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## The Identity of Security Studies

**Book Review** Stanisław Sulowski (ed.), *Tożsamość nauk o bezpieczeństwie*.  
Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek 2015 (pp. 217). ISBN  
978–83–8019–120–4. Price: PLN 33,81.

In 2011 a new field of studies emerged in Poland, as the security studies were recognised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. That provides a starting point for the book edited by Stanisław Sulowski *The identity of security studies*. Each of the chapters' authors had chosen to work on one of a few themes that act as the keynote of this book. Firstly, there are thoughtful reflections on the concepts of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, which characterize the current state of scientific independence in security studies. This draws attention to the very name of the discipline in the Polish language – sciences in the plural, which is a direct reference to the above mentioned concepts. Interdisciplinary is a result of the specific research problems, which are inherently amorphous and hybrid (p. 29) and the idiosyncrasy of the area of social sciences, which tends to demand methodological holism (p. 36). Tomasz R. Aleksandrowicz pointed out that security studies methodologically reaches beyond social sciences. In this place dilemmas arise, whether to narrow the scope of the analysis or to recognize the problems extensively, working in interdisciplinary teams (p. 85). A negative consequence of interdisciplinary is, however, a slowdown in the development of the theoretical generalizations and standardization of methodological issues (p. 37). The chaotic diversity may also be the effect of the way security studies have developed, as Janusz Ziarko noticed, that in the absence of a general theory, new detailed studies are being formed (p. 152).

Małgorzata Lipińska-Rzeszutek pointed out that contemporary theories of security, war and peace are not mutually coherent because of methodological, theoretical and practical differences (p. 175). The situation has not been improved by the fact that the very concept of security has been lacking a single universally accepted definition (p. 143). The authors emphasized ambiguity resulting from the vast number of adjectives that had been applied to “security” label, and thus expanding the concept’s scope and increasing the number of conditions that significantly affect the field of study.

Attention is drawn to the variation in time; selected authors indicated different periodizations in thinking about security, commonly associated with the epoch-making changes in international relations at the global level (i.e. the end of the Second World War and the end of the Cold War), taking into account changes in state functions and technological context. The contemporary change in the basic means of violence was noticed - operation of troops and their groupings had been replaced by asymmetrical actions and information operations. However, the significance of the Ukrainian crisis started in 2014 was underlined by the authors, stating that it had changed the security paradigm. Katarzyna Żukrowska accurately noted (p. 70) that a change in the perception of Russia’s actions had made a kind of reversal of the direction of change - Wojciech Kostecki called this phenomenon “going back to the state” in thinking about security (p. 144). The authors are not limited only to issues of international relations and the wider context of globalization. They referred to changes within countries and societies, stressing the importance of non-military types of threats, privatization of public tasks, which included the security sector.

According to the authors, there is a need to develop scientific paradigms that are a condition of an effective basic research (p. 56). The diagnosis of contemporary trends has become Aleksandrowicz’s foundation for the network security paradigm. Ziarko (p. 157) highlighted advantages of multiparadigmatic perspective that allows a researcher to act in a holistic, integrated and interdisciplinary way. A single paradigm is inadequate to cover the richness of social life, and paradigms used separately exhaust their cognitive capabilities (p. 164 and 171), hence, there is a strong demand for dialogue between researchers. This proposition appears to be very close to the synergistic security paradigm, marked by Kostecki (p. 141–142) as connecting different aspects of security. As indicated by Sulowski (p. 22–23), research on security is carried out on three perspectives: security studies, security theory and empirical approach. The work often emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to security, using – as Stanisław Koziej and Adam Brzozowski said – the concept of integrated safety (p. 9). Andrzej Glen’s proposal followed a similar direction – it defined a complementary paradigm of national security’s knowledge where research activity is carried out in

sequence: descriptive, explanatory and predictive phases and which includes the three sub-processes: conceptual, empirical and formal (p. 101–102).

The reviewed book is characterized by a high scientific value. In the reviewer's opinion it would be worth referring to the identity of the discipline by mentioning its delimitation with other related disciplines. The authors often refer to the established disciplines such as political science or sociology, or sub-disciplines such as international relations, but another two disciplines recognized by the Polish legislation are omitted: the defence studies and the public policy. To define and clarify the identity of the security studies, it seems essential to find the differentiating factors of these disciplines. Perhaps it is a good starting point for further scientific consideration in this group of eminent scientists and preparation for the next volume. Although in this context Sulowski's words must be reminded: he diagnosed that the dispersion of the scientific disciplines is the Polish specificity (p. 33). It also seems that subjective aspects of security, related to singular perceptions, deserve a broader presence – the concept of human security had only been mentioned in the reviewed publication. In several places in the selected texts references to the unspecified seminar and its topic may have been noticed, although the introduction provided no information that the book had been published as a result of this type of event. Summing up, most of the contributors agreed with Boleslaw Balcerowicz's opinion that the security studies are in the initial stage of development, where research achievements are of varying quality, autonomous only in defining the terms, but with the remaining elements borrowed (p. 41). Interdisciplinary is often mentioned – as stated by Jacek Czaputowicz – as a sign of the weakness of the discipline (p. 116).

This book stands out as a great scientific achievement, demonstrating the highest possible standards in conceptualization and theorization. The diffusion of these scientific articles should be supported to increase its scope and longevity. The phenomena of security in the context of increasing international interdependence and change should be the subject of studious research for many years.

Security studies are a peculiar scientific discipline. Its dynamic development can be noticed in the increase of the number of scientists devoting their research to its problems. It is also affected by the behaviour of the many students, who have recently chosen fields of studies related to security studies, such as national security or homeland security. The works broadly defining the subject of the research are dominating security studies- most often devoted to the international context of security or to selected categories of threats, most frequently terrorism or war information. The works devoted to security on a smaller scale most often represent a legal or historical framework. There is a lack of consensus between representatives of security studies about the methodology and theoretical framework, and what is worst - these issues

are frequently overlooked. The reviewed publication is a very important step towards filling this gap, step – because the process is long-term and the result of deliberations and prolonged scientific discourse.

This book is directed to academics and government policy-makers, who are concerned about addressing emerging security problems. It places significant demands on the reader, and in the opinion of the reviewer, students and practitioners in the area of security may have difficulty fully understanding the essence of theoretically oriented scientific research.

It should be noted that the authors were able to avoid the error affecting many collective publications that may be epitomized as the sum of the randomness. The reviewed publication is characterized by noticeable main theme and well-defined research problems, which covered all the chapters (the only doubt may concern Andrzej Misiak's article about the Higher Police School in Szczytno).

#### **References:**

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