligence agencies are no longer the sole career path for aspiring analysts.

This article addresses the overarching questions of how the intelligence analysis field has changed since its creation, and what the implications are for government intelligence agencies. The present study makes a theoretical contribution to answering this question, in three stages: first, by adapting traditional intelligence concepts to the private sector;¹ second, by examining the role of private-sector intelligence consultancies; and, third, by incorporating private sector consulting

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