

PREMISES FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE ON ANGLO-SAXON TERRITORY

Adina MIHĂESCU*

Abstract:

The starting point of literature on the role and importance of economic information is not only the product of academic reflections on productivity and business competitiveness, but also a result of the direct observation, by individuals chiefly and practically interested in economic evolutions, of trends or initiatives already in place in different economic segments or markets. Some common traits are shared between fields that are particular to intelligence-related activities and the economic field: a lack of certainty and the vital need for information. The necessity of competitiveness has always been construed as a desideratum, even though the method for gaining a competitive advantage is something of a controversial topic. In time, loyal competition has always given rise to development and progress. The need to gain access to information has always been acute, as it does not pertain only to modern times, although digitalization and globalization seem to facilitate information-gathering activities. Seeing how humans, capitals, wares, information, ideas and methods have gradually started to circulate freely, while time and distances have steadily faded, economic security and development have become objectives that are tackled all the more carefully and elaborately by regimes and governments that have worked to reinforce their own power.

Keywords: *competitive intelligence, business environment, business competition, information-gathering, economic development*

Markers for the establishment of EI as a field of activity

The term *economic intelligence* was first used in large corporations in Great Britain and the United States, which, influenced by military intel models from the Second World War, created intelligence departments specialized in sales in the 1960s and, starting with the

* PhD Student, Doctoral School of International Relations and Security Studies "Babes Bolyai" University, Cluj Napoca, Romania. Email address: adina.mihaescu@yahoo.com

1970s, built the first frameworks that operated with what we know today as *competitive intelligence*. The introduction of economic intelligence systems was seen as a measure of utmost importance for developing countries as well, but expert studies of the time did not generate enough velocity for their application, due to disparities between the countries, different stages of execution and implementation of national development projects, and local information cultures (Clerc 1997, p. 316).

To these factors were also appended technological and informational inequalities, an increasingly keen addiction to knowledge, and a tendency to exclude poverty-stricken countries, where the systems of data collection and processing were unviable, especially with regard to local areas, as well as lacking quality information that would pertain to the economic and technological realities, and thus to the real needs, of the nation.

For this very reason, economic intelligence was deemed an efficient model for hastening the development of poor countries and for counterbalancing their ability to negotiate and network in the context of global power balance (Clerc, 1997, p. 316).

In the second half of the 20th century, this context was marked by several defining moments that had a great influence on the economic field, as well as on the development of economic and financial strategies, and on the study of economy as the basis for a people's safety and well-being.

Founding the United Nations and its bodies. The peace treaties

By and large, the three great Allied powers – Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union – sought to solve the problems engendered by the Second World War even during the conflict. Thus, a body of principles with regard to the future organization of the world was registered in crucial documents such as the *Atlantic Charter* (1941), the *Declaration by United Nations* (1 January 1942), the *Moscow Declarations* (October 1943) and declarations at *Tehran* (November 1943), *Dumbarton Oaks* (1944), *Yalta* (February 1945) and *Potsdam* (July-August 1945).

The decrees and agreements settled at these conferences laid the groundwork for new post-war international relations, including those of economic nature. US President Franklin Roosevelt urged that the League of Nations (founded after the end of the First World War) proceed in a configuration that would be kept after the end of the Second World War, within a new international organization that would guarantee and maintain peace and protection. Additionally, the declaration made by Ministers of External Affairs at Moscow in 1943 raised the issue of establishing such an institution at the end of the war, and in 1944, Anglo-American experts drafted the *UN Charter* and decided on the components of the Security Council, its permanent members, and the voting system within the Council, the tutelage over some colonial territories being settled during the Yalta Conference, where it was also decided to summon an international conference that would approve the *Charter* and found the UN. The conference took place in the great hall of the San Francisco Opera, between 25 April and 26 June 1945, and gathered delegations from 51 countries that had been at war with the Axis or that had severed ties to the Axis powers. The Conference approved the *Charter* and founded the UN.

The Charter defined the key objectives of the new global organization, its main bodies, and each of their goals in up keeping the peace and security of the member-states, in fulfilling international cooperation based on the principles of equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence, and “the right of all nations to choose a form of government under which they will live.” (See more on <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/history/1941-1950.shtml>)

The Cold War

For more than four decades following the Second World War, the world was affected by what entered history books as the “Cold War”. Thus, was named the state of tension, dispute and adversity between the two superpowers – the United States and the Soviet Union – alongside their allies, Western countries and Communist countries respectively, from Europe, Asia, and South America. Although this period did have its armed conflicts, these were limited from the standpoint of power, scope,

and implications, as the two superpowers avoided to turn them into “a hot war of unimaginable consequence” (Dumitru, 2009, p. 2).

The exposition of the economic evolutions that characterized the period following the Second World War may focus on analysing the fundamental traits of the two opposing blocks in place at the time, as well as the instruments they created: the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) and the Warsaw Pact on the one hand, bodies through which the Soviet Union would assert its economic, political, and military dominance, and the “Marshall Plan” and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on the other hand, as a response from the Western world to what was deemed to be Communism’s ideological offense (Dumitru, 2009, p. 2).

As L. C. Dumitru observes (2009), what were at first “minute clashes of interest and diverging views, at most becoming intrigues and rivalry between Soviets and Anglo-Saxons” proved to be “a mass of ideological, political, and strategic contradictions that created an uncrossable rift between the East and the West.” As such, the Cold War quickly reflected onto international relations and, gradually, the post-war world was divided in spheres of interest and dominance.

The Western perception of a hostile or even aggressive Soviet Union following the war had sprouted from Moscow’s behaviour in the international relations of the time. The Red Army was in place in Central and South-Eastern Europe, and under its occupation of the countries in the area, “they worked systematically toward changing the fabric of their political and economic system, taking after the Communist Soviet totalitarian model” (Dumitru, 2009, p. 2).

The climate of balance that had come to characterize relations between the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union began to crumble, and all resources of historic import were reiterated. Gradually, relations between the Soviet Union and the Western world turned especially strained, which made military hostilities very probable. Despite this, there was never any direct offense, which may be explained by the existence of nuclear weapons that gave rise to the phenomenon of nuclear deterrence.

On 5 March 1946, upon being invited at Westminster College in Fulton, state of Missouri, US, to receive the title of *Doctor Honoris Causa*,

Winston Churchill stated in his speech that “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent,” and that the Russians do not desire war, but rather “the fruits of war and the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines” (Marin, 2006, p. 92).

Many historians consider that Joseph V. Stalin was mainly liable for the outbreak of the Cold War. It is generally believed that Stalin continued the traditional expansionist politics of the tsars, or, worse, that he was determined to spread Communism across the better part of the globe, which was entirely possible at the time, since “socialism in a single country” had been fulfilled. Soviet historians and a few Western historians from the 60s and 70s believed that Stalin’s motives had been purely defensive, as he wanted to build a cushion-zone meant to protect the Soviet Union against potential aggressions from the Western world. The Kremlin leader’s suspicions had sprouted from a memory of the Western intervention against the Bolsheviks in 1918-1920, and had been heightened by the fact that the delay to establish a second European front against Germany seemed deliberately orchestrated so as to exert substantial pressure on the Soviet Union and exhaust its strength.

Moreover, the period in question was characterized, on an international scale, by the many geopolitical and geostrategic mutations that occurred after the Second World War, shifts which materialized into what was titled the Cold War, namely a fierce competition between two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union.

A moment of maximum impact in international relations was the speech of US President Harry Truman, held on March 12, 1947 in front of members of the United States Congress, which marked the beginning of a large-scale confrontation with the USSR that would be known for four decades as the Cold War (Marin, 2006, p. 93).

In light of the threat that other European countries might switch to Communism, but also in the interest of their own security, the US answered favourably to appeals for help made by Turkey and Greece, and launched the Truman Doctrine (Washington, March 12, 1947) for

economic support for countries threatened by Communism, and for the conservation of democracy¹.

Therefore, the division into two different worlds occurred at the same rate, on an economic scale and then on a military scale, through the formation of the two opposing military alliances (Marin, 2006, p. 92).

Yet, even though the rivalling powers never turned their mutual hostility into an open conflict, the confrontation took different shapes in political, economic, technological, ideological, propagandistic, military fields, and others. In order to gain ground, both superpowers formed various alliances.

Thus, between 1945 and 1948, the Soviet Union included in its area of influence most of the countries in Eastern Europe, as Communism governments were being imposed in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Czechoslovakia, and the German Democratic Republic. A Communist government also came to power in North Korea in 1948, and the Communist block was strengthened in 1949, when Mao Zedong ultimately achieved victory in the aftermath of the lengthy civil war in China.

¹ The American Official emphasized the following: "(...) it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures. I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way. I have declared before Congress that every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. The seeds of totalitarian regimes are nurtured by misery and want. They spread and grow in the evil soil of poverty and strife. They reach their full growth when the hope of a people for a better life has died. We must keep that hope alive. (...) Greece must have assistance if it is to become a self-supporting and self-respecting democracy. The United States must supply that assistance. (...) The future of Turkey as an independent and economically sound state is clearly no less important to the freedom-loving peoples of the world than the future of Greece. (...) Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far reaching to the West as well as to the East. We must take immediate and resolute action. I therefore ask the Congress to provide authority for assistance to Greece and Turkey in the amount of \$400,000,000 for the period ending June 30, 1948."

Similarly, the United States made Japan into an ally and closely cooperated with Great Britain and other European countries, offering them economic support that would facilitate the creation of an anti-Communist block. During the Cold War, every action, declaration or opinion made by one of the two blocks was perceived by the other as possible evidence of hostility.

On June 5, 1947, at Harvard University, State Secretary George C. Marshall officially launched a foreign aid plan that would benefit Europe, named the *European Recovery Program (ERP)*, stating that “our policy is directed not against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the emergence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist. Such assistance, I am convinced, must not be on a piecemeal basis as various crises develop. Any assistance that this Government may render in the future should provide a cure rather than a mere palliative. Any government that is willing to assist in the task of recovery will find full cooperation I am sure, on the part of the United States Government. Any government which manoeuvres to block the recovery of other countries cannot expect help from us. Furthermore, governments, political parties, or groups which seek to perpetuate human misery in order to profit therefrom politically or otherwise will encounter the opposition of the United States” (Marin, 2006, p. 93).

Voted for by the United States Congress, this law stipulated for the timeframe April 1948 – June 1952 an aid in the form of non-refundable loans of 85% and long-term grants of 15% of their equivalent in US Dollars.

By analysing long-term implications and by drafting the Warsaw Treaty, the Soviet Union gained a powerful tool in promoting the political integration of satellite-states, the military alliance being an important auxiliary for maintaining them under strict control. From this viewpoint, the actions of Warsaw Pact member-states in Czechoslovakia, with the exception of Romania, demonstrated this approach most evidently, the promotion, starting with the year 1968, of the “doctrine of limited sovereignty” by Leonid I. Brezhnev, being a consequence of the same act.

In light of the new configuration of the power ensemble in the US, in accordance with the National Security Act of 1947, through which were founded both the CIA and the Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), the attributions held by the CIA, under coordination from the National Security Council (NSC), included “correlation and evaluation of intelligence for national security, ensuring its dissemination to Government by use of appropriate structures and resources.” Thus, the period was characterized by an increased attention which was being paid to the connection between economic stability/vitality and national security, the strategic confrontation during the Cold War having given rise to “the revitalization of traditional mercantilism and of the principle according to which economic power is a fundamental component of a nation’s power” (Gregory, 1997, p. 5).

In fact, the CIA was, within the US, the single most active intelligence agency in collecting and analysing economic intelligence, having the highest concentration of expert analysts in the field of international economics, higher even than the American Government’s, making it possible for the agency to have benefited from as much economic expertise as all the other intelligence services combined. Within the CIA, missions of economic nature occupied a significant proportion, approximately a third of all analytical resources being directed toward issues and activities of economic kind (Gregory, 1997, p. 5).

Work in economic intelligence was carried out, for the most part, within the CIA, by the Directorate of Intelligence (DI). What is more, within the DI also operated the Bureau of Transnational Security and Technology Issues, which was the body responsible with aspects of economic nature, the monitoring of sanctions, support for negotiators, the documenting of external actions against European companies, and external economic practices (Gregory, 1997, p. 5). Economic analysis was also distributed to regional DI offices: The Bureau of Analysis – Africa and Latin America (ALA), the Bureau of Analysis East Asia (OEA), the Bureau of Analysis Europe (EURA), the Bureau of Analysis Middle East and South Asia (NESA), and the Bureau of Analysis Slavic Space and Eurasia (OSE).

The total count of economic analysis within the DI was relatively stable after 1970, namely between 250 and 270 specialists, but it recorded significant fluctuations upon the rise in effervescence in the

private sector, and upon the diversification of tasks and the departure of experts from the CIA toward private organizations for higher pay.

The CIA's main sources of economic intelligence were, in order of importance, open sources and secret reports. Open sources used in economic intelligence included official publications, newspapers, radio stations, publications of commercial nature and studies on the states' economic evolutions (including studies conducted by the IMF).

Within the CIA, the main provider of materials collected from public sources was the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), which was managed by the Directorate of Science and Technology. FBIS monitored, selectively translated, and drafted reports using information extracted from a large amount of data broadcast by radio stations and by television, newspapers, magazines, specialized journals, commercial databases, books, grey and underground literature. Furthermore, FBIS' products were dedicated to a wide group of beneficiaries: analysts within the DI, decision-makers from economic politics, and the academic world (Gregory, 1997, p. 8-9).

Instances of economic espionage against American companies gave rise to the expansion of problematizing economic intelligence in information services' portfolios in the US. Theft, by other countries, of ideas used in the development of products that would compete with those manufactured in the US, met a meteoric rise in the second half of the 80s, as the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS) estimated that, beginning with this period, industrial criminality and corruption caused damages of approximately \$260 billion every year, while industrial espionage rose by 260% since the previous timeframe.

From the viewpoint of the competition between the US and Russia, this was brought about by reorienting Russian intelligence from the military field to the industrial sector. The KGB scaled the structures of scientific and technological support of its intelligence and established a new information service, the SVR, whose priorities included economic and commercial intelligence.

The Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) repeatedly reported activities of espionage carried out by Russia through an electronic centre of communications interception installed in Cuba, where extremely valuable secret information of economic nature was being collected,

especially coming from US banks and business companies (Gregory, 1997, p. 13).

Economic Intelligence on Anglo-Saxon Territory

The United States of America is a space where Economic Intelligence has turned, on a large scale, into a veritable doctrinal culture. This trajectory has mainly been determined by two factors:

- The chief role of American power in the development of the market economy;
- The systematic way in which knowledge circumscribed to economic intelligence has been integrated with management elements and disseminated within the managerial sector (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 5).

Economic intelligence has also become, in this way, an object of study within instruction programs in the management field, especially in the aftermath of Michael Porter's contributions in the beginning of the 80s.

Even so, American Professor R. E. Freeman proposed, in 1984 (*Strategic Management. A stakeholder approach*), a broader definition and approach to economic intelligence, by assimilating the concept of *stakeholders*, with emphasis on these figures' influence on areas delimited by the market – Government, territorial collectivities, activist groups, mass media, syndicates, etc.) (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

The stakeholders' approach is, thus, directly interconnected with strategy studies in the US, as notions of economic and influence intelligence are presented in official Business Management Master's programs, in some of America's most prestigious universities (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

The need for such knowledge management is strengthened by the global competitive environment in perpetual transformation. Issues regarding the control of economic, technological, political and social information (influences and behaviours) have radicalized along with the narrowing of markets (caused by financial crises), political instability (the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War), and the conversion of traditional Defence sectors into *dual* formats, wherein the military

component is evaluated and scaled based on the civil component (the Defence budgets were adjusted, other resources were redirected) (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

This radicalization led to the emergence of a new kind of knowledge, especially from the viewpoint of its method, that of InfoWar, which represents the protection of a state's own economy through the deployment of informational resources (IT infrastructures, capacity to collect, store, process, and disseminate economic and political information), the development of influence politics linked to the information war, and the dissemination of destabilizing information to major actants (who concentrate informational power) (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

New forms of competition raise the issue of systematically integrating these new dimensions in the analysis of competitive environments, both in terms of research and in terms of shaping future managers (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

The Anglo-Saxon concept of economic intelligence was developed in the US toward the end of the 1960s, particularly in the table of contents of a landmark book: Harold Wilensky's *Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry*, which outlines two major problems:

1. Collective strategies and cooperation between governments and companies along the line of generating common knowledge to ensure competitive advantage;
2. The importance of knowledge in economy and industry as a strategic engine for development and transformation (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

In order to introduce the concept of economic intelligence, Wilensky identifies four decisive factors in the allotment of power, money and time for intelligence (defined as the collection, interpretation, and systematic use of information to meet multiple strategic goals) in an organization:

- (1) the level/degree of conflict or competition in a field distinctly tied to the degree of involvement or dependence on a government;

- (2) the degree of dependence of the organization on internal support and unity;
- (3) the degree to which internal operations and external surroundings become the object of orientation in management, by means of the possibility to be approached rationally, through predictable elements which can be the targets of influence;
- (4) the size and structure of the organization, the heterogeneity of its members, the diversity of its goals, as well as its centralized authority system.

In this definition one can identify references to various domains of management research, including the contingency theory (item 4), the possibility to analyse the competitive environment (item 3), and competitive intensity (item 1) (Harbulot and Baumard, 1997, p. 6).

Wilenski highlights, especially with the book's title, the fact that economic intelligence is not a process of information accumulation, but rather of knowledge production, done by the Government and the main industrial organizations, as well as within collective strategies, as needed (Harbulot and Baumar, 1997, p. 7).

The dependence of every aspect of strategic planning on economic elements has been recognized without a doubt. Complex strategic issues linked to testing, unfolding, limiting or verifying conventional and unconventional forces have entailed analyses where establishing an influence exerted by the economic element (international trade and internal economy) required detailed structural modelling and empirical investigations with the purpose of gauging certain evolutions.

Circumscribed, the importance of the academic sphere as regards the research and investigation potential of certain segments of interest has also been recognized (Shubik and Verkerke, 1989, p. 481).

While economy in the field of defence implies any form of economic analysis for national security, the study of economic warfare focused more on the use of economic weaponry in conflicts during the Cold War. These weapons included sanctions, embargoes, and attacks of economic nature with the purpose of diminishing the enemy's economic potential.

The difference between “defence economics” and “economic warfare” may be relevant for delineating economic intelligence as a domain of activity, and it stems from the two notions’ definitions.

- “Defence economics” implies the implementation of economic analysis for purposes linked to national defence. Just as economy is a science in itself, “defence economics” represents the systematic study of options in the case of competing alternatives, in issues bearing on expenses, production, effects of the measures adopted onto macroeconomy in the defence industry, etc.
- “Economic warfare” constitutes the use of weaponry for strategic purposes, associated with issues hinging on oligopoly, monopolistic competition, negotiations, and other aspects of competitiveness. In the case of economic warfare, analysts take into consideration the enemy’s every reaction, and the analysis itself represents a sum total of considerations of political, military, and economic nature that are not encompassed by the field of “defence economics” (Shubik and Verkerke, 1989, p. 482 - 483).

Formalizing and consolidating economic intelligence

The United States’ focused diplomatic interest in Europe and Asia marked the repudiation of the Truman Doctrine’s political trajectory from March 1947. The overview of General Marshall’s report on China emphasized the imperative to avoid the United States’ intervention in the Asian country, taking after their intervention in Greece. The trajectory of Marshall’s politics sought to reduce American undertakings in Asia, to abandon the efforts to control the evolution of the Chinese state, an endeavour for which Washington had “neither the power, nor the means, nor the influence, nor the knowledge required” (Lippmann, 1987, p. 879).

Similarly, George Marshall supported the settlement of Europe’s issues by European countries, stating that the United States’ aid program had actually been an intervention, approved by the American people, to support a European strategy to resolve its own crisis.

The difference from the Truman Doctrine was fundamental, as the endeavour supported by the former American President regarded the

countries that required American aid as “outbuildings” of the US, as Washington’s instruments of narrowing down Russia’s influence (Lippmann, 1987, p. 880).

The notion behind Marshall’s politics was that Moscow’s project to divide Europe would yield precisely before the interests of the states under Russian dominance, before the economic interdependence between Western European countries and countries on the Eastern side of the continent. In addition, the relevance of the Marshall program was granted by initiating sectors respective to the launch of elaborate scientific studies, whose purpose was the detailed analysis of European economic facts and realities, based on which the United States’ economic and diplomatic measures toward Europe would be determined. Complemented by the initiative to demilitarize Europe, and by the retreat of Russian and Anglo-American armies from this territory, the Marshall plan is eloquent from the angle of granting a higher status to political and military intelligence than to military intervention as a sole means of stabilizing Europe (Lippmann, 1987, p. 881).

Indeed, Marshall Studies have shown that, for the economic stabilization of industrialized countries from Western Europe, it was vital that they resume commercial ties with Eastern European countries, where agriculture was one of the fundamental economic branches, including Russia. Otherwise, the costs associated with maintaining a tolerable quality of life in Western Europe would have been impossible to incur by their respective governments.

Similarly, studies conducted in Warsaw, Prague, and Moscow have shown that the issues at work in Eastern Europe could not have been settled in the absence of solid connections, first of all of economic nature, and they legitimized the hypothesis that pressures toward establishing economic freedom would only rise, even toward creating “a tighter unity that there has ever been” (Lippmann, 1987, p. 882).

Since 1975, applied economic intelligence has crystallized as a domain of activity and a field of study, including in emerging and developing countries.

In this respect, a significant contribution has been an initiative by Stevan Dedijer, Professor at Lund University in Sweden, who introduced the study of economic and social intelligence as the body of a society’s

activities driven by intelligence, as well as by the ability to adapt and to communicate with ever-changing circumstances, with the purpose of meeting intended goals.

The efficiency of this kind of intelligence has been perceived as the outcome of the magnitude and dynamism of activities that produce and develop knowledge, as well as the quality of information and expertise networks (Duffau, 2010, p. 14).

Later on, in the beginning of the 90s, Philippe Baumard configured the model/evolution of studies which have determined the identity of that time's economic intelligence, already immersed in the era of *business intelligence*.

Conclusions

Strategically evaluating the economic field has become the main axis for the evolution of economic intelligence forms, and information is the raw, useful, and relevant material only in the context of safety and fair exploitation.

The future has started to be regarded in close relation to leaders' ability to develop the skills relevant to the creation and employment of economic intelligence, to manifest behaviours that adapt to environmental requirements, aggression, and competitive density focused on the client.

The main objective has been an integrated approach (including angles from experts in the private and the academic field) to economic intelligence, in light of its implementation in national systems characterized by different cultures and varying degrees of technological and organizational development.

Focusing exclusively on garnering information does not suffice, as there is a need for the skills to analyse and understand the evolution of economic fields and to pose the appropriate questions to the suitable sources. The functional models of the intelligence process, the approach to open sources, and the unbridled dissemination of information entail exceptional rigour, but also honesty and scrupulousness. It is precisely because of this complexity that the CI field is hard to grasp and even harder to implement. Surveilling the fluctuations of the markets, emerging technologies, and the legislation entail a ceaseless preoccupation.

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