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**Governmental Espionage in the International Relations and
the Latent Perspectives since the Cold War: A Systematic
Literature Review**

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DEDICATED TO

This work is dedicated to my father Leonardo Pesantez, who has been always supporting me all the time, he is a man of compromise and dedication. Also, he inspired me to work in this topic of espionage, because of its fundamental role in this contemporary world.

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to analyze the shortcomings and threats of espionage used by the world's powerful governments. This was possible to describe using the method known as Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) that aims to define the current context of international relations and the effect of the Cold War that occurred in the last century. To this end, the background is framed around topics related to the recognition of an espionage war and the use of individuals as spies, which has led nations to witness latent threats arising from growing distrust in a post-Cold War globalized world. Through PRISMA, the most relevant articles were found using eligibility criteria and search strings. The results are presented through figures that demonstrate the contribution of the articles that were part of the analysis, with information on the use of espionage and international relations. As part of the conclusions, it can be described how the world of the 21st century, a post-Cold War world, continues to engage in indirect confrontations through espionage, rooted in ideological changes that drive individuals to become spies and the consequences to pay of being recruited or spying for a nation.

Keywords: PRISMA, Systematic Literature Review, Espionage, International Relations, Cold War, Spies.

Governmental espionage in the international relations and the latent perspectives since the Cold War: A systematic literature review

1. Introduction

This research is focused on an exploratory analysis of government espionage with the purpose of answering the questions of this work and contributing to the branch of government espionage. The method called “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses” (PRSIMA) through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was used to address the issues surrounding government espionage, latent threats since the Cold War in international relations, and false omniscience with the use of intelligence by organizations or countries that use espionage as a tool. With the use of the PRSIMA method, studies or articles were found to enrich the fundamentals that support the stated objective with relevant information related to the topic.

Through this research, we seek to contribute to the area of international relations, due to the threats that exist in this globalized world. On the other hand, there is also diplomacy because the internationalization of countries is still booming. They seek to create ties around the world, a clear example are organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) or the European Union (EU), which are already considered huge blocs with notable power in international relations. However, mistrust can lead to breaking these ties, or the tendency to different ideologies that exist and those that existed in important historical events of the globalized world. Because of the Cold War, the world was divided, but many countries also came together.

With the use of the PRISM method, the aim is to avoid bias when writing useful information focused on the topic. To do this, a specific search was conducted in digital libraries with the help of a search string that can find information to support the objective of this systematic literature review. Espionage is a topic that has different branches due to historical events such as the two world wars and the Cold War. With the SLR, the articles included to conduct this work were analyzed to enrich the evidence that supports the proposed objectives.

General objective

Conduct a systematic review that makes it visible if there are latent threats to international relations, if in the 21st century we are still in a cold war and finally answer if espionage is a tool where, through mirages, it reflects insecurity with the use of intelligence.

Specific objectives

- Define the work methodology to execute the systematic literature review
- Systematically collect scientific articles related to the topic
- Generate the synthesis of the collected evidence
- Report evidence of latent threats through this academic work

The specific objectives, in turn, are framed under the following research questions, which will guide the execution of the literature review in all its stages.

- RQ1. Is espionage a latent threat to international relations?
- RQ2. In the 21st century, are we still in the midst of a global cold war?
- RQ3. Is espionage a tool that leads to a false omniscience with the use of intelligence?

As methods of synthesis of data and information, different artifacts such as tables, figures, and both qualitative and quantitative descriptive analyses, are proposed. Based on the proposed synthesis methods, the results will allow us to describe the current position of various authors regarding the latent perspectives of the Cold War.

2. Literature review

2.1. Theoretical framework

Espionage could be considered the second oldest craft in history. According to Hermosilla (2012), espionage is as old as war; therefore, it can be said that its origins go back to espionage's history itself. There's hardly evidence of the oldest espionage activities in the world; however, an example of such activities is the Neolithic clashes at the Talheim settlement, which show a killing that could be described as "selective;" only four bodies of young women were found. Another case of the use of intelligence and espionage services is found in Mesopotamia in the 2nd millennium b. C., when Sargon I from Akkad came to power, from the coasts of Syria to what we know in present as Iran. Sargon I sent spies who pretended to be explorers and obtained information about exterior land that could be conquered. These cases show how through espionage's history as an office, idea and activity has taken shape and its own concept.

There is an old term that is still used, as explained by Lomas & Murphy (2019): the information that a person obtains, human intelligence (HUMINT), where people can be valuable sources of information, either by conscience or by accident. However, knowledge of persuasion is required on certain occasions, which allows individuals to extort money to commit espionage. For example, White (2010) mentions Mata Hari, a spy executed by the French during the First World War. Hari was the face of sexuality and betrayal in espionage. She represented fear and desire in person. She used seduction as a useful tool.

Historically, during the beginning and middle of the Cold War, three important events emerged, which Reiss (2023) explains in his research. In 1942, when coded agents provided the US government with information about a Japanese trap during the darkest period of World War II, this information was helpful to neutralize the trap. As a second event, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when the US identified intelligence images of nuclear missiles coming from Russia. Then the Soviet Union, during a confrontation between US and Soviet ships, which was the closest event to a third world war at that time. As a third event, the Six-Day War, in 1967, analysts got information about the Arab-Israeli crisis, which served to control the Soviet confrontation on the United States side.

At the end of the Second World War, exposures of Soviet spy networks put the United States on alert. Just before the start of the Cold War, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) increased its efforts to combat espionage, but they required the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in 1947. Nevertheless, just as internal security was increased, the possibility of American spies spying against the government itself also increased. Therefore, there remained a latent threat in the country, and, after the Cold War, many spies fell, and American spies themselves were caught in betrayal of their nation. The misuse of espionage has taken these international consequences to the limit, although some of them went unnoticed until the end, but the costs to be paid are high (Sulick, 2014).

There are risks with the use of espionage as a tool. For Bloom (2020), espionage causes agents to put their lives at risk. In some countries there is death penalty if any spy is caught in the act of spying or becomes a counterintelligence asset. The author explains that there is a term called MICE (Money, Ideology, Coercion and Ego), where each of these words has its own explanation. *Money* is the possibility of having an easy life. Many of the people recruited agree to spy for money; for example, during the Cold War, Colonel Pyotr Popov sold Soviet secrets to the Americans in Vienna in 1953. He died shortly afterwards, shot in the back of his head, earning around \$70,000 US dollars a year for those secrets. *Ideology* indicates that a spy who is driven by any ideology to spy is a stronger threat than one who spies for money. Ana Belen Montes, a senior analyst at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), spied for Cuba for over 16 years and was paid a much higher salary, but the side she defended was striking the Soviet Union so she contributed in part to the Cuban missile event.

The third letter "C" stands for the words *Coercion* or *Compromise*. Where blackmailing was the basis of the tool, when a person was recruited to spy, they were warned that, in case of blackmailing, it would be easy to detect even by seduction traps that were widely used in the Cold War. Finally, the letter "E", represents the terms *Ego* or *Excitement*, where the spy felt satisfaction when completing a *mission*. However, the world of espionage is not as it is portrayed in the movies, with explosions, car chases or sexual adventures; quite the contrary, "only those who have been in the field of espionage, know what it is like to engage in meetings with key targets, write down information and prepare for the next meeting to achieve more overriding objectives" (Bloom, 2020).

As explained by Schrecker (2013), espionage had a strong moment of tension with the Rosenberg case, when the US suffered a lot and there was paranoia due to the influence of communism, and how it

influenced the country's policies and ideological movement. There was an important network of Soviet spies. J. Edgar Hoover was an important piece, as the director of the FBI, which had the objective of fighting against communism at all times. He followed the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. They did not have much evidence, but finally, it was possible to testify against them for conspiracy because they passed information on the construction of the atomic bomb to the Soviets. They ended up on trial and were electrocuted in June 1953. Sulick (2013) mentions incidents related to espionage in the United States which did not decrease in the 1990s. New trends in espionage also emerged and the vast majority of North American Cold War spies came from the army. Russia also faced threats similar to those of the US, due to the growing influence of terrorism and organized crime within each country's own borders. The collapse of the Soviet Union revived nationalism, and Czechia is the country that suffered from the rebellion of people repressed by the former Soviets.

Likewise, Anand & Rosen (2008), talk about the ethics of the use of secrets, when people within an organization have to keep secrets in exchange for something, whether it be a salary or a clause where it endangers the person. It doesn't matter how benign an "insider" is, but the consequences that come with being one are ultimately unethical. On the other hand, ethics not only involve keeping a secret but also betraying it if a person is burdened with a secret. Becoming an informant, an infiltrator could lead him or her to stop keeping the secret and spread it or use it in another way, a reaction that would naturally require investigation.

A group called the "Magnificent Five" that worked for the KGB, notes Trahair & Miller (2012), it was a group of spies working for the Soviet causes. The Magnificent Five was conformed by Anthony Blunt (1907 - 1983), Guy Burgess (1911 - 1963), Donald Maclean (1913 - 1983), and Kim Philby (1912 - 1988) and the last John Cairncross (1913 - 1995). Cairncross who was born in Scotland and educated at Glasgow University, he studied modern languages. He was recruited to the Soviet Union and used the codename Moliere, also Liszt and Mer. He worked against Nazism, was in Paris and Spain, until he was transferred to the German foreign office. He was private secretary of the Cabinet of Ministers, until he heard Winston Churchill deny Soviet communism. Then Cairncross passed useful information to the Soviet Union offices in London, this information contained coded messages about the development of a new German Tiger I tank. He was in the British Foreign Intelligence Service (MI6) list of high-value informants until he was confronted, but at the end he denied being a spy for the Soviets.

On the other part, Andrew (2018) refers to a secret world, and shows that the use of intelligence over the last three millennia changed history. The Israel's Mossad, one of the most successful intelligence agencies in history, leads Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to use modern and ancient methods based on the Talmudic ideology about "*if someone comes to kill you, rise up and kill him first*". This raises questions about the use of tools to extract information, Cole (2014) argues that intelligence agents tend to use torture to obtain information. For example, to catch Osama Bin Laden for the 9/11 attack, the US had to interrogate a person in order to catch him. However, torture was generally accepted as a legitimate form of torture in pre-modern times.

The legal breaks left by the espionage of the 40's and 50's, according to Hannabuss (2008), helped the US understand the nature of Soviet espionage. Espionage activities were carried out during that period against a considered liberal democracy. The famous prosecution of the Rosenbergs and Fuchs gave rise to a piece that demonstrated that there were many more spies in their espionage networks, but they were not disseminated for reasons of secrecy of state. It is considered that espionage attracts its own ideological fanatics, encourages them to commit acts against their own nation, giving rise to an ideology of revenge, and that it suits the vision of "*political machinery*" in a democracy that protects the public interest.

2.2. State of the art

There is a term called "*intelligence revolution*." Watt (1990) and Gaddis (1989) explain that the term of revolution played an important role in the Cold War sequence. The post-war period, in terms of intelligence activities shows evidence of it in the writings and recollections of formal officials, journalists, and novelists, among others. We have learned a great deal over the past decades about the impact of *intelligence revolution*, meaning the clandestine collection of information, the implementation of covert operations and the analysis of adversary intentions as a strategy for the Second World War.

The Cold War was the antagonist in the plot of the Second World War. In his article, Schlesinger describes facts of the Cold War, such as the beginning of the Cold War and a war of ideologies mainly between the United States on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other. He shows how the US broke policies to enter into the conflict, and considers a perspective of the cold war in simple terms, or as

an equation: “The cold war could have been avoided only if the Soviet Union had not been possessed by its conviction of the infallibility of a communist word and the inevitability of a communist world” (Schlesinger, 1967).

According to Koura (2021), during 1960 and 1974, Czechoslovakia sent spies to the Middle East and the Mediterranean East to play an important role in the conflict of Cyprus during the overthrow of President Makarios, who wanted to prevent his nation from becoming a base of NATO, against the Arab countries. Thanks to the use of intelligence, Czechoslovakia was able to send weapons to the Makarios’ government while, on the other hand, they managed to obtain valuable information about the Middle East and the Mediterranean.

Nowadays, the war between Ukraine and Russia demonstrates post-war leftovers from the Cold War. For Jonsson (2024), this actual conflict is due to a post-Cold War liberal international order. There is evidence of the use of espionage in Europe, but one important point prevails here: treason, and how, for example, 139 Americans have been judged for espionage against their own governments. In terms of Money, Ideology, Coercion and Ego (MICE) model of recruitment (spy), coercion and money have been the most relevant causes in contemporary Europe. However, as discussed, money is always the motive for recruitment, but not always (Jonsson, 2024). Another motive that inspires the spy to become one, the ideology. It is very difficult to discern, but ideologically, the case of Ana Montes who spied for the Cuban government for 17 years or Kim Philby that spied for the Soviet Union for almost three decades, without compensation.

Just as Olmsted (2004) describes, there has been a lot of stereotyping in the world of espionage, because only men have been given credit, while there have been women who have played important roles as spies. In 1948, the story of Elizabeth Bentley was made public, it was a huge controversy because being a spy was related to being men; therefore, Elizabeth was branded as a communist only because she was a spy, also she mentioned the case of Mata Hari. However, Elizabeth was the first “red spy queen.” Considered the most important in the world, her ideology flowed between fascism and socialism before falling in love with the Soviet spy in the US, Jacob Golos, who trained her to be his messenger and consequently. his assistant in espionage. When Jacob died, Elizabeth Bentley became the most important spy in her own right, later defecting because she thought she was close to being discovered.

According to Lovelace (2015), the KGB, the Soviet secret service, used journalists as spies. The first agent sent was Aleksei Frolovich, who not only served as a newspaper editor, but entered his first mission in Finland, posing as a journalist; then he went to the US and began to infiltrate, recruiting several journalists. Some of his recruits were Robert Allen, who spied for money and John Spivak, who did it for his ideology. They moved among influential groups without attracting attention because they were journalists.

Additionally, there was a network of spies according to Harding (2021): Harry Houghton, Ethel Gee, Gordon Lonsdale, Morris and Lona Cohen, where everyone had an individual role but, in the end, they connected all the information to pass it on to the Soviets. They were given a name like Gordon Lonsdale, they called him “Last Act”. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, British naval information was sent to the Soviet Union. They were discovered by the CIA and the internal agency of the British Security Service (MI5) and were sentenced to 15 to 25 years in prison.

Classic espionage is obsolete in this technological world, according to Smith (1989), to be remembered and have a place in the history of espionage a spy must demonstrate honor. This is the case of Oleg Penkovsky, who committed treason against the Soviet Union. Oleg clearly used the HUMINT technique as a tool to collect information through recruits who obtained it. They compare Penkovsky to obtaining short information, but of imminent scope.

On the other hand, there is the social damage that espionage leaves behind. Dudai (2023) points out that even if someone admits that the information that spies provide is very useful, the price to be paid for recruitment and operationalization is much higher than it appears. As a result, social mistrust, wounds, and enmities affect the transition of getting out of conflict. In addition, the mass recruitment can sustain rather than end violence. Therefore, the policy of recruiting informants (spies) can have negative long-term implications.

For Sanz Díaz & Sáenz-Rotko (2022), politicians, journalists and analysts have once again reactivated the concept of the Cold War in the last decade where a new concept has been created: New Cold War (NGF), not only due to the current tensions between the US with Russia and China, but the fact that the powers are in constant indirect attack, since it can be ideological, economic, etc. If something characterizes the

current situation, marked by the interregnum war that is taking place in Ukraine, by the dismantling of a post-Cold War security architecture together with the global crisis and the international economy in the geopolitical sphere, it is the fluidity and also the determination that they have a poor adjustment to the rigid and binary schemes of the cold war.

3. Methods and materials

For this study, a systematic literature review was carried out. According to Beltrán (2005), a SLR is an observational, retrospective study, where several studies are combined to examine a question. Systematic reviews are generally used in the field of medicine because of their specific questions. In International Relations, the systematic review sought to answer three research questions related to espionage and the cold war. Urrútia & Bonfill (2010) explain that the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method details a list of 27 items exposed. Also known as a checklist, it details each step in conducting an SLR (systematic literature review). It is a complex process, requiring numerous judgements and decisions to be made by the authors in order to minimize the risk of bias in the review process, some of the criteria are:

- Define and describe the topic to be investigated, with the questions to be answered by the use of SLR.
- Analyze and understand PRISMA method and systematic literature review, review checklist step by step.
- Identify sources of information or database to search for information that is useful in the review (PRISMA).
- Review search strategy, search strings, filters (PRISMA).
- Define eligibility criteria (PRISMA).
- Analyze data selection process, inclusion and exclusion of information (PRISMA).
- Data elements, specify results that are compatible with the study for review.
- Synthesis method.
- Risk assessment in presentation of results.

3.1 Eligibility criteria

In eligibility criteria, according to Selcuk (2019), the benefit to identify all studies, clearly and justifiably indicates that the exclusion and inclusion criteria prioritize precisely and critically the information of reviewed studies, this allows for better results in the systematic review. The inclusion and exclusion criteria allow the identification of what information should be prioritized for the study, and how these studies were grouped for the synthesis goes hand in hand.

According to Page et al. (2021), the use of the PRISMA methodology is intended to be used in systematic reviews, where the focus is on the eligibility of a study. Inclusion and exclusion criteria must take into account the standards required for the review to be conducted.

3.1.1 Inclusion criteria are taken as standards for the selection of studies that could be considered, meaning that they will be useful for the review. For this review, the following inclusion criteria were used:

- Studies with specific cases of espionage during the Cold War by power countries.
- Articles analyzing the use of espionage as a tool of warfare.
- What impact espionage has had on the countries where it has been used.
- Cases of espionage in pre-Cold War, Cold War and post-Cold War periods.
- Most known governmental espionage agencies of the period.
- Reasons and intentions for having used espionage as a tool.

3.1.2 Exclusion criteria are instead rules that disqualify a study or review. In short, they exclude studies that are not sufficiently relevant to the research:

- Non-Cold War espionage cases.
- Cases encompass other types of espionage such as industrial or corporate espionage other than governmental espionage.
- Articles with very little or no relevant information on Cold War espionage.
- Cases of espionage that are not related to international relations.
- Studies that are limited to one irrelevant case.
- Research that lacks historical relevance or is too far removed from the historical context.

Once the inclusion and exclusion criteria were structured, the extraction criteria were created, where articles could be obtained to enrich this research with information and evidence. At this point, it was important to analyze the most critical aspects when collecting studies and articles that could contribute to this review.

3.2 Information sources

This point specifies all the databases, or websites to obtain studies, and the filters that will be used in them. The Scopus, Scielo and Google Scholar digital libraries will be used as databases to obtain studies that will contribute to the literature review. According to Agustín Lacruz (1998), a virtual library is a collection of electronic documents made available to users who wish to access specific information. An example of these libraries is Scielo, Scopus, PubMed, Jstor, Web of Science (WoS) some of them are anchored to specific topics, PubMed by its name is focused on the medical area, while Scopus is called as a bibliographic database where different disciplines are.

Scopus and WoS were used to obtain articles that can support the information in this systematic review. Below is an illustration of the table showing the search string used in each information source and the results, that they threw at the time of execution.

Figure 1.
Table of results from databases Scopus and WoS

Language	Search String	Articles founded in Scopus	Articles founded in WoS
English	"Espionage" AND Spies OR "Cold War" OR "Secret Service" OR "International Relations"	75	10
Spanish	"Espionaje" AND Espías OR "Guerra Fría" OR "Servicio Secreto" OR "Relaciones Internacionales"	0	0

3.3 Search strategy

En this point we present the strategy that will be used for the search of studies, for example, the use of filters to specify information and even limits for them. As mentioned by Hall & Dowling (1980), the search string can be unfeasible in two ways, firstly, that the string provides us with unwanted information, and secondly, that it is far from the required records. Therefore, creating a good search string leads us to the studies we are looking for. In order to do so, it is necessary to find keywords that are part of the search string and thus connect to search the digital libraries for reports on the topic.

In order execute the search strings, words related to the subject of the review were analyzed, where the keywords found are: espionage, international relations, cold war, SLR and "surveillance", (nexus - links) - Relations Global – "International", "Spies", "Secret Service". On the other hand, the Spanish translation should also be considered because the topic itself can be fed by too many works, reviews, studies in Spanish, therefore, the translation of the keywords and associated words are: "espionaje", "relaciones internacionales", "guerra fría", "SLR", and as associated words: "Vigilancia", "Nexo - Global - Mundial - Relaciones Internacionales", "espías", "Servicio Secreto"

Finally, the search strings are obtained by the most focused words to enrich this research:

- English: "Espionage" AND Spies OR "Cold War" OR "Secret Service" OR "International Relations"
- Spanish: "Espionaje" AND Espías OR "Guerra Fría" OR "Servicio Secreto" OR "Relaciones Internacionales"

Table 1.
Flow scenarios and collected articles

Scenario	Number of articles
Identification	75
Screening	73
Selection	24

The search string, as seen in Table 1, when executing the chain, gave a considerable number of articles which, through the process of extraction criteria, could collect those that are closest to the topic and that have the clearest and most precise information. at the time of writing this research. This point is important when carrying out the systematic review because the chain is designed to publish articles related to the topic, in this case, government espionage, but focused mainly on spies, secret services, international relations, and the Cold War. This is why the search strings were executed successfully, managing to find a considerable number of Articles with the necessary information to support this research.

The articles obtained after executing the search string only returned data in the Scopus digital library. The WoS digital library did not return any relevant studies since the works found did not have content that could enrich this work; therefore, WoS articles were excluded.

3.4 Data collection process

As Rother (2007), indicates in his research, data collection indicates that all the variables studied should be observed in the studies and summarized, because article review constitute a form of research that uses bibliographic sources of information to obtain the results, with the aim of theoretically substantiating a certain objective.

- RQ1. Is espionage a latent threat to international relations?
- RQ2. In the 21st century, are we still in the midst of a global cold war?
- RQ3. Is espionage a tool that leads to a false omniscience with the use of intelligence?

Table 2 shows the extraction criteria that were created from the exclusion and inclusion criteria, and allowed us to analyze whether an article would be useful or not in this study. In total, there were 11 extraction criteria; the first 9 with 3 sub-criteria, and the last 2 with 4 sub-criteria, where each sub-criterion mentions a specific point of the criteria.

For example, in criterion 01. Type of espionage, it is divided into 3 sub-criteria internal, external and bilateral to further analyze whether an article has the necessary information to be suitable for this investigation. On the other hand, this criteria matrix does not allow obtaining information about specific characteristics of each article. Therefore, the objective was to achieve a balance to be able to write about the topic without leaving out information within the context, or on the contrary, writing information irrelevant to the topic of government espionage and the three questions of investigation.

Table 2
Extraction criteria

RESEARCH QUESTION	EXTRACTION CRITERIA (EC)	CHARACTERISTICS
RQ1.	EC01. Type of espionage	Intern
		Extern
		Bilateral
	EC02. Involved actors	State
		Non-State
		Others (communities, mafias, private groups)
	EC03. Historical analysis	Evolution
		Capacity
		Legacy
	EC04. Debates perceptions	Legality
		Politics
		Privacy
RQ2.	EC05. Impact of the us of espionage	Politic level
		Social level
		geopolitical level

RQ3.	EC06. Response against the use of espionage	Counter-espionage National security Principle of reciprocity
	EC07. Period	Event before cold war Event during cold war Event after cold war
	EC08. Postwar effect	International cooperation International rivalry Distrust
	EC09. Collateral damage	Society level National level Global level
	EC10. Espionage methods	Recruitment Doble identity Humint (human intelligence) Disinformation
	EC11. Principles of espionage	Etic Moral Non-moral Non-etic

3.5 Data list

At this point, the outcomes used for carrying out this study were defined. First of all, the year of the studies were determinant so neither the information nor the terminology would be too old. Additionally, for the Cold War cases, articles and books were chosen based on specific points in time. Figure 2 shows articles found with the search string “Espionage” AND Spies OR “Cold War” OR “Secret Service” OR “International Relations”, which resulted in 75 documents related to government espionage. As a next step, the flow chart of the PRISMA method was executed and showed the four most relevant points for the topic:

- The first point is identification, where the search strings were executed in Spanish and English, and yielded a total of 75 documents.
- The next step, screening, translated into Spanish, was used for the number of documents that were selected, a total of 73 documents.
- In the third point, selection was used to choose the documents only based on the title, looking for relevance and relation to the topic. In total there were 24 documents that showed usefulness for the review.
- Finally, inclusion. At this point, the abstract was read to verify how close to the topic of government espionage each article was, giving a total of 15 documents that provided clear and focused information for the research.

The aforementioned points were used for the filtration of documents; out of 75 articles and chapters, only 15 documents remained that are highly relevant to the topic, and do not go out of context or focus.

On the other hand, access to the documents is also an important characteristic, because if access is restricted, it becomes a limiting factor when carrying out the research.

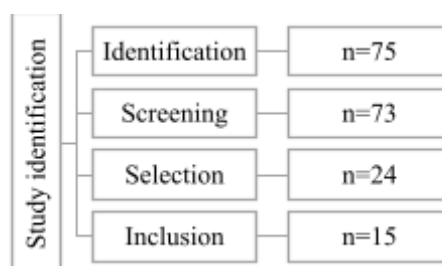
Figure 2
Collected articles through study identification

No.	Authors	Title	Inclusion (Abstract)
2	Harding J.M.	Undercover Next Door: The Cold War aesthetics of truth and deception in espionage theatre	Yes
4	Dudai. R.	Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Informer: Revisiting the Ethics of Espionage in the Context of Insurgencies and New Wars	Yes
5	Koura J.	Czechoslovakia and the 'Cyprus issue' in the years 1960–1974: secret arms deals, espionage, and the Cold War	Yes
6	Gaddis J.L.	Intelligence, espionage, and cold war origins	Yes
9	Jonsson M.	Espionage by Europeans: treason and counterintelligence in post-Cold War Europe	Yes
10	Watt D.C.	Intelligence and the historian: A comment on John Gaddis's "Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins"	Yes
11	Sulick M.J.	Spying in America: Espionage from the revolutionary war to the dawn of the cold war	Yes
12	Lovelace A.G.	Spies in the news: Soviet espionage in the American media during world war II and the beginning of the cold war	Yes
13	Trahair R.C.S.	Encyclopedia of Cold War Espionage, Spies, and Secret Operations	Yes
14	Smith R.H.	The first Moscow station: An espionage footnote to cold war history	Yes
15	Olmsted K.S.	Blond Queens, red spiders, and neurotic old maids: Gender and espionage in the early cold war	Yes
16	Sulick M.J.	American spies: Espionage against the United States from the cold war to the present	Yes
18	Hannabuss S.	Early Cold War Spies: The Espionage Trials that Shaped American Politics	Yes
22	Sulick M.J.	Spying in America: Espionage from the revolutionary war to the dawn of the cold war	Yes
23	Schrecker E.	Before the rosenbergs: Espionage scenarios in the early cold war	Yes

Figure 3 shows the flow chart that summarizes the data collection process, step by step, of 75 articles identified, only 15 were included in the research and will provide clear and precise information for this study.

At this point, the data list was run with the flowchart as in Figure 3, which shows the four steps that were followed after running the search string. In identification it is the number of results that were found, at the filtering point the articles that are in the accessibility option are reviewed. For the selection part, it was done through the title of each article, seeing if it was relevant to the topic or not, and for inclusion, the abstracts were read thoroughly to know each article in depth, this with the purpose of knowing how the optimal study would be to provide the best information to the research.

Figure 3
Flowchart, articles collected



3.6 Synthesis method

First, the eligibility criteria were specified to analyze whether an article should be included or excluded. In this investigation, cases of espionage outside the Cold War, cases that encompassed other types of espionage, such as industrial espionage, corporate espionage that is not governmental, or articles with little or irrelevant information about espionage in the Cold War have not been included. The inclusion criteria comprised studies with specific cases of espionage during the Cold War by power countries, articles analyzing the use of espionage as a tool of war or the impacts espionage has generated in the countries where it has been used.

The next step involved selecting sources of information and search strategies by choosing sources that contained articles that could enrich this review; in this case, Scopus and Web of Science. This process goes hand in hand with search strategies in order to obtain the appropriate studies by finding keywords that are part of the chain and that allow to search in digital libraries for reports related to the topic. The search chains used were “Espionage” AND Spies OR “Cold War” OR “Secret Service” OR “International Relations,” and “Espionaje” AND Espías OR “Guerra Fría” OR “Servicio Secreto” OR “Relaciones Internacionales.” Both chains revolve around the topic of government espionage.

Finally, the chains were executed and yielded excellent results that lead to the point of passing them through a filter to finally analyze whether they were included in the research. A matrix was created with extraction criteria to analyze the information contained in each article. Out of 75 articles found, there were 15 that focused on the topic and had clear information about government espionage during the Cold War. The articles were analyzed through a quantitative analysis, which is represented in tables and figures, such as Table 1, which shows the flow of scenarios and articles collected; and Table 2, which demonstrates the matrix of extraction criteria for each article.

3.7 Risk assessment in result presentation

According to Rother (2007), there is a risk of bias when searching for appropriate information for the systematic literature review. The main problem was that since it was focused on a time like the Cold War with cases and events that have been classified, it could provide very erroneous or irrelevant information, or there was very little information. In this context, there is a possibility that the search returns inaccurate or irrelevant results due to an overabundance of data or, conversely, a scarcity of available information.

4. Results and discussion

In the following points, the extraction criteria and the research questions to be answered will be developed specifically. This will allow us to analyze whether the articles will be clear and concise to support the research questions of this work.

4.1. Chronological and demographic summary

Figure 4 shows the article's year of origin, most of them from 1999 to 2024. However, articles from 1989 to 1994 have also been considered, since they refer to the time in which the Cold War occurred. Gaddis (1989) gives a brief introduction to the beginning of the Cold War with the term intelligence revolution since the use of espionage in the Cold War period was taking shape and concept. Furthermore, authors such as Sulick (2014) and Lovelace (2015) report cases of espionage that demonstrate its benefits in terms of obtaining information by governments or private entities, and its consequences, such as the prosecution of spies who had been caught, some of them in prison, and others sentenced to death.

Olmsted (2004), instead, shows the use of female spies and argues that women have not been credited for their achievements. Stories of female spies who have given their lives for the interests of their nation have never been mentioned in novel, as is the case of Mata Hari, who was shot on charges of espionage for communism.

Figure 4.
Graphic about the publication year of each collected article

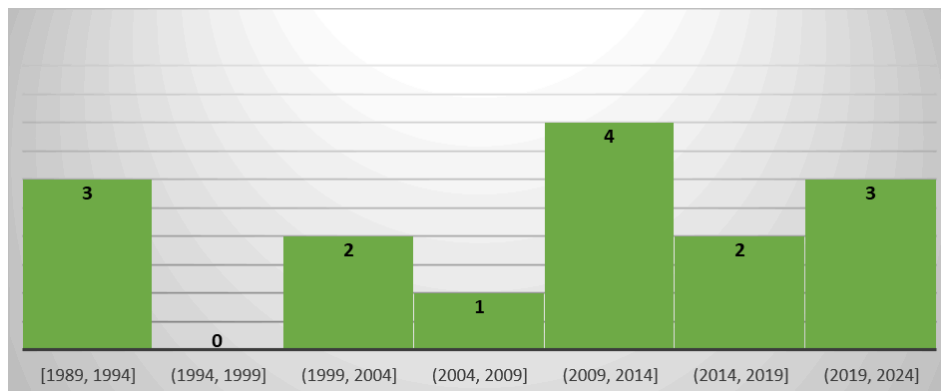
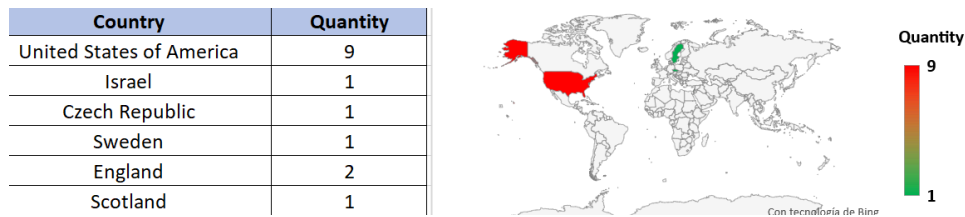


Figure 5 shows the country of origin of each extracted article. They come mostly from the United States because most authors are North American writers, historians or belonged to US intelligence departments. It is worth mentioning that many of the cases shown took place in the United States due to the Cold War and the interest of spies in each nation. Trahair & Miller (2012), detail a series of espionage cases in different parts of the world, but the focus of this work involves the United States and Russia, then the Soviet Union.

Furthermore, Dudai (2023) states that the price to pay for spying is high. Although there is recruitment of spies who do it for money, ideology, or commitment, the price they pay if they are discovered or if spying generates a political controversy can become a time bomb. Spying involves a latent threat, as well, since a spy can choose to spy on the same nation due to a change of thought.

Figure 5.
Graphic about the origin country of each collected article



4.2. Extraction criteria synthesis

EC01. This extraction criteria focuses on the type of espionage, it is divided into internal, external and bilateral. This criterion allows us to analyze the events with the use of espionage, in total there are 28 hits in the 3 subcriteria of 15 articles, this tells us that a large number talks about the types of espionage that have occurred in the international arena, which It is very useful to answer the question of latent threats in international relations. Specifically, there is more type of external espionage, which means that there is a high number of cases of the use of espionage outside the country that applies it.

Figure 6 connects criteria 01 with 02. It shows that the type of espionage, whether internal, external or bilateral, is higher; but when it comes to actors involved in others, it means that private companies use espionage as a tool, but also state actors, have a high number of their type of espionage, this indicates that, if there are governments that, with the use of their intelligence agencies, use espionage, for national interests. EC02. In the second criterion, the actors involved in the use of espionage, state, non-state or others (communities, mafias, private groups) are analyzed, with a total of 25 correct answers in the 3 sub-criteria of the 15 articles, the most correct. It is that of others. This means that there are companies outside the law that apply espionage, this allows us to respond to latent threats and whether we continue to live in a cold war in the 21st century.

Figure 6.
Quantitative summary between EC01 and EC02

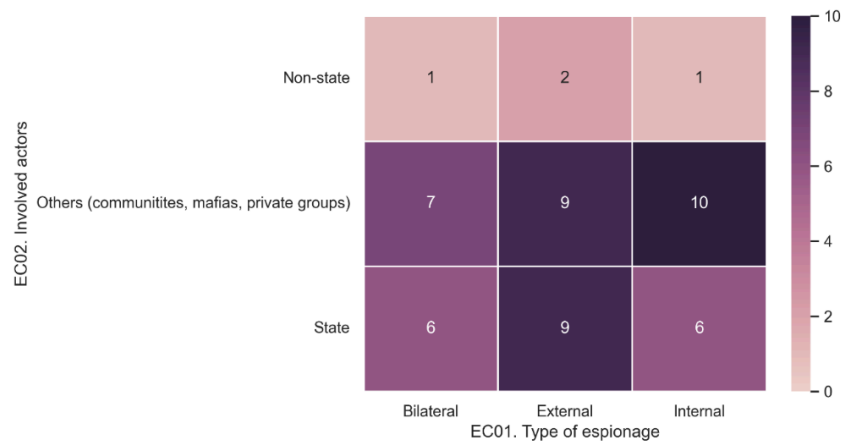
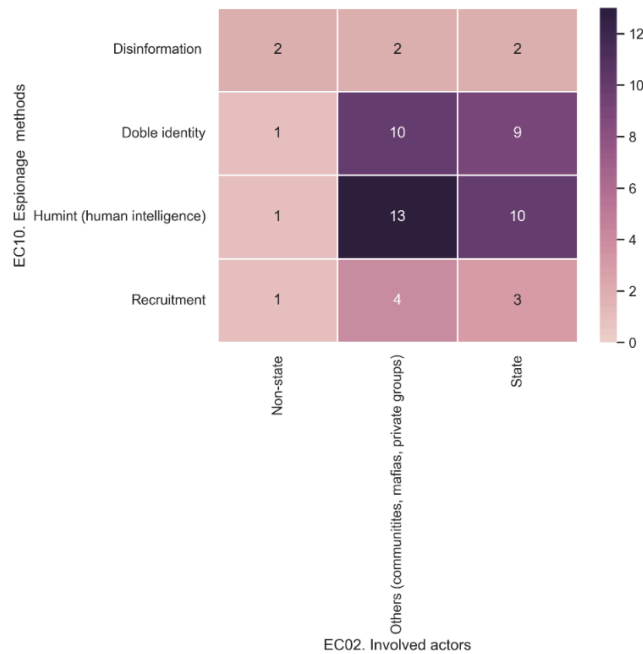


Figure 7 shows the connection between criteria 10 and 02, whereas actors involved in the use of espionage, whether state or other, use Humint (Human Intelligence) and double identity as a method. This means that spies are recruited when they have a double identity and use human intelligence tools for the interests of state or private agencies focused on their interests. In EC03, the historical analysis, which is divided into evolution, capacity and legacy, was verified. This allowed to analyze whether marks have been left or there has been a change in history with the use of espionage. With a total of 23 hits in the 3 criteria, the criterion with the most hits was capacity, which indicates that espionage as such can generate chaos or historical changes. EC04, that is, perceptions to debates, is divided into 3 sub criteria: legality, policies, and privacy. A total of 24 correct answers were obtained, being the most correct the political sub criterion, in which government espionage is involved in the political issue due to its objective. This means that many of the cases in articles or studies found enrich the supporting part of the political topic.

Figure 7.
Quantitative summary between EC02 and EC10



On the other hand, Figure 8 shows us the perception of debates on criteria 04 and criteria 05 of impact with the use of espionage. The political sphere has more perception of the debates of the states at the geopolitical level, where both points can be connected. The impact of the use of espionage is in most cases given at the international level; therefore, the perceptions in the debates are referred to politics, whether government or state interest. EC05 involves the analysis of the impact of the use of espionage. It is important to understand this topic due to the nature of the impact. It is divided into 3 sub criteria, which are social level, political level, and geopolitical level. The most accurate is the geopolitical level due to the border crossing in the political aspect, or in other words, diplomacy. This contributes to the global impact with the use of espionage.

Figure 8.
Quantitative summary between EC04 and EC05

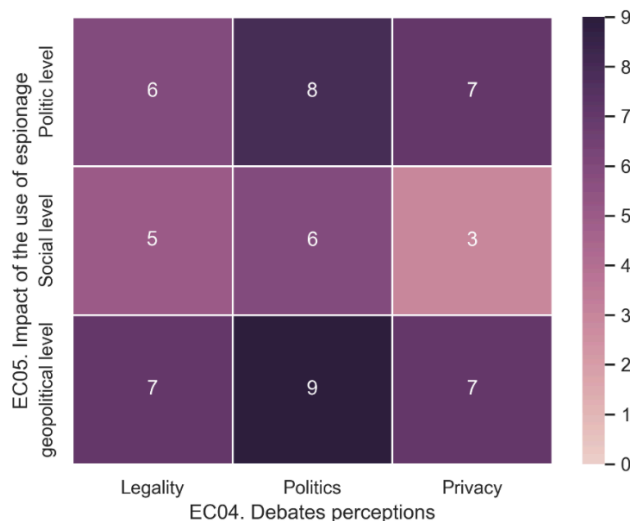


Figure 9 shows us criteria 05 and 06 connected, demonstrating that the impact of the use of espionage at a geopolitical level is responded to by counterespionage and the principle of reciprocity. This means that at an international level, espionage is used against the country that spies, which is based on the principle that if one country attacks another, the attacked country tends to defend itself: in this case, with the use of espionage. EC06 refers to the response to espionage, whose three sub criteria are important to analyze.

The 3 sub criteria are counterespionage, national security measures, and the principle of reciprocity (you spy, I spy). Counterespionage and the principle of reciprocity were the most successful. This shows that the same espionage is used to combat espionage; fire with fire.

Figure 9.
Quantitative summary between EC06 and EC05

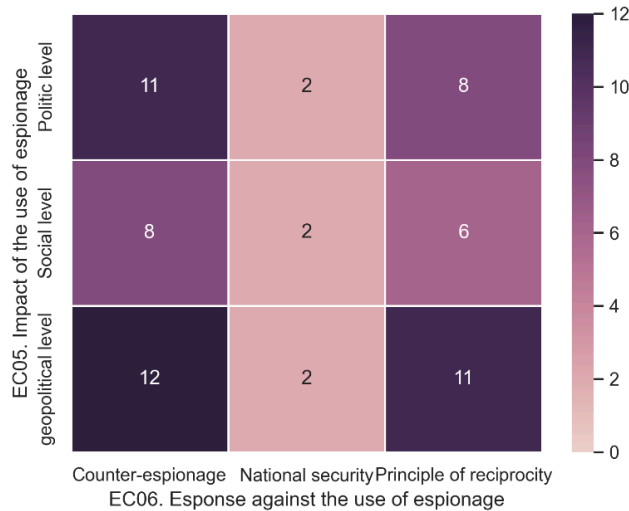


Figure 10 indicates how criteria 01 when connected with 06, shows that external and internal espionage are mostly affected with counter espionage as a response. This is an indicator that the studies found see the use of espionage from against espionage at an international level or within a nation, but the principle of reciprocity also has a high rate of being used in the same area. The next criteria, EC07, which refers to the period. It is one of the most important criteria because this study is focused on the Cold War. The three sub criteria refer to events before, during, and after the Cold War. The articles and studies found were correct about events during the Cold War, which is a good indicator to strengthen the period part and not go out of context in the research. However, it is also important to know a little about the pre-war and post-war period to analyze how certain movements that led to the use of espionage in the Cold War began, and then, the collateral damage or latent threats that remain.

Figure 10.
Quantitative summary between EC01 and EC06

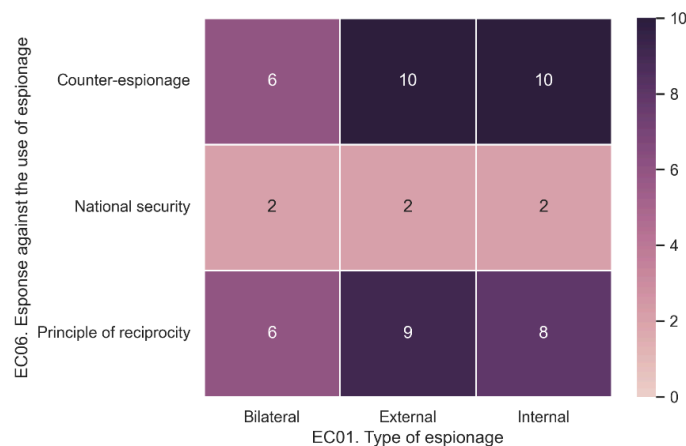
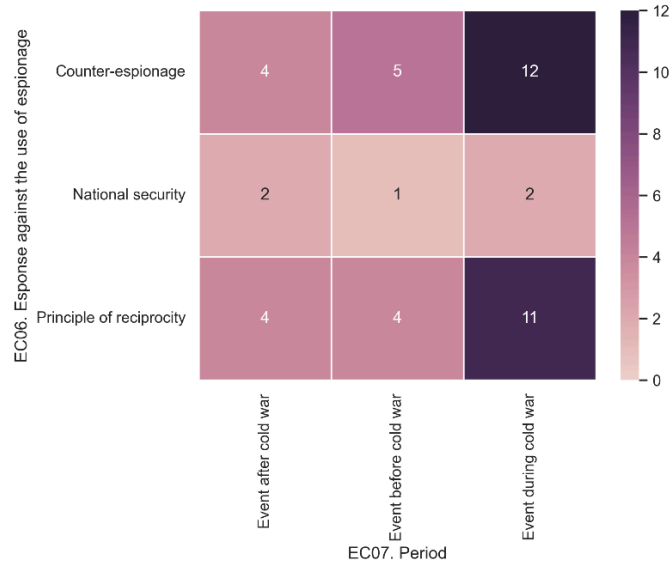


Figure 11 indicates the connection between criteria 07 and 06, period and response to espionage. The studies are focused more on the Cold War, but with the use of counterespionage and the principle of defense of the countries. These cases are focused on spying on the country that spies on the others in the period during the Cold War; however, it is important to also emphasize a considerable number on the factors before and after the Cold War indicating its beginning and marking its end. EC08 refers to Post-Cold War effects, which are divided into the following three sub criteria: international cooperation, international rivalry, and mistrust. Rivalry and mistrust in the global environment were the most

successful, demonstrating that there remains tension between the countries that used espionage as a tool. On the other hand, this point allowed us to find cases that can support the evidence with the latent threats that continue to compromise international relations and, in the same way, if there is still tension such as the Cold War.

Figure 11.
Quantitative summary between EC07 and EC06



On the other hand, Figure 12 shows the connection between criteria 10 and 08, where the Humint or recruitment method is marked by geopolitical distrust. Making it known that espionage can affect international distrust, studies show that countries also tend to use a spy with a double identity, not only for distrust, but also in international rivalry. EC09 refers to the collateral damage, which is very important. The three sub criteria are society level, national level, and global level. Global level is the most accurate for this study because international relations is where espionage has been used as a tool, but it is also worth recognizing that the society level was also accurate and important because studies show how espionage leaves collateral damage in the human level as an individual, and consequently, as a society. EC10, as the penultimate extraction criterion, involves espionage methods and its four sub criteria: recruitment, double identity, Humint (human intelligence) and disinformation. This point indicates the methods actors who use spies employ, or the ways in which they obtain information. The most successful was human intelligence because it relates to collateral damage and post-war effects, latent threats. This is very important to show how the use of a person as a bridge to obtain information is risky at a societal level but also at a global level.

Figure 12.
Quantitative summary between EC10 and EC08

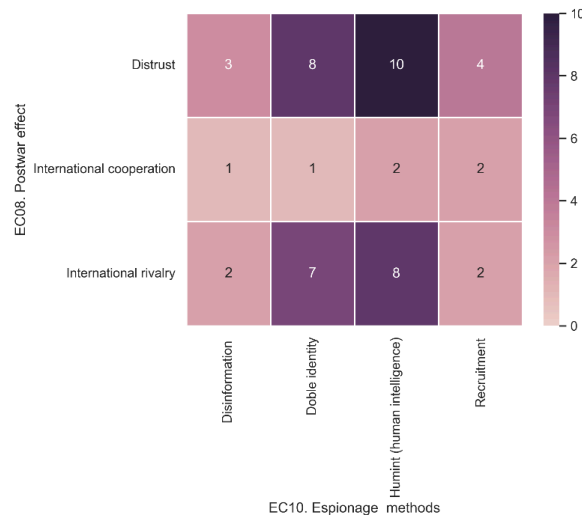
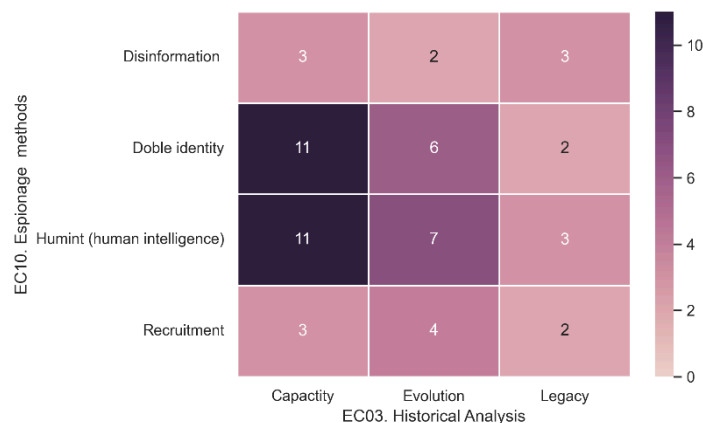


Figure 13 combines criteria 03 and 10, where in terms of historical analysis, the ability of espionage is most affected by the Humint method and double identity. This means that studies show that the historical events of the Cold War could be affected by the use of these espionage methods, contributing to the latent threats that their use entails. Finally, EC11 refers to the principles of espionage, which are divided into four sub criteria, ethical, moral, antimoral, and unethical. This was the least accurate criteria, by far. This criterion was clearly focused on whether there are studies that evaluate the use of espionage as something good or bad, or the opposite, but only one article talks about that topic, which allowed us to show how unethical the use of espionage might be. In the same way, the morality of the use of spies in a nation, community, or institution can generate enormous damage, without considering collaterals, or at the society level, how this damage influences the changing history of war. These extraction criteria allowed to verify whether the information in the articles serves to support the answers to the questions of this research. As a next point, the successes of the extraction criteria and sub criteria were used to write, demonstrate, and answer the questions posed in the research question synthesis section.

Figure 13.
Quantitative summary between EC03 and EC10



4.3. Synthesis of research questions

In the field of qualitative studies, significant growth has been observed in recent years, providing valuable perspectives on phenomena related to espionage. This synthesis aims to systematically review and analyze the research questions proposed in the background and methods sections, in order to examine the findings of the different studies, leading to a deeper understanding of the research topic. This synthesis will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature, identify gaps in knowledge, and suggest directions for future research.

RQ1. Is espionage a latent threat to international relations?

Once the extraction criteria have been analyzed, the answers for this research question could be done. International relations have been affected by the use of espionage, but also at a social level. Gaddis (1989), argues that the intelligence revolution with clandestine information collection missions can leave collateral damage in the place where it is carried out. The successes in the criteria showed that countries attack external countries and try to obtain information by any means possible, with the use of spies or information theft methods. On the other hand, Lomas & Murphy (2019), explain how people are used as a bridge to obtain information, as in the case of Mata Hari, who was used because of her experience to seduce key objectives and thus reach or obtain information or any other agencies' objectives. Similarly, Bloom (2020) talks about the case of spies who are sentenced to death or become corrupted by becoming double-edged swords, or leaving collateral damage due to the term MICE (money, ideology, coercion and ego), which corrupts spies to commit espionage by own government or use other people with the recruitment method to spy for them and use the information as a tool.

RQ2. In the 21st century, are we still in the middle of a global cold war?

Just as Sanz Díaz & Sáenz-Rotko (2022) refer to a second cold war or rather a New Cold War (NGF), where the ideological wars of the cold war were the cause of current tensions such as that between Russia and the United States. They also mention a possible "cold" conflict between the US and China with the conflict over Taiwan territory. Andrew (2018) talks about a secret world and mentions how the use of espionage has modified history. While authors such as Bloom (2020) or Trahair & Miller (2012) show espionage cases where pre- and post-Cold War events have changed government decision-making. Hermosilla (2012) explains how espionage is as old as war, and how over the millennia it has taken shape and a concept or idea. The use of spies has been the tool of war in the shadows: on the outside you can see tanks and armed men, but in the shadows, you can only see papers of information arriving by different transportation lines (human, technological, etc.).

RQ3. Is espionage a tool that leads to false omniscience with the use of intelligence?

False omniscience is related to pretending to know everything when in reality, one knows little or sometimes what one knows is incorrect. Andrew (2018) shows how realities that were never completely written are changed, in the same way, which leads the Israeli prime minister to mention that, if you know of a fixed attack, it is better to be one step ahead and finish it. This shows that the use of spies is not only a possible tool, but it is an inevitable tool. Schlesinger (1967) studied the origins of the Cold War, an ideological war between the United States and the then-called Soviet Union, but in between, there are the cases of spies used in the period that the cold war lasted and that either helped with its end or its extension. Apart from the historical twist, there is also a point about what happens with the spy case; as Dudai (2023) mentioned, people were used as a bridge of information, but the consequence of doing so is a much higher price than was thought. Apart from the damage social or the collateral wounds that remain in the society, community, nation where the spies were used, espionage as a tool is not true as an idea to gain advantage, but rather it is a tool that initially works, but decays over time leaving threats that are latent.

5. Conclusions

Espionage is a tool that has a higher cost than benefit. It is used for national purposes in terms of ideological or government interests. However, the consequences that come with the use of espionage are very high due to the risk in which the person and the state as such are exposed in the state of the art. Countries have experienced social harm when a spy is used to obtain information, but the state also maintains a latent threat because the spy may be able to use the same information against its own nation. As analyzed, espionage is considered an activity as old as war itself, but the concept or idea that has been formed, especially in terms of the Cold War, has been questionable. There are still latent threats that states have been guarding since the time of the cold war where the ideological struggle is still going on. China is currently included in the new concept of international tensions, without forgetting organizations like NATO that also represent an ideological bloc that can enter into conflict at any time.

By using the PRISMA method focused on the systematic review of literature, results that centered on the topic could be obtained. However, the risk of bias was notable because the cold war was an event where, since there was no direct confrontation, a war between the shadows was fought, leaving very little record or studies in terms of espionage. Nevertheless, the SLR tools made it possible to find adequate, clear, and concise information to be able to analyze the objective set at the beginning: Cold War of the 21st century, latent threats in the international relations and false control over espionage. The articles, books, and

studies found have relevant information regarding their position, whether espionage, the Cold War, or important events of the time that were investigated.

If countries want to succeed in any branch such as military, government, political, economic, etc. The world could transform into a no man's land, a third World War can finish the existence of humanity. Focused on the international level, they will consequently resort to the use of espionage, creating internal distrust. Not only at the societal level of the country, but, at a global level, a spy is considered a cancer within a state because it is latent, at some point, could explode. This might lead to the death of spies which is decided by each country, in some through execution, in others by hanging, or in other cases, they simply wake up dead, causing disagreement among the people close to the executed spy. Espionage is considered a war of shadows. It is like chess; above are the pieces (soldiers, generals, political leaders, etc.), but under the board it is dark, and no one moves in those corners, from a latent feeling of insecurity, distrust and threat. The case of Mata Hari, who was considered one of the best spies and who is attributed with the use of seduction to reach the objectives, had one of the worst endings; she was murdered by a firing squad. In the end, they said that she was never a spy and was attributed the phrase "A Whore always! A traitor never." But also, the case of Ana Montes, who although earned thousands of dollars from spying. They realized that money was not the reason why Ana spied for the Cubans, but rather her ideological support for communism (Jonsson, 2024), leading to the term MICE (money, ideology, coercion and ego), a term that explains what leads spies to be spies or to spy for other countries, making them a threat to the organization that recruited them, or to the country or place in which they are spying.

This work also allowed us to analyze the perspective of a current cold war, or as stated by Sanz Díaz & Sáenz-Rotko (2022), the term NGF (New Cold War), where China is now also in the ideological conflict. It is worth mentioning the economic power that it is gaining in a globalized world. In the Cold War, it was the United States and at that time the Soviet Union who were in conflict, but now, there are also more and stronger actors in an ideological conflict where espionage continues to be the first tool that gives the different blocs an advantage today. The world is taking a multipolar turn where there are many more blocs than there were until the end of the Cold War. Espionage is and will continue to be a useful tool for a country to obtain benefits of national interest, but the question remains of what other types of consequences it will have, or if this act will continue to modify the course of history of governmental political events at a global level.

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Appendix

Appendix A 1

List of articles in final revision

Source	Author	Title	Year
Scopus	Harding J.M.	Undercover Next Door: The Cold War aesthetics of truth and deception in espionage theatre	2021
Scopus	Dudai. R.	Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Informer: Revisiting the Ethics of Espionage in the Context of Insurgencies and New Wars	2016
Scopus	Koura J.	Czechoslovakia and the 'Cyprus issue' in the years 1960–1974: secret arms deals, espionage, and the Cold War in the Middle East	2021
Scopus	Gaddis J.L.	Intelligence, espionage, and cold war origins	1989
Scopus	Jonsson M.	Espionage by Europeans: treason and counterintelligence in post-Cold War Europe	2024
Scopus	Watt D.C.	Intelligence and the historian: A comment on John Gaddis's "Intelligence, Espionage, and Cold War Origins"	1990
Scopus	Sulick M.J.	Spying in America: Espionage from the revolutionary war to the dawn of the cold war	2014
Scopus	Lovelace A.G.	Spies in the news: Soviet espionage in the American media during World War II and the beginning of the cold war	2015
Scopus	Trahair R.C.S.	Encyclopedia of Cold War Espionage, Spies, and Secret Operations	2004
Scopus	Smith R.H.	The first Moscow station: An espionage footnote to cold war history	1989
Scopus	Olmsted K.S.	Blond Queens, red spiders, and neurotic old maids: Gender and espionage in the early cold war	2004
Scopus	Sulick M.J.	American spies: Espionage against the United States from the cold war to the present	2013
Scopus	Hannabuss S.	Early Cold War Spies: The Espionage Trials that Shaped American Politics	2008
Scopus	Schrecker E.	Before the rosenbergs: Espionage scenarios in the early cold war	2013