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Minorities, Personnel Security, and Intelligence Operations: Beyond Morals and the Law

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Title: Minorities, Personnel Security, and Intelligence Operations: Beyond Morals and the Law

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Abstract. This article advocates the need for programs designed to increase the percentage of ethnic, racial, religious, and other cultural minorities within the operational units of security bureaucracies.

Advocates to increase the percentage of various cultural minorities--e.g., ethnic, racial, religious--within security bureaucracies often found their rationales on notions of equality, equal opportunity, equity, justice, and even various levels of political machination. The present article posits that advocates of greater minority representation can make a very strong case based on the psychological skills that many members of minority groups--by virtue of their minority status--have developed. Moreover, these skills seem uniquely suited to the development and management of intelligence operations that often are the most prestigious of intelligence activities within security bureaucracies.

The psychological skills in question comprise cognitive and behavioral techniques to attenuate and even reverse the noxious effects of oppression--e.g., ethnocentrism, racism, (pace) inquisitionism. Attenuations and reversals are effected through creating and maintaining spheres of psychological freedom resistant to the freedom-destroying elements of the majority culture. Escapes to freedom include a host of phenomena researched in the social cognition and interpersonal relations literatures--e.g., deceiving down, subversion of social practice, impression management, Machiavellianism, self-invention, subterfuges, poses, masks, ingratiation, social roles, and self-improvisation.

What these and other phenomena have in common is the substantiation of a double consciousness, or better yet of a web of consciousnesses. On a continuous basis--if necessary--various consciousnesses become more or less salient in supporting social adaptation within an overarching structure of self-identity. Concurrent with this adaptive significance, these consciousnesses afford an individual the spontaneous sense that words, images, and behavior are imbued with multiple meanings--those of the individual and of others.

These escapes to freedom also have in common an association with a sense of humor, comedy, the surreal--even absurdity--that is able to permeate the very real tragedy of everyday life. This sense tempers how oppression is perceived by the oppressed and can facilitate victory against the forces that seek to foster demeaning self-perception and false consciousness among, between, and within the oppressed.

The psychology so far described seems uniquely suited to the challenges inherent in developing and managing intelligence operations. In essence, a minority candidate has been living the life of both an intelligence operator and agent before being employed by a security bureaucracy. (To a much lesser degree, this is the case of most people based on the reality between their realities and their ideals, while to a much closer degree this is the case for other socially stigmatized groups such as the so-called physically handicapped and people of minority sexual orientations.) A caveat is that this psychology also might make the minority candidate and others with social stigmas more of a personnel security threat if they decide that the security bureaucracy is the place to wreak vengeance against the oppressive society that they now represent. (See Perkins, D. (1997). Counterintelligence and human intelligence operations

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in Bosnia. *Defense Intelligence Journal*, 6, 33-61; Salinas, C. (1998). Human rights and intelligence reform. *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 3, 1-4; Sherr, J. (Winter 1994/1995). Cultures of spying. *National Interest*, 56-62; Steele, S. (March 1, 1999). The content of his character. *The New Republic*, pp. 27-34; Wolf, M. (1997). *Man without a face: The autobiography of communism's greatest spymaster*. Random House.) (Keywords: Intelligence, Personnel Security.)