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SECURITY SCIENCE AS AN INDEPENDENT ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE: THEORETICAL, EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND PRAXEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Abstract: *The article addresses security science's theoretical and epistemological foundation as an independent and interdisciplinary scientific discipline. The author responds to the growing need to overcome traditional state-centric and normative frameworks of security studies, presenting security science as a dynamically evolving field of science and knowledge with practical application. The article emphasizes the use of qualitative and quantitative scientific methods and the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach that connects knowledge from political science, sociology, law, information technology, and other related fields. The first part analyses the evolution of the security concept and highlights the need for its scientific grasp. The second part focuses on the epistemological and methodological starting points of security science, its subject of research, and the approach to security as both a process and a state. The third part presents arguments for its autonomy and its relationships with other sciences, emphasizing technological and informational dimensions. The fourth part discusses the praxeological dimension of security science and its use in strategic decision-making, crisis management, and education. The conclusion emphasizes the need for methodological standardization and further research in the examined area. Overall, the article represents a relevant contribution to the ongoing discourse on the formation of security science, and at the same time, a call for building a comprehensive and adaptive scientific framework for analysing security phenomena in a dynamically changing globalized, multipolar and fragmented world.*

Keywords: *Security, security science, academic discipline, epistemology, interdisciplinarity, methodology, praxeology.*

Introduction

The current development of human society is remarkably dynamic, and in some cases, even turbulent. There's a continuous deterioration and fundamental transformation of the global and regional security environment. The consequences of this transformation are challenging the adequacy of traditional paradigmatic frameworks of security thinking. The collapse of the bipolar world order after the Cold War did not lead to a stable order; instead, it opened up space for the emergence of a pluralistic, multi-vector, and broad asymmetric spectrum of threats that significantly transcend the state-centric balance of power.

This shift didn't occur in isolation, but in parallel with an explosion of a wide range of technological innovations, the proliferation of hybrid tools of power, a massive increase in cyber-attacks, and the destabilising influences of deepening globalisation processes. New phenomena are coming to the forefront, such as environmental, financial, energy, and pandemic crises, external interference and information manipulation, the erosion of trust in institutions, and transnational network risks. These impact not only the physical domain but also the symbolic and discursive levels of societal consciousness (Baldwin, 1997; Hofreiter, 2006; Collins, 2007; Ivančík, 2021a; Piwowarski & Trifunović, 2023).

This new security context is characterised by considerable variability, instability, complexity, ambiguity, and reduced predictability, which significantly complicates its apprehension within classical scientific approaches based on rigid concepts, normative approaches, or empirical reduction. It's becoming evident that security can no longer be understood exclusively as a politico-military or politico-strategic problem, or merely the result of foreign policy analysis. On the contrary, there is an increasingly urgent need to grasp it as an independent scientific discipline – not only in the form of pluralistic security studies but as a systemically anchored, methodologically consistent, and epistemologically defined science of security (Hofreiter, 2009; Todorović & Trifunović, 2020; Ivančík, 2021b; Ivančík, 2022).

Although security studies, as an interdisciplinary research field, have provided highly valuable analytical frameworks, they are now facing several limitations. Their

theoretical dispersion, normative burden, and the absence of a unified epistemological core prevent them from establishing a stable research programme. In this context, the need to develop security science as an autonomous academic discipline with its own subject of inquiry and methodological and conceptual apparatus is becoming increasingly apparent. Such a discipline would be capable of systematically integrating knowledge from multiple disciplines while simultaneously producing relevant knowledge with practical implications for security policy, crisis management, defence, and societal stability.

This study aims to examine, define, and scientifically justify the necessity of establishing security science as a standalone academic discipline within the available scope. The research question guiding us is: Why is it essential to establish security science as an autonomous and fully-fledged academic discipline within the current scientific system of knowledge? This problem is investigated from the conviction that current security challenges cannot be adequately grasped or addressed without creating a specialised, transdisciplinary anchored, and applicable knowledge framework.

In this regard, the author sets three partial objectives:

- To theoretically and epistemologically justify the need to form security science as an independent academic discipline with a specific subject of inquiry and its own research language.
- To differentiate security science from security studies and other related disciplines (political science, law, sociology, military sciences, technical and information science fields) and to identify their overlaps and boundaries.
- To propose starting points and principles for the further development of security science—including theoretical-methodological standardisation, institutional establishment, and praxeological applicability.

The methodological framework of this study is based on a combination of descriptive, analytical, and comparative approaches, emphasizing a synthesising and interpretive level. The author draws upon interdisciplinary theories and empirical sources, primarily from political science, philosophy of science, security studies, law, systems theory, and technical disciplines. Concurrently, it references the works of renowned international and domestic authors who have focused on the conceptualisation of security

science in recent years. The methodology also incorporates critical reflection and a metatheoretical assessment of trends in the conceptualisation of security.

Furthermore, it is essential to state that the author's intention is not merely to present the concept of security science, but primarily to contribute to its theoretical foundation, create a framework for its future development, and support standardisation as an essential prerequisite for its establishment as a fully-fledged academic discipline. In a broader sense, this is the author's contribution to the ongoing academic discourse that reflects the dynamics, complex threats, and challenges of the 21st century. As an interdisciplinary, practically oriented, and reflective academic discipline, security science can indeed represent a crucial tool for managing current and future threats and challenges, not only at the theoretical level but also in practical policy and strategic planning.

Theoretical foundations and transformations of the concept of Security

Security studies as an academic field have undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, reflecting profound changes in the nature of the security environment. The originally strictly state-centric and military understanding of security, primarily rooted in the realist paradigm of international relations, has gradually been replaced by a broader, more complex, multi-level, and multi-layered conceptual framework. This shift is a logical response to the evolving nature of threats and risks, which increasingly disregard national borders, sectoral categories, or traditional power hierarchies. In a globalised and post-bipolar world, it has become essential to transcend the previous restrictive frameworks of security studies and expand them to include new dimensions that account for the interconnectedness, uncertainty, and dynamism of the contemporary security environment (Dragaš, 2020; Todorović – Trifunović, 2020; Akrap – Mandić, 2020; Jurčák et al., 2020; Ivančík, 2021c).

The traditional view of security, which dominated during the Cold War, considered the state the primary actor in the sphere of security and the international system, with military threats from other states being the main subject of the security agenda. Security analysis in this context was primarily limited to assessing military capabilities and capacities, the balance of power, and strategic stability (Walt, 1991). This approach, while relevant and progressive in its time, is now insufficient. The end of bipolarity and the breakdown of the rigid structure of the international order led to legitimate criticism of this reduced model, which was incapable of capturing the multifaceted and unconventional

forms of threats. Buzan and other authors from the Copenhagen School pointed out that the state is not the sole relevant actor in security and that threats are not exclusively military in nature, thus paving the way for a sectoral analysis that included new areas such as societal, environmental, economic, and political security (Buzan et al., 1998).

Even though the sectoral expansion of the security concept represented a significant step forward, it largely retained a structural rigidity that could not fully reflect the complexity and plurality of current security challenges (McSweeney, 1999). Furthermore, hegemonic frameworks of security discourse, often presented as neutral, served as tools for legitimising authoritarian measures, justifying states of emergency, and suppressing fundamental rights or marginalising certain population groups (Huysmans, 2006). These issues led to the formation of reflexive and critical approaches that emphasise the importance of normative dimensions of security, examine securitisation processes, and decontest the self-evidence of security categories.

The contemporary security environment is characterised by increasing complexity, a high degree of interconnectedness, and the emergence of new risks, which are marked by hybridity, unpredictability, and difficulty in identification. Alongside traditional military threats, new, non-military, and often non-state forms of threat are coming to the forefront, impacting across sectors and affecting fundamental societal functions (Putten et al., 2015). Hybrid and cyber threats are a significant phenomenon, encompassing attacks on information and communication networks, digital content manipulation, disinformation spread, conspiracy theories, hoaxes, and sophisticated forms of cyber-espionage. Cyberspace has become a technical environment and a distinct security arena, where military, civilian, economic, and social dimensions intertwine, with actors including states and individuals, companies, and transnational groups (Dean, 2023).

Another significant challenge lies in hybrid threats, which combine military and non-military tools, overt and covert forms of operation, and legal and illegal means. The aim is to disorient an adversary, disrupt their social cohesion, undermine trust in institutions, and weaken their ability to respond effectively (Hoffman, 2009). It is precisely the hybrid character of security challenges that complicates their identification, attribution, and adequate response—placing high demands on research frameworks' analytical capacity and flexibility. In such an environment, it is essential to consider security as a dynamic, broad-spectrum, and multidimensional phenomenon that requires a transdisciplinary

approach, a combination of knowledge from various fields, and the ability to synthesise fragmented information into a coherent picture of reality.

Beyond technological and military aspects, it is crucial to focus on security's environmental, societal, and psychological dimensions. Climate change, environmental degradation, mass migration, and the spread of disinformation represent complex phenomena that do not fall under traditional threat categories but possess significant destabilising potential. Security can no longer be viewed exclusively as a matter of state survival but also as a prerequisite for social stability, individual dignity, sustainable development, and the integrity of democratic processes (Homer-Dixon, 2010; Barnett–Adger, 2007). This shift necessitates re-evaluating the fundamental ontological and epistemological assumptions of security research and developing new frameworks that reflect the reality of the 21st century.

From the above, it follows that existing approaches—whether realist, liberalist, or constructivist—offer valuable starting points, yet none of them can individually provide a sufficiently robust foundation for understanding and resolving contemporary security problems. As an interdisciplinary field, security studies allow for a certain degree of flexibility, but their internal fragmentation, methodological inconsistency, and normative dispersion hinder the formation of a coherent discipline. These limitations are particularly evident in the lack of standard theoretical foundations, the absence of standardised methodological procedures, and a low degree of knowledge cumulativity (Hofreiter, 2008). Consequently, there are increasingly frequent calls to move beyond the status quo and create an autonomous scientific discipline—security science—that would enable the systematic and cumulative building of knowledge about security phenomena.

Security science should represent a qualitatively new epistemic framework that transcends the *ad hoc* amalgamation of knowledge from various disciplines and moves towards creating an integrated and methodologically anchored research programme. Founded on a reflection of practical security challenges and the theoretical limitations of existing approaches, security science would create space for the structured examination of security as a complex, dynamic, and socially conditioned phenomenon. Its goal would be to explain security phenomena and generate applicable knowledge that contributes to public policy formulation, crisis management, and defence planning. In this sense, security science

would not just be an academic construct but also a practically relevant tool for enhancing societal resilience.

In recent decades, there has been a fundamental transformation in the understanding of security—moving from a traditional military-political concept towards a complex, multi-layered, and multidimensional category. The contemporary security environment is characterised by volatility, ambiguity, and the hybrid nature of threats that extend beyond classical state actors and traditional conflicts. This shift demands a new theoretical and practical approach to security that corresponds to strategic uncertainty, technological transformation, and global interconnectedness. In this context, the need to profile security science as a distinct, interdisciplinary, and autonomous academic discipline is becoming increasingly urgent. Such a discipline could offer adequate analytical and methodological tools for examining current and future security challenges.

The above analysis demonstrates that the security concept has evolved from state-centric frameworks to a more pluralistic, comprehensive, and dynamic understanding. This shift inevitably necessitates new theoretical, methodological, and epistemological research frameworks. Building on this, the following chapter will focus on security science's epistemological and methodological profiling as a field that reflects this transformative challenge.

Epistemological and methodological profiling of Security Science

Several arguments can justify the establishment of security science as a distinct academic discipline. Firstly, it involves emerging and consolidating its own knowledge, focusing on specific phenomena such as threats, risks, vulnerability, resilience, anticipation, response, prevention, response capacity, and security strategies. These concepts are not merely adaptations of terms from other disciplines; they represent the fundamental building blocks of an analytical apparatus that arises within security research and reflects the empirical and normative dimensions of security reality. Security science strives for a specific definition and operationalisation of these concepts, thereby profiling itself as a scientific discipline with its own epistemological identity.

Concurrently with developing a specific knowledge framework, security science is also characterised by creating its own terminology and analytical concepts. These enable the systematic examination of security phenomena across various levels—from local to

global—and within diverse domains, such as physical, digital, and information space. Regarding methodological tools, combinations of qualitative and quantitative approaches are increasingly employed, indicating a high degree of methodological openness and adaptability. Tools such as threat modelling, vulnerability analysis, scenario building, simulation methods, and developing early warning and crisis response systems, all oriented explicitly towards the security environment, are utilised (Hofreiter, 2006; Ivančík, 2022). These approaches strengthen security science's autonomy while demonstrating its capacity to generate knowledge directly applicable in political practice and strategic decision-making.

Security science's epistemological and methodological foundations form the core of its identity as an independent academic discipline. However, they rely heavily on connecting knowledge from multiple fields and transforming it into their own research logic. Therefore, the next section of the text will focus on the interdisciplinary connections of security science and its autonomy from other scientific fields.

Interdisciplinary connections and autonomy of Security Science

Despite its apparent interdisciplinarity, security science cannot be reduced solely to the sum of knowledge from other disciplines. While its relationship with other sciences is cooperative and reciprocal, it is also a discipline that develops its own research logic and interpretive paradigm. A key aspect is its ability to integrate knowledge from diverse fields—such as law, sociology, political science, economics, and technical sciences—and transform it into its own theoretical models and applied frameworks.

From law, security science adopts concepts like the legitimate use of force, the protection of fundamental rights, state obligations in security, and issues of accountability and the rule of law during crises. However, it doesn't merely descriptively transfer legal norms; it also analyses their effectiveness, implementation capacities, and contextual limitations in specific security situations.

Similarly significant is the overlap with sociology, which provides essential tools for analysing societal responses to security challenges, the level of public trust in security institutions, the dynamics of social cohesion, and the mechanisms of polarisation or panic dissemination during crisis events. The sociological dimension of security raises questions that cannot be resolved solely from the perspective of political decisions or legal

regulations, as they touch upon cultural codes, historical experience, media discourse, and risk perception. Therefore, security science not only adopts this knowledge but further develops it within the context of its own research objectives, thereby creating a more comprehensive view of individual and group behaviour under threat.

From a political science perspective, security science draws on knowledge about the functioning of power structures, public policy formulation, and decision-making mechanisms in the security domain. Political science approaches allow for the analysis of how security strategies are formulated, what factors influence the security agenda of governments and international organisations, and how security issues are securitised and communicated to the public. Security science simultaneously goes beyond classical political science analysis by examining the practical implementation of security measures, their effectiveness, societal impacts, and the interactions between political will, institutional frameworks, and available resources.

Knowledge from technical sciences is also an indispensable part of security research, providing the fundamental understanding of risks associated with infrastructure, technologies, and the digital environment (Todorović & Trifunović, 2020). In the context of cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, and data protection, technical disciplines play an irreplaceable role in threat identification, vulnerability assessment, and the development of technical solutions. However, security science does not passively adopt this knowledge; it actively integrates it into its methodological frameworks and value reflections. This creates a new qualitative framework of knowledge that is simultaneously technical and social, analytical and normative.

Such a synthesis of diverse knowledge, methodological approaches, and application frameworks leads to the conclusion that security science is not merely a compilation of knowledge from other scientific disciplines. Instead, it represents a distinct research framework with its own epistemology, terminological apparatus, and methodological literacy. By reflecting the complexity of security phenomena and creating tools for their analysis, prevention, and resolution, it strengthens its position as an autonomous discipline capable of providing relevant responses to contemporary world challenges.

At the same time, it is evident that in conditions of increasing globalisation, digital interconnectedness, and threat variability, the interdisciplinary nature of security science is its key benefit. The ability to link the technological, legal, social, and political dimensions

of security phenomena creates space for the emergence of new analytical models and application strategies that would otherwise not be effectively developed solely within traditional fields. Security science thus represents an integrative platform that combines descriptive, explanatory, and normative components of research, thereby becoming not only a reflective but also a transformative tool for societal knowledge and political decision-making (Murdza, 2005; Brooks, 2009; Purpura, 2011; Krause & Williams, 2018; Jurčák et al., 2020; Ivančík, 2022; Piwowarski & Trifunović, 2023).

As a discipline, security science transcends the scope of descriptive research and becomes an integrating platform with high application potential. This application dimension—its praxeological utility—is the subject of the following chapter, which analyses the use of security science in the areas of strategy, management, and education.

Praxeological dimension and societal applicability of Security Science

As an established independent scientific discipline, security science does not solely fulfil a cognitive and explanatory function; its pronounced praxeological orientation is a characteristic feature. Unlike exclusively theoretically focused disciplines, security science pursues descriptive and analytical goals and aims to apply acquired knowledge in specific societal, institutional, and political contexts. This applied dimension makes it a significant tool in formulating and implementing security policies and the professional formation of the security sector and its institutional embedding. The praxeological function of security science is fully manifested in several areas, among which its contribution to decision-making processes in public policy, strategic planning, and crisis management holds a key position.

Security science provides systematic frameworks, analytical tools, and methodological models that find direct application in decision-making processes within security and defence policy. This applicable potential significantly distinguishes it from other social science disciplines whose outputs often have limited penetration into real political practice. In the case of security science, however, it is a discipline with a strong orientation towards political relevance and practical utility—whether it concerns the creation of national security strategies, the preparation of defence plans, or the design of legislative measures aimed at the activities of security and crisis response components. In the field of crisis management, this contribution is particularly evident, as security science participates in the creation of comprehensive crisis scenarios, the modelling of system

behaviour in the event of accidents, terrorist attacks, or natural disasters, and simultaneously in assessing the preparedness of individual institutions to face these threats. Modern concepts such as "resilience-based governance" and "adaptive security planning" stem precisely from the multidisciplinary outputs of security research, which enable a flexible response to unpredictable events in conditions of high uncertainty and environmental complexity (Linkov et al., 2014).

Security science gains particular importance within defense planning in the context of the transforming nature of armed conflicts and the development of new types of threats. Classical forms of military activity are now complemented by hybrid operations, cyberattacks, information operations, and asymmetric tactics, which require new methodical approaches to planning, preparing, and managing defence capabilities (NATO, 2024). Security science provides analytical tools to assess the population's cognitive vulnerability, the preparedness of critical infrastructure, and the ability of systems to restore functionality after crisis events. These tools are not exclusively military; they combine knowledge from engineering fields, social sciences, psychology, and strategic studies (Purpura, 2011; Brassett & Vaughan-Williams, 2015; Ivančík, 2022). Security research conceived in this way enriches the scientific base and provides concrete solutions applicable to the decision-making sphere and political practice.

In line with its praxeological nature, security science doesn't just serve as a source of academic knowledge; it also plays a crucial role in education (Kavan, 2020; Lundie, 2024), forming professional identities, and the standardisation of security-related professions. In this context, the close link between security research, the educational system, and the practical activities of security entities comes to the fore. With the increasing complexity of the security environment, characterised by the emergence of hybrid, unconventional, and interconnected threats, there's a growing need for professionally trained experts capable of analysing, interpreting, and, crucially, adequately responding to these challenges.

Security science must also respond to the demands of an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach. In an era of digital transformations and an interconnected global reality, combining technological literacy with critical thinking, legal orientation, strategic reasoning, and cultural sensitivity is essential. Such an approach necessitates continuous innovation in education, including using digital platforms, instructional simulations, interactive methodologies, and a personalised approach to professional development.

Educational institutions, therefore, cease to be merely places for knowledge dissemination and become incubators of security culture, reflection, and responsibility.

Finally, one of the key manifestations of the praxeological function of security science is its institutional establishment within academic, research, and public structures. This institutionalisation process is an essential prerequisite for its long-term sustainability, societal relevance, and professional legitimacy. The development over the last two decades shows a significant trend towards the systematisation of security research, the creation of independent study programmes, the establishment of research centres, and specialist journals dedicated to security issues. Such an embedding creates space for accumulating knowledge, standardizing methodological approaches, and forming expert communities that collaborate across national and disciplinary boundaries.

However, the institutionalisation of security science cannot be viewed solely as a formal integration into academic structures; an emphasis must also accompany it on the qualitative dimension of research, the internationalisation of scientific networks, and a strong connection to practice. This requires effective collaboration among universities, research institutes, public institutions, and actors within the security environment, including security forces, local governments, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector. Security science thus ceases to be a closed academic discourse. It acquires the character of an open, application-oriented, and socially engaged discipline capable of reflecting current challenges and anticipating future threats.

In this context, the praxeological dimension of security science emerges as one of its fundamental pillars. It lies in its ability to produce knowledge that is scientifically sound, applicable, and relevant for strategic decision-making, crisis management, defence planning, public policy formulation, and building societal resilience. Such security science becomes not merely a bearer of knowledge but also an active agent of social change, contributing to the formation of security culture, democratic resilience, and civilisational integrity in the conditions of the 21st century.

The preceding sections presented security science as a theoretically grounded, methodologically consistent, and practically applicable scientific discipline. In the conclusion of this article, these findings are synthesised, with particular emphasis on their normative implications, the challenges of its further development, and its role in managing security risks in a globalised, multipolar, and fragmented world.

Conclusion

Over the past decades, security science has emerged as a response to dynamic changes in the security environment and as a reflective answer to new forms of threats that extend beyond traditional military and state-centric approaches. This article highlighted the necessity of transcending traditional security studies frameworks and presenting security science as an independent, multidisciplinary, and application-oriented scientific discipline. The fundamental starting point was a critique of state-centrism and the sectoral approach, which are proving insufficient for analysing contemporary phenomena such as cyber threats, hybrid conflicts, climate risks, and transnational and asymmetric challenges. In response to this complexity, a new systemic and societal framework for thinking about security was proposed, emphasising the emergence, complexity, and adaptability of security thinking.

From the foregoing, it can be concluded that security science now possesses all the fundamental characteristics of an independent scientific discipline—it has its own subject of inquiry, theoretical foundations, methodological basis, application potential, and institutional background. Its establishment stems not merely from academic ambition but, more importantly, from the objective need to reflect the changing characteristics of the security environment, which traditional security studies frameworks or other social science disciplines can adequately address. At a time when security threats are increasingly non-linear, complex, and interconnected, security science offers tools for their analytical comprehension, understanding, and effective response. It is thus a discipline that combines a reflexive and normative dimension, empirical precision with practical utility, and interdisciplinary openness with its own scientific identity.

Despite progress on both theoretical and practical fronts, security science is still in a phase of development and consolidation. For further advancement, it's essential to move towards methodological standardisation, which will ensure the comparability of research outputs, their higher scientific reliability, and the ability to grasp complex security phenomena analytically across different contexts. A significant goal is to deepen the discipline's theoretical foundation, create a robust conceptual apparatus, and intensify interdisciplinary dialogue with related scientific fields. In this regard, it is also necessary to develop its own terminology, consensual definitions of key concepts, and a critical

reflection of epistemological foundations corresponding to the plurality of contemporary security discourse.

A crucial challenge remains strengthening ties between security research and political practice. The effort to generate relevant knowledge should not remain isolated within academic confines but must lead to real influence on strategic decisions, policy formulation, and the building of societal resilience. Security science can and should serve as a "bridge" between knowledge and practice—a tool of societal reason in an era of uncertainty, crises, and strategic threats.

In this sense, security science is currently profiling itself not only as an independent scientific project but also as a strategic initiative responding to the key challenges of the 21st century. Its contribution lies in its ability to offer analytical precision in interpreting security phenomena and practical value in proposing solutions. It is a discipline that transcends the realm of academic inquiry and enters the space of societal impact—thereby becoming an integral part of democratic governance, resilience planning, and sustainable security strategy.

The challenge for the future remains the creation of a consistent scientific framework capable of reflecting the dynamics of security risks in a globalised, digitised, multipolar, and fragmented world. Research efforts should therefore focus on developing analytical tools that will reflect the security environment's complexity while supporting political rationality and strategic foresight. An essential part of this effort is the integration of new technologies, data analytics, and foresight methods into research, which will enhance the ability to identify and respond to emerging threats promptly. Only through such an adaptive, scientifically grounded, and socially embedded security science will it be possible to face the present and future challenges with an appropriate degree of preparedness and resilience.

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