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## Studying the Phenomenon of Security in Social Sciences (Slovenian Experiences)

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### *Summary*

Designing the phenomenon of security at the level of individual states and the international community, and the explanation of its nature, dates from the beginning of the history of humankind. In the early stages of the development of organized social communities, security (as an objective structural element of individuals, states, and the international community) was primarily seen in the context of two concentrated forms: the war and the relations among states. Given the numerous new conditions in the international system, research would at present, within the framework of security studies, have to focus on comparative empirical studies of security at the level of states and the entire international system. In the former Yugoslavia, the research into security and defence was at first conducted within military research institutions. In mid-seventies, the establishment of the diploma course in civil defence marked the beginning of investigating these issues at universities. In Slovenia, this course is organized within the Faculty for Social Sciences. At first, it mostly involved teaching the institutional approach to the issues of defence and security; in time, research began, particularly after the establishment of the Institute for Defence Research. Today's defencology department and the Institute for Defence Research conduct research in the fields of security, defence, army, protection, and peace studies.

Research into security and defence issues in the context of addressing national, regional and global problems is based on ideas deriving from different historical sources and their perception. Among these at least four are especially important for the development of the contemporary approach to the study of security at state level and within the international system, namely:

a) Early approaches in studying security, which examine this subject matter within the context of two concentrated manifestational forms: war as a socio-historical phenomenon and as an instrument of state policy in international relations among primeval states.

Namely, the security dimension was indeed salient in the nature of relations among the first states, manifested as various ways of ensuring the survival, development and expansion of both individual states and groups of states joined into mutual defence and/or military alliances. (Grizold, 1998: 62). Ideas, concepts and doctrines of war and relations between states can be found as far back as ancient China, India, Greece and

Rome in times of Antiquity, (for example works by Confucius and Mencius, which teach that in mutual relations states must abide by good will and moderateness and avoid aggressive wars of conquest; notably the works of Plato and Aristotle and others).

Almost all early religious and ethnic civilisations approached the problems of war/military alliances, diplomacy and those of relations among states from differing viewpoints: political, military, strategic, spiritual, moral and others.

Thinkers, politicians and others were nonetheless captive to a single paradigm involving constant efforts aimed at peaceful survival compounded with a permanent conflict with their neighbours, which on its part, called for the development of the military organisation of the state and its constant preparations for war (e.g. Dougherty, Pfaltzgraff, 1997: 184-189).

b) Classical political philosophy (in particular works by Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and others studying the subject of the freedom and security of the individual in relation to the broader social community; the issue of war as a socio-historic phenomenon and an instrument of the state's foreign policy; the promotion of broader, international security. etc.);

c) Christian political thought (primarily the doctrine of a just war), and

d) Modern political thought in both of its basic streams, the realistic and the idealistic.

Historically observed, the problem of state security emerged with the development of national states. Soon thereafter three different approaches were inaugurated in social thought and shaped the further evolution of thinking on the security of individual states and the international system as a whole. The most prominent representatives of these schools of thought in the area of security were:

– Thomas Hobbes, who defined the role of the state as a means for ensuring internal order and defence against external enemies. He thus charted the developmental path of the realistic school of security, which resides upon the concept of power.

– Immanuel Kant, who with his ideas of a voluntary world federation of states, laid the foundations for idealistic approaches to the perception of security and peace in the international system.

– Hugo de Grotius, who in relations among states perceived not only conflicts but first and foremost respect for given rules of conduct, which make for co-existence and co-operation in international relations (pragmatic/institutional approach).

All these three basic approaches to the consideration of the phenomenon of security at the level of the national state as well as of the international system in general, have been of significant bearing on subsequent contemporary views of the subject as well.

Among the more important ideas which contributed to the development of modern national and international security concepts after World War II, we should primarily emphasise the following:

– John Herz (1950: 157-180), with his idea from the early 50's on the security dilemma, warned that the pursuit of the security and defence needs of an individual national state led to a higher level of insecurity for other states. Namely, every state defines measures and activities aimed at ensuring its own security as part of its vital survival interests and hence as necessary and defensive in their entirety, whereas it considers those same activities taken by other states dangerous.

– Arnold Wolfers (1962), with his 1962 treatise on national security inaugurated research into the multi-layered nature of the phenomenon of security in the contemporary world.

– Robert Jervis (1976), advanced an interesting idea on security regimes diverting the attention of researchers from the state to system analysis.

– Gert Krell (1979), developed a comprehensive critique of military concepts of security, primarily from the standpoint of peace studies.

– Stanley Hoffman (1978), maintained that national security should be considered in the context of world politics. Hedley Bull also called for a wider-ranging approach to addressing national security, which would devote more attention to the joint interests of all states in the field of security.

– L.B. Krause and Joseph Nye (1975: 325), critically warned of the fact that economists and politicologists had not paid sufficient attention to the comprehensive nature of the fundamentals of national security, that being instrumental in promoting other values in society.

A general conclusion to be drawn is that until the 1980's there prevailed the realistic and the idealistic approaches to the consideration of contemporary security and defence issues.

While the realists view security as the objective, and the power of the state an instrument for the achievement of that objective, the idealists postulate security as above all a consequence: durable peace in the international community will bring security to all states. Common to both approaches is that both have confined their subject matter to either the problem of power (realists) or the problem of peace (idealists) thereby only enhancing the conception of security as mainly a military-political problem. Reflecting such a perception are indeed the existing national and international security structures, which reside upon principles of harsh competition, deterrence with intimidation, mistrust among states and an orientation to the development and use of armed force as an essential element of those structures.

The second basic parameter indicating the one-sided elaboration of the concept of security until the 1980s is the rather modest literature which seeks to capture the phenomenon of security within the framework of a coherent paradigm, which would, apart from the military one, also take into account other relevant dimensions of contemporary national and international security (e.g. economic, political, social, environmental, etc.) and which would resolve the present-day security dilemma of the individual, of the society/state and of the international community in the light of the cultural norms of every

individual society/state while concurrently taking into consideration the broader, universal context of human community as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

In response to the increased interdependence of subjects in the international community, during the 80s, neo-realists (e.g. Kenneth Waltz and others) with their structural theory of power politics, postulated the security motive as pivotal in the operation of the state in an anarchic international system (Buzan, 1991: 12). According to it, the supreme goal of states is the ensuring of security.

The pressures of interdependence required a lot of effort on the part of researchers into security-defence issues, whose subject of study during the 80s was greatly expanded<sup>2</sup>, partly due to the need to reformulate security policies which are linked to the reality of anarchic political organisations in an anarchic international system. The external reflection of efforts for an integral approach to studying and understanding contemporary security was the idea of common security<sup>3</sup> which was first publicly promulgated through the UN Commission (1982) chaired by the former Swedish prime Minister Olof Palme, and which addressed global arming issues. The concept of common security in the light of processes of internationalisation and globalisation goes beyond the traditionally restricted perception of national and international security as only a military-defence problem and, as such, is an attempt to synthesise the respective logic of the realistic and the idealistic approaches to the subject-matter in question.

Various aspects of the overall phenomenon of contemporary security are the subject of study of different sciences such as, for instance: medical science, natural sciences, technical sciences, social sciences, the humanities, military science, etc. Among the so-

<sup>1</sup> Barry Buzan offers five basic reasons to account for the lack of a more in-depth and more comprehensive conception of the phenomenon of contemporary security, namely:

1. The complex nature of the phenomenon of security deters researchers from a comprehensive approach, who rather opt for the more concrete dimensions of that phenomenon (e.g. the army, etc.).
2. In the actual international environment after World War II marked by tensions, mistrust and conflicts among states, the concept of security has been reduced to the concept of power.
3. The unconstructive dispute between the realistic and the idealistic schools in addressing the concepts of power and peace instead of co-operation in developing a concept of security (at least until the early 80s when processes of internationalisation and globalisation intensified).
4. The nature of strategic studies which stresses the excessive reliance of that discipline on state policy and hence narrows down the subject of study to the military aspects of contemporary security.
5. The political and symbolic power of the national security concept among the political elite. The imprecise and vague definition of the phenomenon of national security makes it possible for political and military elites to articulate strategies strengthening their rule and power in the state and in society.

See Barry Buzan, *People, States & Fear*, 1991; pp. 7-12.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the traditional perception of security as a military and defence problem, under pressures from the existing international security environment which emphasises the need to perceive the inter-links and interdependence of the contemporary world in its entirety, other dimensions of security – environmental, civilisational (human rights and freedoms) etc. also gain in relevance.

<sup>3</sup> The concept of common security reflects such a state of the international order in which states benefit from security as a common good. In the broadest sense it is a state of the international order in which the rights to development and freedom from external threat and the principle of self-determination are guaranteed to all peoples. See Peter Mangold, *National Security and International Relations*, 1990, p. 80.

cial sciences in particular some disciplines such as, military sociology and politicology, international military law, polemology, etc. deal with this subject. In addition, different elements of contemporary security policy are also the subject of a number of different studies only just epistemologically being shaped as distinct sciences<sup>4</sup>, such as security studies, defence studies, strategic studies, war studies and peace studies.

Security studies and international security studies in developed states most comprehensively address the complex phenomenon of security in the contemporary society and international community.

In the framework of security studies we can today identify four main approaches to the studies of the phenomena of security and defence, notably:

1. Security studies at the level of the national state (national security concept) which focus on problems of the security, well-being and survival of an individual state. The threat and/or use of military force are explained as the key instrument for the survival of the state. This approach stems from the tradition of the realistic school in which the state is the key factor in an anarchic international system and which, through armed defence, ensures the external aspect of its security. It also takes into account other instruments of the national security policy of an individual state (e.g. defence alliances, arms control treaties, etc.). National security today is a political and personal good which is in developed states exercised as a fundamental human right. It is taken care of by the state which creates general conditions for the personal security of its nationals against foreign threat (interventions, attacks, blockade, occupation) and from threats coming from within the society (disturbances of the law and order, crime, etc.) by employing its national security system to that end. After World War II and up to 1990, the realistic concept of national security based on the following main premises prevailed in theory and practice:

- national security is a fundamental right of sovereign states stemming from the “natural” right to self-defence,
- the concept of international relations is a system of states which is by nature anarchic,
- ensuring national security is an activity of the development and use of the armed forces for defence and for deterring threats from the international environment, and
- the main task of statesmen is to deter external enemies and defend the state and its citizens.

With the end of the cold war, the concept of external enemies was succeeded by the concept of sources of threats which are a consequence of the operation of different

<sup>4</sup> The distinction between sciences and studies stems from the awareness that a number of conditions need to be met for the development of a science, e.g. the following established:

- its own subject of study,
- its own set of scientific instruments,
- testing of hypotheses and results in practice,
- its own language, etc.

jeopardising factors in nature, society, and in relations among states, and the substance of the concept of national security is expanded by the knowledge that the security of individuals, the society, culture, is an integral part of national security, which are protected by the political state and civil society on the basis of public, responsible and mutually controlling action.

2. The international security concept – that approach explicitly respects the security dilemma of the contemporary state and acknowledges that the security of one state is linked to the security of other states. Collective recourse to military force is an important instrument of policy in international relations. Although this approach is also based on the realistic school, in contrast to the former, it lays greater emphasis on the role of international institutions in ensuring security. This approach stems from the awareness that the responsibility for providing international security lies not only on individual states and their alliances but also on “global society”, i.e. the international system. A reflection of this awareness is, among other things, the existence of the international security community, defined by the UN Charter, to which all states respecting the ideas, assumptions and norms of international security belong. States not respecting them are recognised as violators, i.e. sources of threat. International security is, therefore, an internal security problem of the system of states and of the world as a whole and is as such a good of the international system.

3. The regional security concept theoretically does not differ from the second one and focuses on studies of security issues in individual regions of the world (e.g. Europe, South-east Asia, Latin America, Africa, etc.).

4. The global security concept seeks to deal comprehensively with the phenomenon of contemporary security in terms of content (the complex nature of contemporary security) and space (the security of the world i.e. the planet<sup>5</sup>) (Shultz, Godson, 1993: 1-3).

Of significance within the concept of global security is also the human security concept which stresses the security of the individual as an international problem. Namely, under that concept, the international system would not ensure what is known as the external sovereignty of its members (based on the principle of prohibiting aggression and intervention), but would ensure immediate and individual security of people irrespective of their nationality. Such efforts stem from the recognition of the fact that respect for individual and collective human rights and democratic principles is today a universal international value. Practice, however, does not seem to confirm the mentioned assumptions as far as the majority of states are concerned. In addition, the realisation of the mentioned cosmopolitan right to the international assurance of the security of individuals irrespective of their nationality, would necessarily call for radical changes of the international system, which is, *inter alia*, based on the following principal norms:

a) the legal equality of states and the prohibition of colonialism and all forms of externally imposed patronage, and,

<sup>5</sup> See also: Stein Wrightson, Patricia & Ackerman, Alice 1994: 55-85 in: Klare, Michael T. (ed.) Peace & World Security Studies, 1994.

b) in case of collision or conflict between the sovereignty of the state and the individual, priority is given to the sovereignty of the state.

If a significant part of the global scientific community (primarily in the USA and Canada) today agrees that international relations are a distinct science within social studies, this is equally true of security studies. Scholarly debates as to the scientific justification of security studies notwithstanding, we should emphasise that a lot has been done already in the area of studies of contemporary security problems within security studies. Research and education on problems of the security of the contemporary state and of the international community emerged as a distinct area (but still within the framework of the subject-matter of international relations), primarily in the USA in the late 50s and 60s. Before World War II, American politics and science devoted almost no attention to the phenomenon of national security. Huntington attributes this mainly to the prevailing liberal tradition in the USA which was highly distrustful both of the field of international relations and of a professional army. Accordingly, in that period American universities devoted no scientific research and pedagogic attention to the various dimensions of security issues, such as, for example national security policy, military forces, the role of force in international relations, military-political alliances, security-intelligence activities, etc. However, since civilian scientists studied primarily the history of diplomacy, international law, international organisations, etc., military strategy and related subjects remained in the domain of military schools. The end of World War II marked a significant about-turn in that field also. Its status of a great power focused the attention of the USA on the need for the scientific study of different aspects of national and international security. Various scientific institutes came into being (e.g. the RAND Corporation established by the US Air Force in 1946) and various postgraduate study programmes which trained civil and military security experts for work in different segments of national and international security studies. In the late 80s most USA universities offered postgraduate courses in national and international security.<sup>6</sup>

In post-war Europe too, in most countries of the West, research into contemporary security was undertaken within strategic, defence, peace and security studies. The development of the latter was initiated at European universities in particular, parallelly

<sup>6</sup> Understandably, security studies and such study programmes at US universities can contain various simplifications, i.e. one-sided views, such as for instance:

- excessive emphasis on the importance of deterrence theories for explaining various types of international conflicts (small-scale, large-scale, conventional/unconventional, etc.) while neglecting the political-cultural context of different factors at global level;
- insufficient attention is devoted to studies of the non-military dimensions of contemporary security and the non-combat roles of the armed forces, international peacekeeping, humanitarian activity, etc.);
- exclusive focus in analysing international security on the USA, Europe and the former Soviet Union;
- non-military instruments of power and influence as well as the impact of a specific culture and values in various conflicts and in conflict-resolution strategies, etc., were neglected. The end of the cold war in Europe (1989/90) marked numerous changes in the international community which are of relevance for study within security studies and university curricula (e.g. new sources of threats to national and international security, the reshaping of the existing security organisations, etc.). See Shultz, Richardson, Godson, Roy, Greenwood, Ted (eds.), *Security Studies for the 1990's*, 1993: 6-9.

with the processes of the relaxation of tensions in international relations and the development of the concept of common security in the mid-80s.

In most European former socialist states, the greatest attention was devoted to the military element of national and international security, which was, until the end of the 70s, studied exclusively within military research establishments. But, in these states also, after World War II, the area of national security became markedly specialised, institutionalised and etatised. Study of that area to a large extent was concentrated in the former Soviet Union as the leading force of the socialist countries of Central-East Europe.

In the former Yugoslavia, security and defence was first studied exclusively within military research institutions and was generally considered a matter of military science. It was only during the 80s that some research organisations in the area of social sciences were encouraged to study not only the military but also some other dimensions of national security issues. A special form of such encouragement was the establishment of studies at different civil colleges in the mid-seventies, which trained civilian experts for work in the national security structure of the state. In Slovenia, such studies (first called total people's defence – namely the official defence doctrine of the then state) at the present Faculty of Social Sciences evolved after several years into a course offering studies in “defencology” /defence science/, teaching “defencology” as a distinct social science.<sup>7</sup> At the beginning “defencology” was largely based on an institutional approach which primarily studied a single segment of contemporary security issues, i.e. defence as a function and structure of the contemporary state. “Defencology” gradually expanded the subject matter of its research by way of different national and international research projects from defence matters to the more complex subject matter of national and international security (sources of threats to security and the resolution of the contemporary security dilemmas at the level of the state and that of the international system, the process of institutionalising assurances of national and international security, etc. “Defencology” was thereby constituted as a science in its own right equivalent to those disciplines in developed countries which comprehensively study the complex phenomenon of security.

<sup>7</sup> “Defencology” as a social science studies on an interdisciplinary basis military-defence, political science, sociological, economic, international, informatics and other elements of the phenomena of security, defence, war and peace at the level of individual states and the entire international community. The main theoretical aim of “defencology” is to study different historic, geographical, national, international, social, politico-institutional, economic, environmental, military and developmental-technological dimensions of security issues in the contemporary world. It aims at linking partial theories into a coherent paradigm which would encompass the entire social phenomenon of security. Through theoretical and empirical research into security issues, “defencology” has defined numerous specific features of the new science and at the same time, established adequate expert premises for resolving practical problems in the area of Slovenian national security. For details see: Anton Grizold (1996) *Aktualni trenutek obramboslovja*, in: Malešič Marjan (ed.) (1996), *Obramboslovne misli*, pp.77-88.



### *Institutionalisation of “Defencology” and Integration in International Scientific Research Processes*

The development of “defencology” in the institutional and scientific research framework to date is based on the following premises:

1. The classification of “defencology” under social sciences followed from the fact that “total people's defence and social self protection” were studied at the Faculty of Sociology, Political Science and Journalism. The fact that these studies were included in the curriculum of precisely that Faculty made it possible for “defencology” to draw upon the theoretical, methodological and empirical knowledge of the then already more or less affirmed social sciences such as sociology, political sciences and communications science, and even psychology, economics and history. Work focused on applying theoretical and empirical inputs to the area of “defencology” as well as on the immediate subject of research scattered as it was across a number of sciences, not only social ones. Graduates of “defencology” courses were defence scientists equipped with knowledge in the various areas of social, economic, political and other aspects of complex social processes which are of decisive bearing on the security of society, among other things.

2. The discarding of the terms of total people's defence and social self-protection and the adoption of the term of “defencology” marked a turning point in the development of this stream of studies at the Faculty as an institution and of “defencology” as a science and was of more than just a symbolic nature. It was the result of the understanding that the system of defence and security existing at the time could only be a subject of study and could not be equated with the science studying it. At that point of development, “defencology” turned to defining the subject of its research, searching for and articulating adequate methods of work, observing the norms and principles of scientific activity and rules of academic life and developing a rather autonomous position in relation to political and state institutions; all these are constituent elements of “defencology” as a science.

*The subject of study* of “defencology” is that segment of the activities of the society and state which meets the security needs of the individual and the community.

*The methods of work* were transferred from other scientific disciplines to ensure the interdisciplinarity of “defencology”, but, naturally, that still did not invest “defencology” with scientific legitimacy. It needed to develop its own theory as the basis for the application of methods (the guiding role of theory) and its own scientific paradigm resulting from the generalisation of observation over many years and of the recognition of the actual security reality.

3. The commitment to scientific research was marked in the development of “defencology”. Of great significance at the institutional level was the establishment of the research centre for “defencology” (ORC) in 1985. Only the shift from the relatively weak theoretical assumptions to the empirical study of defence security reality helped the new science gain legitimacy. Thus “defencology” theory began questioning the postulates of the then current security and defence policy. Empirical findings had a great feedback ef-

fect on the development of “defencology” theory while putting ever new questions before researchers which over time made it necessary for them to cooperate in international research projects. Research work, elaboration of theory, the observance of the principles of academic activity, and the international assertion of “defencology” all made it possible for “defencology” to weather even the roughest of crises.

4. The decision to establish a postgraduate study programme was also of great importance for the development of “defencology”. Postgraduate studies advanced the critical mass of knowledge so necessary for creative endeavour in the security environment and made possible a reconstruction of the pedagogic and research human resources input within “defencology” institutions in Slovenia (Malešič, 1996: 71-73).

5. Where is “defencology” today? Up to six years ago one could speak about “defencology” only in conjunction with one institution, i.e. the Chair for “Defencology” at the Faculty of Social Sciences and its “Defencology” Research Centre. However, the past six years have seen the development of new institutions and circles which through “defencological” methods of research contribute to the development and clarification of the subject of research as a whole. The Centre for Strategic Studies within the Ministry of Defence merits special mention as do the Higher Police-Security School and the people producing the magazine *Defence* and the specialised military journal *War*. I believe that this process will have to extend to the system of military schools in Slovenia which will not be sustainable only at the reproductive-educational level for long. Without research that system will have difficulty in developing programmes taught to generations of officers and non-commissioned officers at the Military Schools Centre. The training of soldiers cannot stay forever at the level of rules, prescribed programmes and past experience (Jelušič, 1996: 84.).

6. The ORC research group at the Faculty of Social Sciences in Ljubljana, comprising researchers into security, defence, military, protection and peace issues, has been constantly devoting particular attention to joining international research projects and establishing joint data bases for security-defence and peace research undertakings. In this regard the ORC is co-operating with a number of eminent foreign universities and research institutions dealing in problems of security, defence, war and peace.

ORC research fellows have taken an active part to date in concerted undertakings of the non-governmental European Research Group on Military and Society, ERGOMAS, and Research Committee No.1 within the International Sociological Association (ISA). They successfully co-operated on two major international ERGOMAS projects, the project entitled *The Present and Future of the Military Profession in Europe* and on the project *The Change of Social Values and Standpoints Related to Security, Peace and War*. Co-operation is also envisaged on a joint ERGOMAS and ISA project on *Civil-Military Relations in the World*.

The more important research undertaken within the ORC includes:

- *The Readiness of the Socio-Political System of Total People's Defence and Social Self-Protection of the SFRY* as a component of a Yugoslav macro project administered and co-financed between 1983 and 1989 by the Centre for Strategic Studies in

Belgrade, with the collaboration of research groups from different Yugoslav universities.

- *Slovenes and Military, Defence and “Defencology” Professions* (1985-1990). This was a multi-stage empirical study in which research focused on the most important subjective and objective factors motivating people to opt for military professions.
- *Recourse to Armed Force in the International Policy of Socialist States* (1984).
- *The National Security of Slovenia* (1990). This study is comparable to three international studies, namely: the Swedish study of Public Opinion on Psychological Defence and to ERGOMAS studies: The Military Profession and Legitimacy and Military Integration in Society.
- *The Slovene Soldier – Members of the Territorial Defence in the Armed Conflicts in Slovenia* (1991).
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- *Propaganda in War* (1996-1997).
- *Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Society* (1995-1997).
- *Slovene Youth and the Military Profession* (1996-1998).
- *European Security Integrations* (1998-2000).

In the future ORC collaboration in projects sponsored by NATO will play an increasingly important role. In the joint organisational and financial framework provided by NATO we expect it to be possible to revive international projects, namely those in which empirical research is conducted in a number of states, but applying the same methodology, making for international comparisons, cross-checking and exchange of data.

*Translated by the author*

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